

Necropolis 821

Chapter 821: What Era Is It?

Amidst the croons of blessings, a hunting party from Ning Village once more headed into the forests of Qingqiu Mountain at the break of dawn.

There were approximately two hundred households in the village, and fifty men in the hunting party. The hunters were the strongest and most well trained in the village, and Ah Zhuang was their leader and the overall number one expert of Ning Village.

Lu Yun was allotted a longbow, ten feathered arrows, and a broadsword of fine iron. He wore a wicker basket on his back and brought up the rear.

Elderly craftsmen in the village had forged the bow and arrows, while the broadsword had been obtained through trading with others around the foot of the mountains. The broadsword in particular displayed exquisite workmanship. Its rows of delicate patterns weren't just a decorative motif, but runes that referenced the laws of nature and imbued the weapon with strength to hew through obstacles. For Lu Yun, these runes were uncommonly useful.

Ning Village practiced a fledgling form of agriculture as they raised livestock—it wasn't the completely primitive society he'd gathered at first glance. It was just that hunting was still the village's preferred way of life.

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"Hoi, Shan! You look all soft and gentle like, and you have a Tushan fox for a spirit creature pet. You're from one of those big villages outside, aren't you?" Ah Zhuang looked roughly three meters tall and bulged with rippling muscles that felt like chiseled rock. He slapped Lu Yun's shoulder hard, throwing him off balance and stumbling forward, almost falling flat on his face.

The men around them laughed uproariously to see Lu Yun's discomfort, but he could tell that there wasn't any derision in their laughter. They just honestly found things funny.

He panted a few times and shoved the broadsword into the wicker basket behind him, eliciting a round of protest from the little fox.

"Brother Ah Zhuang, I'm not with you guys to join the hunt. I can't use any of the things you've given me." He smiled ruefully.

"Take them, take them. How can a man be without a blade?" Ah Zhuang responded solemnly. "Dangers in the mountain aren't limited to just those deadly beasts, there's also a lot of wandering thieves and roving robbers. You'll have to protect yourself if you run into robbers!"

Lu Yun nodded with resignation. What the village people meant by hunting was to check the traps they'd laid out yesterday and then set things up again. Actual chasing of game was in the rarity.

"Hush!" A man with a tanned face, so lean that he lacked any fat whatsoever, suddenly made a gesture. "This is the territory of the pixiu. We need to cross it silently so we don't disturb it."

“Pixiu?!” Lu Yun’s eyes went wide. This was a divine beast long extinct in the world of immortals. Born with great strength, it could kill scaled-dragons and rip other divine beasts apart. Some primitive tribes even worshipped the pixiu as their totemic figure.

There are pixius here? He trembled, finding it very likely that he’d actually arrived in an exceedingly ancient era. However, he still didn’t know what point in history he’d landed in.

The fifty men slowed down their pace and stealthily crept past pixiu territory.

“Yip yip yip!” Curled up by Lu Yun’s shoulder, the little fox called softly at his ear.

“You say the pixiu noticed us a long time ago and has been observing us?” Though the little fox couldn’t speak, Lu Yun somehow understood her meaning. She nodded, then started miming again.

“What is she saying?” Ah Zhuang walked up curiously to them.

“She says that pixiu is the village’s guardian, that it’s the reason why the savage beasts in the mountain haven’t attacked Ning Village.” Lu Yun was a bit doubtful of what he’d translated.

According to some ambiguous texts and Zhaoqing’s memories, the pixiu were extraordinarily ferocious divine beasts. They swallowed people alive by the dozens, but this one was... the village’s guardian?

Ah Zhuang and the others looked at each other. There were countless fierce beasts in the mountain and even stronger divine beasts, but it was true that Ning Village had never been attacked, despite being at the foot of Qingqiu Mountain.

“It looks like the legends of the village are true, that we really do have a divine beast guarding us.” Ah Zhuang sighed with appreciation and put the matter out of his mind.

Cheers broke out not long after they crossed pixiu territory—an enormous beast that looked like a wild boar, but was a dozen times bigger than any Lu Yun had ever seen, hung in a net in the middle of the air. Twitching with an occasional struggle, this was the harvest from what the hunters had set up the day before.

Meanwhile, Lu Yun scanned his surroundings. He hadn’t found the ingredients he wanted, but he’d filled his wicker basket with all sorts of foreign herbs that brimmed with qi. Though he didn’t recognize them, he could taste them and use formula dao to hypothesize what they might be used for.

“Hey Shan, what are you collecting all these useless weeds for?” Ah Zhuang poked his nose in curiously when he saw Lu Yun sort through his collection.

“These are all treasures, they might be able to save a life!” Lu Yun carefully placed a brilliantly red herb that looked like a ganoderma into his clothes. This was a blood ganoderma, and Qing Yu had made use of one to ascend to the void realm in one go. He hadn’t thought he’d find one here!

Blood ganodermas needed the fertilization of fresh blood and souls. Plainly, quite a few beings had once died here.

“Wait, why don’t you guys know about this?” He blinked.

In Lu Yun's eyes, hunters that often traveled through the mountain should be familiar with the effects of these herbs and their uses. But judging from the expressions of the hunting party, they viewed these ingredients with stunning levels of qi as ordinary weeds.

Ah Zhuang twisted his mouth and looked at Lu Yun like he was seeing a bumpkin. Imagine collecting that trash as treasure!

"Then what do you do when you're injured or get sick? Just wait to die?"

Though Ah Zhuang and the others were ordinary mortals who'd never cultivated, their physical bodies were ridiculously powerful. They could rip tigers apart with their bare hands—but they were still mortals at the end of the day.

Mortals would fall sick or become injured, and the herbs in this mountain were the most basic way of curing or helping someone.

"The village worships an altar spirit. We can ask it to help whenever someone isn't feeling well or is hurt. Who needs all these weeds?" Ah Zhuang answered matter-of-factly.

Lu Yun said no more. In exceedingly primordial times, altar spirits were divine spirits born from sacrifices to an altar.

"Alright, we've had enough of a break. Time to go to the next location!" Losing interest in the conversation, Ah Zhuang called out his orders. A few of the men lashed the boar to trimmed logs and sauntered their way to the next trap.

Lu Yun wordlessly rolled his eyes to the heavens. Just what kind of era had he arrived in?

Perhaps I have to find Tushan of Qingqiu Mountain to figure out where I am... He carefully put the herbs away and shuffled listlessly after the hunting party, heading deeper into the mountain.

1. I'm sorry, wtf?

2. Pixiu are auspicious, winged animals in ancient Chinese history with powerful and grandiose feats of victory in battle. They have the head of a Chinese dragon, the body of a lion, and sport either one antler (male) or two antlers (female) on their heads. Pixiu are considered powerful protectors of feng shui practitioners and statues of this creature are often used to attract wealth in feng shui.

Chapter 822: Bi Fang

As the sun drifted to the west, so too did dusk slowly descend over the village.

Strains of flowing and resonant mountain songs echoed in the woods as fifty men carried eight enormous beasts on their shoulders. Stepping forward in high spirits, they headed in the direction of home. Eight beasts amounting to a thousand kilograms of meat was an enormous harvest for the hunting party.

They'd destroyed the previously set traps, especially those that'd caught game, recreating them in a location very far away from the original. The beasts of the mountains were intelligent creatures—they would decrease their wandering in an area where one of their kind had been injured.

Lu Yun also returned with a full basket in tow. All sorts of herbs poked out of it, but he wasn't sure what they could be used for. He had to analyze them through slow and steady experimentation and deduction.

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"Stop!" Ah Zhuang suddenly ordered in a low tone, causing the entire group to halt.

"What is it, Brother Ah Zhuang?" some of the young men asked.

"Something's wrong... there's something here!" His expression was uncommonly serious, leading to similar changes in the others.

"Bird chirps, bug chitters, and the sounds of little animals have all disappeared. It looks like something big's showed up," mumbled Lu Yun.

Ah Zhuang looked in surprise at the newcomer. He hadn't thought that this pampered young man would be able to immediately determine the situation at hand.

