

Necropolis 831

Chapter 831: Priest

“This is the next realm after setting foot onto the connate great dao, the golden core realm of the great dao!” Arms spread wide, Lu Yun opened his mouth and shot out an arrow of white air that flew more than three hundred meters into the distance.

Golden core great dao was a completely different realm from golden core under the immortal dao. Though the dao now was unsophisticated and primitive, its golden core realm rivaled the level of void realm immortals.

This primitive dao might be crude in Lu Yun’s eyes, immensely lacking in finesse compared to the immortal dao of the future, but it was much closer to nature, to heaven, to earth. He didn’t have to put in any effort to understand the world. The creations of the world and the world itself were always by his side and a part of him.

“The dao of nature!” Enlightenment struck Lu Yun. “The primitive great dao is the great dao of nature. Everything in the world follows its course...”

Following that thought, he closed his eyes and fell into another cultivation trance. An imperceptible amount of time passed