"The smell of blood is in the air, that thing's probably injured." Lu Yun's nose twitched. Though he'd lost his cultivation, his five senses were still unusually sensitive.

"Injured?" Ah Zhuang's eyes lit up. "Then what are we waiting for? Brothers, come with me! There's easy pickings to be found!"

"Hold on!" Lu Yun quickly cut them off. "There are some things you can't handle even if they're injured. We should take a good look at what it is first. Otherwise, we won't even know how we happened to die!"

He really had gotten a great shock from their impulsiveness, and he even wanted to describe them as all brawn and no brains. He didn't know how strong Ah Zhuang and the others were, but caution was the parent of safety.

Ah Zhuang blinked and thought carefully. "That's true, the pixiu outside the village can eat us all even if it had only one breath left... I'll go take a look!" He gestured for the others to stay put and headed forward.

"It's on your left..." Lu Yun rubbed his forehead to Ah Zhuang's embarrassment. "I'll go with you!"

Sudden inspiration struck him and he placed the little fox on the ground, tagging along closely behind Ah Zhuang. Unwilling to risk herself, the little fox stayed right where she'd been left, with the hunters.

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"Hey Shan, I didn't think that you'd be so brave as to come with me. Aren't you afraid that the beast will swallow you with one gulp?" teased Ah Zhuang as they carefully picked their way toward the unknown creature.

"What am I afraid of? I've got you here." Lu Yun chewed on a strand of grass and slowly swallowed it. A wave of fiery pain rose in his body, but at the same time, he clearly felt his body grow that much

stronger from the pain. This jade-green blade of grass was the first useful thing he'd identified—it was a herb that strengthened the constitution.

A small ball of flame ignited in his dantian a few moments later, and his vanished spirit root actually showed signs of coming back to life!

Falling silent, Ah Zhuang looked at the enormous clearing in front of them. Such a vast expanse of open land was very rare in a dense forest. In Lu Yun's eyes, the clearing looked more like the aftermath of a struggle between two great beings. They'd flattened the surrounding trees and shrubbery, then burned it all.

A thick burnt smell intermixed with the tang of blood wafted from the clearing ahead of them. A large bird measuring thirty-some meters across lay prone in its center. Its body was ripped to pieces, something having torn off its head and wings, but Lu Yun could still identify it.

Dark blue feathers sporting scarlet red patterns covered it, and it had... only one leg!

"A Bi Fang!" both Lu Yun and Ah Zhuang yelled at the same time.

Based on Lu Yun's understanding, the Bi Fang was a legendary divine beast. Mysterious and powerful, it was the perfect basis for a battle formation projection. But now, one that'd been mutilated by one blow sprawled in front of him. He could clearly sense the remaining energy ripples on the divine bird—absolute strength that exceeded peak dao origin realm!

In Ah Zhuang's eyes, the Bi Fang was a vicious beast that heralded great disaster and misfortune. If this bird had made it to the village, all of Ning Village would turn into a sea of flames and nothing would remain of it.

"Um..." He stood dumbly where he was, at a loss of what to do.

"Um what?!" Lu Yun kicked Ah Zhuang in the butt. "This Bi Fang's corpse is full of treasures! Drag it back to the village, chop chop! Hurry up! You go by yourself taking another route, I'll bring the hunting party back along the original path!"

Ah Zhuang shook himself into action. "Oh, right, okay!"

Though the Bi Fang was more than thirty meters long and weighed almost five thousand kilograms, that only made it slightly heavy to him. In the face of Lu Yun's awestruck gaze, Ah Zhuang rolled up his sleeves, shouldered the divine beast, and vanished with a few quick strides.

Swallowing hard, Lu Yun quickly ran back to the hunting party.

"Ah Zhuang's body is on par with a core realm cultivator... and he's reached that without ever having cultivated..." The revelation quite shocked him.

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When the hunting party reached the village, nothing seemed out of the ordinary, and the Bi Fang's body was nowhere to be found. The village chief, Ah Bao, and Ah Zhuang had disappeared.

That didn't bother Lu Yun much. Though he also wanted the divine beast's corpse, he was unable to endure such colossal energy given the current condition of his body.

He lived at the village chief's house, and there was no one home. Upon opening the contents of his basket, Lu Yun cleaned all of his findings and then tasted them one by one. He used what remaining power of formula dao he could access to theorize the properties and uses of these herbs.

"I suddenly feel like I'm Shennong tasting all of the herbs beneath the heavens. ...PAH!! This one's poison, and it's really bad poison!" Just when he'd started daydreaming, the shock of trying acute poison scared any delusions of grandeur out of his mind. He quickly called upon the breathing method and circulated his organs to expel the poison from his mouth.

The breathing method of the five elements was something he'd derived from the world's organs. Its greatest use was to actively call upon the body's organs to expel whatever foreign influence was present.

"The poison properties of this grass... have... something to do with paralysis. It will paralyze the heart in a short amount of time after it reaches the blood and ultimately lead to death. I need to remember all this so that the villagers don't accidentally eat it." Lu Yun grabbed a piece of charcoal from the fire pit in the house and started drawing various diagrams on the ground.

1. Bi Fang is a mythological Chinese bird said to have one leg, but its appearance differs by source.
2. Shennong, variously translated as "Divine Farmer" or "Divine Husbandman", was a mythological Chinese ruler who has become a deity in Chinese folk religion. He is thought to have taught the ancient Chinese not only their practices of agriculture, but also the use of herbal drugs.

Chapter 823: Connate Great Dao

Another month passed.

Although the village chief and Ah Bao didn't return during this time, no one in the village found their absence noteworthy, and life continued as normal.

In the meantime, Lu Yun identified dozens of herbs, very few of which were of any use to him. Qingqiu Mountain possessed more poisonous plants than useful herbs; he was almost fatally poisoned a few times by the sheer multitude of poisonous vegetation. Thankfully, the breathing method he cultivated had enhanced the function of his organs to an unprecedented level.

Moreover, things that countered each other were often found together. Where poisonous plants were, their antidotes were always found less than a kilometer away. Therefore, Lu Yun changed tack from harvesting herbs and testing them back in the village. Instead, he tried them on the spot to discern their properties.

Throughout this process, he found a few poisons that were very helpful to the village. Poison that could cause cardiac paralysis, for example, could be applied to blades or arrows. Once the weapons penetrated a beast's skin, the poison would make quick work of the beast. Better yet, the poison didn't last long despite its potency. It remained in the blood for at most an hour.

He also told the young men of the village which herbs could be used to treat injuries. Skeptical at first, a few trials resulted in delighted surprise that the “weeds” the village newcomer collected were actually effective.

He made a record out of the herbs and poisons he’d identified, putting their appearances and characteristics down as drawings.

The human race of this era had a written language, and everyone in the Ning Village was literate. It posed no trouble for Lu Yun to learn their language and writing system, so he was easily able to make a detailed record of his findings.

Another fifteen days passed. Autumn announced its arrival with gentle breezes and the yellowing of trees as well as other vegetation.

During this time, Lu Yun found more herbs that were useful to him and deduced a number of prescriptions. Consuming the resulting medicines further strengthened his constitution, making him overall much stronger than he’d been before.

Although he still couldn’t rival Ah Zhuang’s ridiculous physique, he was far stronger than regular mortals. It was at this time that the elderly village chief and Ah Bao finally returned from their expedition.

“Brother Lieshan, this is some blood essence that grandpa extracted from the giant bird. You’ll recover fully once you take it!” Ah Bao bounced up to Lu Yun and handed him a clear, ruby-like crystal the size of an infant’s fist which radiated a bit of burning heat.

The little fox had been fast asleep, but woke up with a vigorous swivel of her ears. She almost salivated on the spot at the sight of the Bi Fang blood essence.

Lu Yun turned seriously to the merry village chief and shook his head. “This is too valuable, I can’t accept it.”

“You should, Shan’er. No one in the village has any use of it other than you.” The village chief smiled at him. “I know what you’ve done for us lately. Giving you a bit of blood essence that we have no use for is nothing in comparison.

“If not for you, we wouldn’t know that these seemingly useless weeds can be used to treat illness and help with hunting!”

Lu Yun smiled wryly. He wasn’t actually trying to help anyone but himself; he simply wanted to speed up his recovery so that he could return to the path of cultivation sooner rather than later.

“Then I shall accept the blood essence!” He accepted the gift with solemn gratitude, and Ah Bao’s big eyes creased into two crescents again.

With that, the little fox leapt up from the ground and grabbed the blood crystal from Lu Yun, hugging it tightly to her and refusing to let go.

The strength contained in Bi Fang blood was too wild, so neither Lu Yun nor the little fox could swallow it directly. Instead, they had to slowly absorb its power through the breathing method. Since the little

fox couldn't cultivate here either, she'd learned Lu Yun's breathing, nascent spirit, and body tempering methods for lack of any other skill.

Lu Yun didn't dare pass down the cultivation methods he'd invented in the future to those of this time, lest that action lead to unperceived consequences. He could only take it slow and observe the heavenly dao in the process, trying to figure out where and when he'd been taken.

He was now certain that he'd been transported to the past, to an era much before Zhaoqing's time.

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It was another pleasant autumn day, and Lu Yun was training with his breathing method as usual. A fragrant flow of warmth steadily emerged from his embrace to enter his mouth and nose.

The energy within the Bi Fang blood entered his system and strengthened his constitution in tandem with the rises and falls of his chest.

He suddenly felt a stifling sensation in his chest—something was lodged there. Guided by instinct, he straightened his back and howled piercingly. A ball of tainted air ejected from his mouth and it felt like a weight had suddenly been lifted from him. A refreshing current of air circulated through his body via his meridians.

The Method of Life and Death!

He'd finally overcome that bottleneck and joined the ranks of being a cultivator again!

"As I expected... there's no immortal dao here. It's not the immortal methods that I'm practicing..." Lu Yun fell silent after a long while.

There had been an immortal dao before Emperors Fall. The three founders had read its cadence in the Immortal Myriadtree, the second greatest connate spirit root, and created their immortal dao accordingly. There had also been immortals and cultivators then; they'd just been in the minority.

Now, however, Lu Yun saw no immortal dao lingering between heaven and earth, despite becoming a cultivator again. It would appear that this was an era before even the three founders, when even the immortal dao hadn't been born yet.

If one were to give a name to this era, it would be the "Prehistoric Era". It likely predated the era of human dao.

Such is the most primal great dao between heaven and earth. The living is blind to the way of cultivation... The great dao of this world has been created by the divine spirits. The so-called altar spirits are the ancient divine spirits. Lu Yun exhaled deeply.

If I can come here, then there must be a way back! Yuchi Tianhuang went back in time to an era a hundred and fifty thousand years ago, but still came back safely. I'll be able to find my way back once I'm powerful enough! His determination to return to his proper time and place was further cemented.

Although the Tome of Life and Death hadn't returned to him, his Method of Life and Death had begun circulating again. The treasure must be hidden somewhere in his body. He would be able to activate it again once he gained enough power.

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“Hahaha! From youth arise heroes!” a hearty voice suddenly rang out. “When I hurried to Ning Village this morning, I didn’t expect to witness little brother here breaking the postnatal shackles and ascending to the great connate dao! Felicitations are in order!”

His reverie broken, Lu Yun looked up to see a noble-looking young man dressed in luxurious furs. The young man was watching him with an infectious smile.

Chapter 824: The Yan Tribe

“Who is it?” Startled, Lu Yun jumped backward.

The young man looked roughly twenty-eight years old and was quite handsome. Adorned in luxurious furs, he didn’t look like someone from the mountains. Also, he moved like a wraith. Lu Yun had no idea when he’d showed up next to him.

“No need to worry, my friend. I’m Jiang Ba of the Yan Tribe, an old friend of Ning Village!” He reached out to clap Lu Yun on the shoulder.

Lu Yun wanted to shy away, but he discovered with great shock that he couldn’t avoid Jiang Ba’s hand! He could only remain put and permit him to pat Lu Yun as he would.

“Oh? My friend seems to have a treasure on you.” Jiang Ba’s eyebrow arched gently and he swiped a hand at Lu Yun’s embrace, bringing out the crystallized Bi Fang blood essence.

“You have quite the luck, my friend, this is Bi Fang blood essence! No wonder you’re able to set foot onto the great dao at your young age and become a cultivator.” Jiang Ba laughed heartily and returned the item.

This meant he wasn’t much interested in the blood essence, or he never would’ve returned it. Unbidden, a less-than-good first impression of this Jiang Ba rose in Lu Yun’s mind. But he says he’s from the Yan Tribe... is it that Yan Tribe??

“Hahaha, and I wondered who it was. So it’s Brother Jiang Ba from the Yan Tribe!” Ah Zhuang roared with laughter when he walked out of the village. “That’s right, it’s about time you came by if I count the days!”

Arms spread wide open, Ah Zhuang grabbed the other for a bear hug. A trace of hard-to-detect disdain flashed through Jiang Ba’s eyes, but he remained grinning merrily and hugged Ah Zhuang tightly.

“Brother Ah Zhuang is impressive alright, to kill a Bi Fang!” he praised joyously.

Ah Zhuang’s expression turned solemn and he lowered his voice, “Brother Jiang Ba is joking at my expense. How could I possibly kill a divine beast? Besides, why would there be Bi Fang along the outskirts of Qingqiu Mountain?”

The villagers didn’t know about the Bi Fang. Ah Zhuang had taken it elsewhere and the village chief and tribute spirit had taken care of it.

Ning Village was exceedingly weak, and their strongest member Ah Zhuang wasn't a cultivator either. Once word spread about the Bi Fang corpse, it'd be a devastating blow to the tiny village.

"Eh? Ahahaha—right, right you are. My mistake," chuckled Jiang Ba. "Ah yes, who might this friend be...? I didn't see this young hero when I visited Ning Village last year."

"This is Shan, full name Lie Shan! He's a distant relative from Ah Mu's maternal side, and came to us for shelter after his village suffered a disaster."

"Oh?" Jiang Ba took a close look at Lu Yun. "Hahaha, Lie Shan, is it? Well met! I'm going to pay my respects to granduncle and see if I can change his mind. If he's willing to return to the tribe, the villagers won't have to spend their days in fear and suffering at Qingqiu Mountain." He walked into the village with a broad smile.

Numerous exquisitely-made wagons trundled into the village from outside, filled with all sorts of grain, cloth, and metal tools. Ah Zhuang quickly called over the young men of the village to help put the items away.

When Lu Yun heard the introduction of "full name Lie Shan", his heart spasmed painfully.

"Full name Lie Shan', fuck me! Why didn't I think about this earlier?" he grumbled softly. "Yan Tribe, Jiang Ba? Fuck me sideways man! What kind of era is this?!?!"

His joy of breaking through a great obstacle and returning to the path of cultivation was utterly obliterated by what had just happened. He really regretted randomly calling himself Lieshan!

Ah Zhuang had just turned him into the Lie Shan with a casual introduction.

However, it wasn't until now that he realized this tiny Ning Village was a branch of the Yan Tribe. Village Chief Jiang Ti was the younger brother of the tribe chief, and had taken a group of tribesmen with him after the two had a falling out. He left the tribe on the banks of Wei River and settled down at the foot of Qingqiu Mountain, whereupon he built Ning Village. The villagers were also of the Jiang branch; Ah Zhuang's full name would be Jiang Zhuang.

After breaking away from the tribe, the village's circumstances were extraordinarily difficult at first, particularly when winter arrived. When the cold winds blew and the beasts in the mountain hibernated or migrated, that lack of available food for Ning Village meant hunger was on the menu.

Thankfully, the Yan chief constantly thought of his younger brother. He sent a convoy of resources every winter to help the village survive the cold.

Jiang Ti was an exceedingly stubborn character. To accept these deliveries went beyond his character, but he had no choice if the village was to safely weather the season. However, receiving them for free crossed his bottom line, so he always prepared things in exchange. He'd collect a year's worth of hunting and give it to his fellow tribesman as a form of barter.

Mount Qingqiu produced plentiful commodities such as animal pelts, animal bones, and other curious odds and ends. Those of the Yan Tribe naturally wouldn't refuse this return gift, and so the tradition continued for several decades.

Every year, someone from the tribe also came to convince Jiang Ti to move back to Wei River. And indeed, his anger had abated a long time ago after all these years. However, he couldn't find it within himself to set aside his pride; he wouldn't go back if his brother didn't personally come to request his return.

Given that the tribe chief and Jiang Ti were blood brothers, they shared the same temper and obstinacy. Likewise, the tribe chief couldn't bear to be the first to blink, so the standoff continued for all these years.

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"Hahahaha—there's ale, fine ale!" Ah Zhuang smacked a seal off an earthen jug and sniffed appreciatively at the fragrant bouquet of alcohol. Hugging the jug to him, he swiftly vanished out of sight.

Lu Yun approached an enormous wagon at random, scanning the bags of linen piled up in its bed. Sneaking a peek down one of them, he glimpsed yellow millet.

"So millet already existed in this period of time?" Out of curiosity, Lu Yun grabbed a handful and brought them to his nose for a deep sniff. "Ah... of course, it's wild. We can eat this, but there's not much nutritional value to it." He shook his head slightly.

"But these can be used as seeds. If planted in an appropriate location in the springtime, we'll be able to cultivate real grain out of it." Lu Yun stroked his chin. "Lie Shan... oh fuck, he's known as the Divine Farmer and taught agriculture to the people. I haven't really turned into him, have I?"

"But Lie Shan was the chief of the Yan Tribe, I'm just an outsider. This should just be some crazy coincidence."

Hummmm.

An enormous aura exploded from the sky as a terrifying surge of monster spirit energy descended over Ning Village.

"How dare you!" Trying his best to convince his granduncle, Jiang Ba jumped up in fury when he sensed the surge. "The Jiangs of the Yan Tribe are here, what lowly monster dares stir up trouble?!"

Jiang Ba hovered in midair and stared fixedly at the enormous creature in front of him.

"The Jiangs of the Yan Tribe? Aren't you something now!" sounded a gentle voice with a twang of perverse violence. A nine-tailed fox the size of a small mountain stood in the air. "How dare humans come to Qingqiu Mountain and enslave the descendants of Tushan? Do you want to die, or cease living?!"

1. Later generations believe Lie Shan to be the mythical Yan Emperor in Chinese mythology. A long debate has existed over whether or not the Yan Emperor was the same person as the previously introduced Shennong. An academic conference held in China in 2004 achieved general consensus that the Yan Emperor and Shennong were the same person. The Yan Tribe is where the legendary emperor originates from.

Chapter 825: Ghosts in Qingqiu Mountain

It was at this moment that Lu Yun finally understood what monster spirits were. Compared to the specimen in front of him, the ones in the current world of immortals were all overly domesticated. Even the two scarlet apes of Levitating Island were nothing compared to this snow-white fox the size of a small mountain in front of him.

“Ah, so it’s Senior Tushan. This humble fellow is Jiang Ba and offers my humble respects!” Jiang Ba hastily bowed, dismissing his overweening bearing from moments ago.

“How dare Jiangs of the Yan Tribe enslave a Tushan descendant?! Do you wish to be wiped out to the last??” The enormous white fox wouldn’t let the point go and brought down a wave of sharp killing intent onto Ning Village.

The tiny mountain village swayed as if a skiff in the storm, ready to capsize and break apart into pieces at any time.

“ROAR!!” A furious snarl sounded at this time, and a terrifying presence rose from the south of the village, not too far from where they were.

An enormous beast with a horn on its head slowly reared up, displaying the body of a panther and tail of a dragon. Golden and jade scales covered its form as it rose to a full three hundred meters tall. It too emanated a dreadful lethal presence; its faintly golden eyes flashed with killing intent as it stared at the white fox in midair.

“Pixiu!” The fox’s expression changed. The presence from the pixiu was too horrifying as it completely dominated its own.

“It’s that pixiu! People say that granduncle has one of those with him...” Jiang Ba’s expression shifted as well. He didn’t even register as an ant when compared to a pixiu or a Tushan fox. Any random piece of fur from them could crush him to death a hundred times over.

“Tushan, what evidence do you have that a Ning resident has enslaved one of your foxes?” Jiang Ba raised his head confidently when he saw that overwhelming reinforcement for his side had arrived.

“My kin saw a pureblood Tushan fox following a young man from your village. If it wasn’t for him enslaving the fox, why would one of my own accompany a human?” Since this matter had to do with its kind, the white fox wasn’t backing down, even though the pixiu had shown itself. A pureblood Tushan fox was at stake!

Though Tushan was the ancestor of all foxes, there were very few purebloods of its kind in the world these days. To think that one of them would appear at the foot of Qingqiu Mountain, but be enslaved by a human youth!

Village chief Jiang Ti looked at Lu Yun. There was indeed a white Tushan fox by the young man’s side, but they didn’t look like spirit pet and master. Rather, they seemed more like two friends fallen on hard times.

A treasure like Bi Fang blood essence was normally tucked out of sight for one’s enjoyment alone. However, Lie Shan shared the precious item with the little fox without the slightest hint of reluctance.

“Yip yip yip!” The little fox burrowed out of Lu Yun’s clothes and yipped at the white fox in midair, seemingly protesting its current interpretation of things.

“Hmm?” The white fox frowned and suddenly gave voice to a howl. Fox bays and howls rose and fell in answer from the mountain forest.

Jiang Ti tensed and the pixiu grew nervous as well. It seemed that the white fox had mobilized every monster spirit under its command and surrounded the village. Those visiting from the Yan Tribe had complexions that resembled ash.

Tushan foxes were a great tribe of the wilderness and the Yan Tribe just a strong clan of the human race. In a world like this, humans were the lowliest link of the food chain. All of humanity wouldn’t be able to provoke Tushan, not to mention a mere Yan Tribe!

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“Why don’t you go with it? Haven’t you wanted to find them all along?” Lu Yun caressed the little fox’s head and whispered softly to it.

“It also wants to kill you!” answered the little fox’s soft and sweet voice.

Lu Yun blinked. “Wait, so you regained speech a long time ago.”

The little fox rolled her eyes at him and whispered back, “I can go with it, but the white fox is set on killing you.”

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead.

“I’ve gotten the hang of things here. In this era, humans aren’t on equal footing with monster spirits at all. It’s an unconscionable crime if humans dare enslave monster spirits—the tribe will be wiped out for it. The time of human dao that you know of hasn’t arrived yet,” relayed Miao solemnly. “With the pixiu here, the Tushan will probably let Ning Village off the hook. But you’ll have to die today!”

Lu Yun frowned slightly.

“Hand over the Tushan descendent and the young man. Otherwise, we will destroy this human village today even with the pixiu present,” sounded another voice.

A second Tushan fox padded out of the forest. This one was golden in color and its energy even more robust than the white fox before it. The pixiu had entered the village proper and let loose with its own tremendous energy, offsetting the enormous aura from the two Tushan.

“How dare you throw your weight around, Tushan foxes!” snapped out a clear voice. Amid the gaping stares of Lu Yun and the other villagers, Ah Bao walked on thin air from the mountain to the rear of Ning Village.

A haze of light bloomed from her, enveloping the village.

“Ah Bao?!” Lu Yun goggled. He knew Ah Bao as an ordinary girl, but right now, she was releasing tremendous holy strength that was magnitudes greater than what he’d ever sensed from the celestial emperors. She was plainly a peak powerhouse!

“She’s the Ning Village tribute spirit, that mysterious sacrificial spirit!” Jiang Ba shook all over. He knew that the village possessed a guardian spirit, but he’d never met it before. He never thought that the spirit would be Jiang Ti’s granddaughter, the pure and innocent little girl!

She was ridiculously powerful, even more so than the Yan tribal spirit. No wonder a tiny Ning Village could thrive and prosper in Qingqiu monster spirit territory. They had a pixiu for a guard and a tribute spirit holding down the fort. They didn’t have anything to fear even though there were no cultivators among their ranks!

“Ah Bao—” called out the village chief.

“I know what I’m doing, grandpa.” The little girl shook her head and directed her gaze at the foxes. “I won’t stop her from leaving if the little fox wants to go with you, but if you dare harm a single hair on Brother Lieshan’s head, I’ll have you experience the might of the mountain ghosts.”

RUMBLE.

The entire mountain shook as sudden dismay rippled through the Tushan foxes. Mountain ghosts!

They’d never dreamed that a tiny human village would be worshipping a mountain ghost for their tribute spirit!

Mountain ghosts were both mountain gods and an existence that exceeded them. They were the legendary divine kings! If this tribute spirit dared call itself one, then it’d surely reached that realm.

There were mountain ghosts in Qingqiu Mountain, and they’d become a human village’s tribute spirit! This was a tremendous blow to the resident monster spirits.

“I’m willing to go with you!” the little fox jumped out and shouted loudly. “But you can’t touch the human. He saved me and protected me, and he never enslaved me!”

She had no desire for the mountain ghost to smack all of the Tushan foxes out of existence.

Chapter 826: Departure

The Tushan foxes retreated. A pixiu might not be big enough a deterrent, but the presence of a mountain ghost was enough to make them think better of killing Lu Yun.

“You have to come get me in Qingqiu Mountain if you find the way home!” the little fox said pitifully. “I miss home, and I miss Yue Longsha and Zhu Yan...”

“I won’t abandon you.” Lu Yun petted her head while she undid the bell on her neck and handed it to Lu Yun.

“This is my greatest treasure,” she whispered into Lu Yun’s ear. “You can borrow it for now... Don’t forget to give it back to me once we go home!”

“This bell...” Lu Yun shook the bell gently. It jingled when tied to the little fox’s neck, but was silent in his hands no matter how hard he shook it.

Miao’s departure left a profound sense of loss in Lu Yun’s heart. She was his only comfort in an era to which they both didn’t belong, the only thing that was familiar to him. He was at a loss of where he

should go and what he should do after she left. Should he find his way back home, or should he do his best to survive in this era? Survive until his present finally arrived...

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Though they'd completed their mission, Jiang Ba and the other members of the Yan Tribe didn't leave. Putting away his air of slight arrogance, Jiang Ba spent every moment hanging out with Ah Zhuang and the others, calling them brothers and seeking out every opportunity to approach Ah Bao.

Ah Bao didn't care for them and preferred sticking with Lu Yun.

"Big brother Lieshan, can this medicine of cooked plants really cure grandpa's injury?" Ah Bao asked curiously, squatting by Lu Yun's side with her eyes fixed on the clay jug stacked over the fire.

"Grandpa village chief has damaged his meridians, which hinders the circulation of inner energy," Lu Yun explained with a smile. "He'll recover fully after taking my medicine for a few days!"

Upon connecting with the connate great dao and becoming a cultivator, Lu Yun had recovered some of his consciousness and combat arts.

He could tell that Jiang Ti was a great cultivator more powerful than Jiang Ba, but unfortunately, his meridians were deeply injured. He'd lost his cultivation as a result of obstructed circulation of inner energy, which was how he ended up becoming a regular old man.

Not even Ah Bao could cure him.

She was the tribute spirit of Ning Village, but could only treat simple wounds despite her tremendous power. Injuries deep enough to hurt meridians or organs left her stumped.

Lu Yun, on the other hand, could cure such injuries with no difficulty at all. The village chief's condition wasn't serious by his standards. A few portions of medicine would be enough to restore the injured and blocked meridians, enabling the chief to recover his cultivation.

In this era, no one knew anything about medicinal ingredients, let alone more advanced disciplines such as pill and medicine dao. Lu Yun had been hesitating over whether he should pass on the more sophisticated practices, such as the cultivation methods, combat arts, and supplemental paths he knew.

He wasn't a contemporary and feared that passing down his knowledge would lead to serious consequences that not only influenced the future, but changed the very course of history. Things might go completely awry due to his interference.

Besides, he knew almost nothing about this era.

There were primeval myths on Earth that'd survived the passage of time, but those were nothing more than snippets of legends, completed by the imagination of later generations.

Here, Lu Yun mustn't treat those tales as facts, or he would die a terrible death. His ultimate goal was to go home and recover his cultivation and replica. Then, he would make his way to the West Sea again and see if he could find the ruin with the chaotic flow of time.

He had another strand of hope available to him: once he found Xing Chen, he would ascend to the great emperor realm. Before Emperors Fall, Empress Timelight and Empress Vastspace had once travelled to the future by following the river of time.

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“Amazing! Who would’ve thought that these useless flowers and plants would create such wonders?” Ah Bao knelt on the ground with a hopeful expression on her face. Finding out her identity didn’t change the way the villagers treated Ah Bao. They still saw her as the granddaughter of the village chief, rather than a spirit they should fear.

“Brother Shan, Ah Bao!” Ah Zhuang called out to them. “Chief said he’s decided to go back to the Yan Tribe!”

“What?” Lu Yun started. “Return to the Yan Tribe?”

“That’s right!” Ah Zhuang cackled. “He said that after taking Brother Shan’s... medicine? That’s right. After taking your medicine, he found himself cured. He’s going to return to the tribe to settle a score with their chief. He sent me to tell you to pack up. Let’s return to the tribe together!”

Ah Zhuang was overjoyed. Although he was born and raised in the woods of Qingqiu Mountain, he’d always yearned for the big villages and tribes beyond the mountain.

“Yay, wonderful!” Ah Bao leapt up. “I’ve always wanted to see the world outside!”

Although she was a divine spirit of Qingqiu Mountain, she was a mountain ghost instead of a regular mountain god. The latter couldn’t leave the mountain that mothered them, while the former had long broken free of the restraints from the land and become a free spirit.

Lu Yun wasn’t going to say no, of course. He wanted to see his ancestor—the Yan Tribe—for himself.

Although he was cultivating a primitive great dao rather than the immortal dao, his cultivation had recently progressed at incredible speed.

The Method of Life and Death was a connate cultivation method that the Tome of Life and Death had tailor-made for him. It could be cultivated under the immortal dao and also away from it. Even when brought under this primitive dao, this method was still the greatest cultivation method between heaven and earth.

In only a few days, the dense, pure energy in the area not only helped him stabilize his cultivation realm, but also pushed it several levels higher. At least, Jiang Ba wasn’t as great a threat to him now.

It made sense to Lu Yun that Jiang Ti would bring the villagers back to the Yan Tribe upon completely recovering. Apparently, the tribe was locked in a war against a neighboring tribe and had suffered great casualties.

Jiang Ti naturally wasn’t going to stand by and do nothing after regaining his strength. Ah Bao and the pixiu were great assets in war as well. Although Jiang Ti didn’t want the pure-hearted Ah Bao to become involved in wars of the human race, she would serve as a great source of intimidation.

The next day under Jiang Ba's delighted gaze, the five hundred and some members of the village packed up and left their home of a few decades.

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Lu Yun turned back and sighed faintly when he looked upon Qingqiu Mountain, which lay across the terrain to their southeast. He'd entered the mountain to bid the little fox farewell last night.

A piercing yowl suddenly rang from the yellowed woods at this time.

"Don't worry, I won't leave you behind," Lu Yun said gently, gazing at the faint white figure. "The day we become powerful enough to gain a foothold here is the day we meet again."

Chapter 827: Ruthless

The great wilderness was uncivilized territory, full of mountains and unruly countryside, wastelands and deserts. There wasn't a proper path to be found in any of its expanse; everyone had to make do with the most primitive method to determine direction—referencing the stars, moon, and sun in the sky.

Qingqiu Mountain was situated in the east of the great wilderness, and Wei River to its southwest, putting it in the center of the land. It was now well into autumn with yellowed flora as far as the eye could see. Chilly breezes swept across the land, leaving hints of desolation in their wake.

The Ning Village entourage swung southwest with great fanfare. The further south they went, the warmer the days became and some greenery dotted the withered grass and trees along the way. Ferocious beasts abounded upon their route, all of them exotic and strange. Some creatures that only existed in myths and legends also appeared more than once to Lu Yun's shocked eyes.

However, given that their retinue boasted of a pixiu constantly flaring with a savage presence unique to a divine beast, the feral beasts were always scared off before they approached the group of humans.

Lu Yun wasn't in a good mood these days.

Three days into Ning Village's migration, they'd come across more than one completely decimated village. The same fate had also befallen some of the larger tribes. Corpse-strewn grounds hemmed in rivers of blood, and wild beasts had already scavenged most of the bodies.

With the advent of winter, hungry animals prowled desperately for food. Humans were weedy and fragile, born without great strength. In the great wilderness, humans were the lowest on the totem pole.

"This is the great wilderness." Jiang Ti was quite used to sights like these. "If it wasn't for Ah Bao by my side silently keeping watch over the village, Ning Village would've been razed to the ground a long time ago."

He read sympathy and anguish in Lie Shan's eyes—which astounded him. That kind of look shouldn't appear in a human's eyes, because the race was long used to this kind of lifestyle.

"In my homeland, though humans aren't the strongest race beneath the heavens, they absolutely have the right to be on equal footing with other life forms..." Determination flashed through Lu Yun's eyes. "Humanity shouldn't be like this..."

“Is big brother Lieshan’s homeland Nephrite Major?” Ah Bao sidled up to him.

“Mm.”

“Shan’er, humans are different from the others,” Jiang Ti sighed. In his eyes, Lie Shan must be a great expert from an unknown tribe. Only those who wielded great combat arts could contend with the heavens and fight off fierce floods and savage beasts.

“Ordinary humans don’t have sharp claws or agile bodies. We’re powerless in front of the mighty monster spirits and vicious beasts. The cultivation methods that our tribute spirits pass on help us grow stronger, but cultivation itself is too difficult. Very few pureblood humans reach its peak, to a level where they can match true powerhouses like the Tushan.”

Jiang Ti sighed, and Jiang Ba looked downcast as well. The Yan Tribe was one of the greatest human factions and possessed its greatest expert, but they were still nothing compared to the Tushan clan of Qingqiu Mountain.

Lu Yun remained silent. For humans, the great wilderness was far too harsh.

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After seven more days, their surrounding vegetation turned green and the temperature grew warmer.

“Hahaha—humans!” A piercing shriek rang out ahead of them, followed shortly by wild wolves flooding out of nowhere. They were the size of wild oxen and sizzled with fiery sparks.

“It’s been a long time since we’ve tasted human flesh...” Their leader was an enormous wolf with a sole horn on its head. Salivating over the sight, it stared unblinkingly at the Ning Village group.

“They’re flamewolves!” Color drained from Jiang Ba’s face.

Flamewolves were one of the fiercest wild beasts in the great wilderness, and each one of them as strong as an initiate in the connate great dao. Their leader was undoubtedly stronger by many times over. They’d surely already sensed the pixiu, but they’d chosen to approach nonetheless.

“ROAR!” The pixiu snarled and stalked menacingly out of the entourage.

“It’s a pixiu alright!” The leader’s brilliantly green eyes glinted ruthlessly to see a challenge present itself. It wasn’t a match for the pixiu, but it also wasn’t afraid in the slightest. “Leave three hundred humans behind and I’ll let you go. If not... I’d like to see how many you can save!”

Leering threateningly at the pixiu, the wolf king faced off against its opponent.

“Grandpa, you’re not recovered yet. Let me!” Ah Bao quickly intercepted Jiang Ti upon seeing that he was going to take the field himself.

Delight brushed over Jiang Ba’s face when he saw the girl’s actions. Ah Bao was a mountain ghost, one many degrees stronger than the Yan Tribe’s tribute spirit. With her in the mix, this pack of flamewolves was nothing to worry about.

“Don’t you do anything either!” Lu Yun quickly stopped Ah Bao. “Your identity is too important and you shouldn’t reveal it so easily. You’ll attract a lot of wrong attention that way!”

Though she was a mountain ghost on par with a human king, she was also as innocent as the day she was born. Nothing but ridiculous strength at her command, she didn't have any combat arts in her arsenal, nor did she possess any real battle experience. If the experts that Jiang Ti mentioned came calling, she'd be in great trouble.

The Tushan of Qingqiu Mountain had backed off because she was that mountain's ghost. If the two had erupted in open hostility that day, the foxes still would've been able to destroy her if they'd put everything on the line.

"But big brother Lieshan..."

"I got it." He comforted Ah Bao and walked up next to the pixiu. "Do you flamewolves want to see your bloodline wiped out?" He flipped his hand to manifest a tuft of white fur sparkling with silver.

"A Tushan token! You're under the protection of the Tushan foxes!" A shudder ran through the wolf king when he saw the tuft of fur. "No wonder you dared to traverse the mountain and engage in a large-scale migration like this..."

Its gaze grew uncertain. It was afraid of the Tushan, but it didn't want to give up all this food just like this. All of the villages and small tribes in the vicinity had been picked clean, and they didn't dare attack a large tribe... It was sheer serendipity that a bunch of humans had fallen into their lap today!

"Qingqiu Mountain is just a thousand short kilometers away from here. Do you think they really don't know what you're doing right now?" Lu Yun waved the tuft of fur again.

Naturally, this was a gift from Miao. As a rare pureblood nine-tailed fox, she was feted as a princess among the Tushan. Their patriarch would do whatever she said.

"We go!" Though highly reluctant, the wolf king quickly waved his pack mates off. They were still in Qingqiu monster spirit territory, and the Tushan were their king.

Chapter 828: Only When I Become History Can I Write History

Jiang Ba and his tribesmen were all cultivators, having already set foot onto the connate great dao. They'd taken only ten days to travel from Wei River to Qingqiu Mountain.

The villagers, however, were ordinary mortals with frail bodies and their speed more than ten times slower than Jiang Ba's. Thankfully, the Yan Tribe had been alerted ahead of time and sent their people out to welcome the delegation. They hewed a primitive dirt path through the wild forest, but it still took the villagers three entire months to reach the tribe's camping grounds.

They made it just before the worst of winter arrived, running into many troubles and setbacks along the way. Danger visited them often, and many fell sick or were injured. It was only due to Ah Bao's presence and Lu Yun's medicines that no lives were lost.

Lu Yun didn't stop identifying various herbs along the way, making useful discoveries often or labeling new poisons. After witnessing the marvel of his medicines, the Yan tribespeople wholeheartedly supported his actions. They even relaxed their pace so they could bring Lu Yun to patches filled with a variety of plant life.

But more often than not, when they saw Lie Shan foaming at the mouth from yet another poisonous plant, they felt a strange feeling arise in their heart.

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The rippling waters of Wei River were close at hand, and the Yan Tribe lived along its shores.

“Hahaha my younger brother, I’m the winner in the end!” Hearty laughter traveled in from the distance to the ears of the villagers.

A middle-aged man without a single wrinkle creasing his face stepped out, wearing cotton clothes that bulged with muscles. He rushed over to Jiang Ti for a tight hug. The sight shocked the Ning villagers—this thirty-some year old man was their chief’s older brother?

“Hahaha, my dear brother, I’m still young, but you’ve gotten old! You’re so old now!” The Yan chief took another close look at the brother he hadn’t laid eyes on for several decades and laughed uproariously again.

“Hmph.” Jiang Ti snorted and refused to answer. However, the tribe chief didn’t find this lack of response awkward or irritating. He threw a friendly arm around Jiang Ti’s shoulders and welcomed the villagers into the tribe.

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Bonfires sprang up when night fell, illuminating all of the campground. All sorts of delicious meat sizzled and dripped fat and oil onto the flames. The Yan Tribe was a large faction with roughly thirty thousand people, and on this night, they danced and sang by the bonfires to welcome the Ning villagers home.

Such were the banquets of a primitive society.

“The tribe’s chief is called Shennong?” Lu Yun’s eyes lit up when he heard the name.

“That’s right! The chiefs of the Yan Tribe are always called Shennong—that’s one of the most esteemed titles of humanity!” Jiang Ba took a seat next to Lu Yun, the two of them sitting by an enormous bonfire, and brought the young man up to speed about the tribe.

Lu Yun nodded slightly. “I see... then, are there any other human titles just as venerated as Shennong?”

“Yes, the chief of the Xiong Tribe by the banks of the Ji River is called Xuanyuan. The first Xuanyuan invented the wagons we use for transport! But... our Shennong discovered grains that we can eat and saved countless lives that way. So that definitely makes him better than Xuanyuan!

“There’s also Youchao, Suiren, Cangjie... they’re all saints who have done a great deal for humanity, so they’re listed with Shennong and Xuanyuan!” Solemn respect appeared on Jiang Ba’s face when he recited these names.

Lu Yun nodded slowly as well. It’s no exaggeration and completely befitting to label these people as saints.

“But there are two more saints that, though they’re not human, we show them the same respect as we do for those I listed earlier! They saved humanity from great peril during multiple disasters, and their names are Wahuang and Fuxi!”

Jiang Ba tutted appreciatively. “Wahuang and Fuxi are both descendants of great connate gods, but they chose to look after humans in our darkest age so that we would survive and prosper in the great wilderness...”

Listening quietly to Jiang Ba’s stories, Lu Yun suddenly grasped something in this moment.

I want to record history and document all of these happenings that no one knows anything about so that later generations will learn of them. ...but aren’t I in a span of unknown history right now?

Enlightenment hit him over the head, abruptly shifting his mentality.

No part of history is more real than a portion that I’ve lived through myself. To me, these times right now are in the past, and I’m living them again. Therefore, nothing I do will change history!

Spontaneous comprehension opened up his thoughts. A tiny ruin in the West Sea couldn’t have sent him to an unknown era of gods and mythology, to a time where he stood side-by-side with so many legendary figures. Only the Tome of Life and Death could’ve done so!

Since I’ve come here and coincidentally become the Lie Shan, let me imitate him and taste all of the plants beneath the heavens. Let me advocate the practice of agriculture and see what I can make of myself! Only when I become history can I write history!

Lu Yun’s soaring ambitions were thoroughly ignited, sweeping away the helpless and lost miasma around him.

“You seem to have changed, big brother Lieshan!” Ah Bao blinked her bright eyes at him. “I used to think you were so far away from me.”

“And now?” Lu Yun tousled her head smilingly.

“Hmm... you’re very, very close, like you’ve become more real.” Eyes curved into crescents, Ah Bao happily rubbed her face against Lu Yun’s collar, conveniently wiping off all her grease and food stains onto his clothes.

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Several elders such as Shennong and Jiang Ti sat in the middle of the tribe.

“Let me tell you something, brother!” Shennong adopted a mysterious tone. “I discovered a mysterious grass recently that can help wounds recover faster! If people in the tribe are injured, we can muddle that grass and spread it over the wound. They’ll be good as new after a few days.

“It’s not as good as what the tribute spirit can do, but there’s so much of the grass lying around! You know as well as I do that the tribute spirit’s strength is limited and it can’t save ordinary tribespeople all the time...”

Finished with his grand reveal, Shennong looked smugly at Jiang Ti.

“Do you mean this kind of grass, big brother?” Jiang Ti reached into his pockets and brought out a pile of wood pieces.

Roughly a hundred in number, they were the size of a palm, light, and very sturdy. All sorts of plant depictions could be found in them; detailed descriptions of their characteristics, purpose, and usage methods were recorded next to the drawings.

Jiang Ti selected one of them and gave it to Shennong, promptly shocking his brother into complete silence.

Chapter 829: Things Have Gotten Out of Control

Shennong’s breathing grew heavy as he looked at the small piece of wood. He then snatched the other pieces from his brother’s hand and peered at them closely. Meanwhile, the elders by the bonfire ceased conversing; judging from Shennong’s expression, something big was about to happen.

“Brother of mine!” Shennong jerked his head up. “Are these all... real? You must know that there are many poisonous grasses in the mountain. If we get any of them wrong, someone will die for it!”

“The poisonous plants and herbs recorded here were all personally tasted by the child called Lie Shan. He’s labeled which are poisonous and which aren’t. The one in your hand can be used in medicine, and these other ones are poisonous!”

“It’s an amazing thing, really. These herbs or poisonous grasses result in a marvelous variety of different effects if they’re paired in different ways...” Jiang Ti waxed eloquent. “It was Lie Shan who cured me of my injuries with these herbs.”

Shennong shot to his feet. “Where’s Lie Shan? Have him come here... no, that’s not right. I’ll go see him!”

“I’ll take you to him!” A victorious smile spread across Jiang Ti’s face as he took his brother’s arm and guided him in Lu Yun’s direction.

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Everyone rose to their feet when Shennong arrived. The chief held absolute power and status in the tribe and had to be accorded all due respect.

“Lie Shan greets the chief!” Slightly confused, Lu Yun looked at Jiang Ti standing next to Shennong.

“Did you write all these?” Shennong shoved the wooden pieces in front of Lu Yun.

“Well, yes...” he’d just started replying when the chief suddenly bent at the waist and bowed at Lu Yun.

“Lie Shan, you have done a great deed for all of humanity. Please receive my gratitude!”

Lu Yun almost jumped out of his skin and subconsciously dodged to the side. This was Shennong, the ancestor of all Chinese! He would never dare receive this kind of honor from the great ancestor!

However, a tremendous forcefield barreled out of Shennong and nailed Lu Yun to where he was standing, forcing him to accept three bows from the chief. Not only was he scared out of his wits, so were the tribespeople next to him.

"I now declare that when I am old and infirm, when I can no longer perform the duties of chief, Lie Shan will be the next Shennong and chief of the Yan Tribe!" shouted Shennong.

"This won't do, chief!"

"The matter of succession is a very important one, it can't be decided so rashly like this!"

"Please reconsider, chief!"

The tribe erupted in an uproar the moment Shennong's announcement rang out. What had been a picture of harmony, of song and dance, immediately turned gravely tense. The air hummed with a tension, the kind found when swords were unsheathed and bows drawn.

Only those with great virtue and merit could occupy the position of tribal chief. Each generation of Shennong experienced ferocious competition before the final victor emerged. Never had one been decided beforehand!

Shennong's decision violated custom, but he was a man of his word. He quelled the emotional undercurrents with a wave of his hand, and the altar at the center of the tribe flared with strong mental ripples. Those came from the tribe's tribute spirit.

Everyone fell silent, but they no longer looked at Lu Yun and the Ning villagers with as much friendliness. Shennong didn't care about that, he grabbed Lu Yun's hand and left the scene in a hurry.

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"Chief, I think we need to further discuss me becoming the next Shennong." Lu Yun looked wryly at the fervent ancestor in front of him, reluctance rising from the bottom of his heart. Though he'd made peace with his mental hurdle and was content to stay here to witness history and even create certain aspects of it, it was another thing entirely to become history by stepping into the role of the next Shennong.

"No, this matter is thus decided. Don't worry about the feelings of the tribe. They'll come around and support you on their own after a while!" Shennong shook his head gravely. "What other thoughts do you have about the usage of herbs and poisonous plants?"

Lu Yun blinked, then slowly relayed what he understood of medicine and pill dao. He sketched a quick overview of the theory behind various herbs' medicinal properties as well as any related concepts.

However, most of it was still too complicated for Shennong. Though, his eyes lit up when Lu Yun mentioned that brewing numerous precious herbs together would help with cultivation. Humanity's greatest weakness was a natural-born fragility and insufficient development after birth!

Their rate of cultivation was many times slower than that of other races, even after setting foot onto the path of connate great dao. If there was something that could help with cultivation and increase their speed of breakthroughs, that would be a gift from the heavens!

"But the types of herbs and ingredients I recognize now are too few. The recipes I can deduce are limited to what I've already come up with. So I need more time to organize my findings and identify more plants!" Lu Yun thought for a moment. "But what's more important than cultivation is to improve

mankind's physique... I've noticed that the various grains the tribe eats are all ones gathered from the wild. Yes, those are edible, but they just serve to stave off hunger."

Though agriculture and the raising of livestock existed in this day and age, they did so in a very rudimentary form. What resulted from those pursuits was just enough to prevent starvation, and what grains humanity currently possessed couldn't be considered actual provisions.

At the heart of things, the crux of the problem was that humans didn't know how to adapt to the local terrain and grow what was suited to that area. They only knew to label the places where unhusked rice and millet grew, then come back the next year to harvest them when they grew again.

Lu Yun dug into his memories to share what he knew about agriculture and animal husbandry. But due to limited conditions, he couldn't spark an agricultural revolution. He could only start from tiny details and work his way upward.

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Lu Yun and Shennong's conversation lasted three days and three nights. This period of time solidified Shennong's desire to make Lie Shan his successor.

By now, Lu Yun had thrown away all thoughts of what his impact on history might be and spoke freely of his body tempering and breathing methods. As for the nascent spirit observation method—since that was a cultivation method under the immortal dao, it wasn't possible to practice that here.

These two methods alone were a great delight to Shennong and the rest of the tribe. While they could practice the methods taught by the tribute spirits, those were ludicrously crude and simplistic compared to what Lie Shan showed them.

The entire tribe's overall strength took a great leap forward in the span of only one winter season, while Ah Zhuang and the others also became cultivators as well.

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"I'm at the peak of this level, making my strength on par with peak void realm!" Lu Yun sat by the banks of the Wei River and assessed his current cultivation level.

In this world dominated by a primitive great dao, the demarcation of cultivation realms was a very blurry affair. One of their realms was the equivalent of several realms in the modern day world of immortals.

"If I make one more breakthrough, I'll be able to enter the next realm like I've become an immortal. I wonder if I'll be able to sense where my replica is at that point." When his thoughts traveled here, Lu Yun mustered all of the energy in his body and barreled toward the next cultivation realm.

Chapter 830: Holy Clan

The most primitive of qi flowed through Lu Yun at the moment. Not having undergone baptism by the great dao, it was the most fundamental energy beneath the heavens.

This kind of energy was strong and wild, but it wasn't suitable for cultivation. If beings of the world wished to officially become cultivators, they had to transcend the limits of their birth and transform their bodies into ones suitable for the connate great dao before they could cultivate.

Lu Yun had reached the limits of what he could do with his body, so the untamed qi within him careened wildly, shoving against the threshold of the next realm again and again. He didn't know what the next realm was, but there was a next level to the Method of Life and Death. He'd be able to ascend to the next cultivation realm as long as he made a breakthrough there.

Boom—

An enormous rumble roared like a thunder clap from his body and startled the nearby tribespeople.

"He's breaking through and entering the golden core great dao!" Some of the youths on their way to challenge him trembled with fear when they overheard the commotion.

Cultivators newly initiated into the connate great dao were the apex in small tribes and war gods of an entire race. But at the same time, they weren't a rare sight in a large faction like the Yan Tribe—the tribe's hunters were comprised entirely of cultivators.

However, golden core cultivators were the greatest powerhouses of the human race. These kinds of people were very rare in the tribe; only the patriarch and priest were at that august level. But this Lie Shan was only eighteen years old and about to set foot into the golden core realm of the great dao!

"No wonder chief wants him to be the next Shennong..." A young man grimaced with fear.

"Bah! So what if he's a golden core cultivator? He doesn't have Yan blood flowing in his veins! How can the chief of the Yan Tribe, the vaunted Shennong, be an outsider?" Deep resentment flashed through the eyes of a man who looked roughly forty years old.

His name was Qingyou and he was one of the most accomplished people of the tribe. He would've most likely been the next Shennong if life had progressed as expected. He couldn't possibly accept Lie Shan's sudden appearance and Shennong just announcing that the newcomer would be the next chief!!

"Maybe he's a spy from the Xiong Tribe!" A long bone spear clenched in his hand, Qingyou geared himself up and flung the spear straight at Lu Yun. Streaking across the air with a deadly glint of white, its target was in the most critical moment of his breakthrough and couldn't react. Besides, Lu Yun had never imagined that someone would dare ambush him while in Yan tribe territory!

But before he could sense the arrival of the spear, it dissipated in midair as bone dust. An enormous aura descended from the sky and pinned Qingyou and the others to the ground. They couldn't even mew in protest, much less move a muscle.

A livid Shennong appeared, looking at Qingyou with a glare of death. Terrified out of his wits, Qingyou remained docilely plastered onto the ground.

"Hmph!" Shennong waved his hand and wrapped an enormous surge of power around the group, taking them with him as he pushed off in a giant leap.

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"I do not accept this!" Qingyou stared stubbornly at his chief. "Why can an outsider be our chief?!"

"I don't accept this either!"

“Me too!”

Much of the tribe were gathered here in protest. Their reactions wouldn't have been so pronounced if Shennong had wanted his younger brother to be the next chief, but the people had gotten to the bottom of this 'Lie Shan' during this time.

According to the former Ning villagers, this boy was a random wild thing they'd found in the woods! His background was completely unknown, to say nothing of being from the Yan bloodline!

Shennong trembled from anger. If it wasn't for a few elders and the tribe priest holding him back, he would've already executed the troublemakers from earlier.

“Chief, I too think this matter requires more deliberation,” said the tribe priest. He was the most revered figure in the tribe after the chief, and the representative of the tribute spirit at the same time.

Qingyou's eyes lit up when he saw the priest raise an objection as well. Even the chief couldn't go against the priest when it came to many things.

“The chief of the Yan Tribe is the pillar and guardian of our people. How can we give that position to an unknown outsider?” The priest took a look at Jiang Ti.

The old village chief remained silent at a time like this. It wasn't his place to speak. He'd been away for several decades, so his prestige in the tribe was long gone.

“I admit that Lie Shan has done a deed as great as the heavens for the tribe, and all of humanity, in identifying a hundred plants. But... we must still properly investigate his origins.” The priest's tone softened when he met Shennong's eyes. He too knew that Lie Shan's contributions were too enormous for humanity. The tribute spirit could heal wounds and cure sickness, it could bring someone back from the dead and revive the injured, but there was only one of it. Only in providing for themselves was there a way forward for humans.

“Ai...” Shennong sighed. “I was hesitant too, but fully made up my mind when I saw Lie Shan just now. Tribe uncle, do you remember Holy Emperor Fuxi?”

“Fuxi??” The tribe priest—Shennong's tribe uncle—gasped.

Fuxi wasn't human, he was the son of the two connate gods—Leize and Huaxu—and an incredibly famous god beneath the heavens. He and Wahuang had protected humans in the darkest of times, saving them from floods and beasts, and defeating the connate demon gods that fed on humans.

The priests of the various human tribes first worshipped Heavenly Sovereign Fuxi, then worshipped Earthly Sovereign Wahuang, before finally worshipping the tribe's tribute spirit.

“Do you mean that the young man has something to do with the holy emperor?” the priest shook his head.

“Yes, he has something to do with Holy Emperor Fuxi!” Shennong affirmed solemnly. “Though Fuxi isn't human, he's been protecting us all along. He takes in our race's experts and has built a human sacred land. Those in there are our last hope, the holy clan of humanity!”

“Um...” The tribe looked at each other, finding this too much to believe.

“There’s a marvelous power around Lie Shan that protects him from outside disturbance! I once went to the sacred land to pay my respects to Holy Emperor Fuxi and witnessed the same power there!” Shennong delivered in ringing tones, “So I’m very certain that Lie Shan is from the holy clan!”

He’d just finished when a howl rang forth—Lu Yun had officially set foot into golden core realm.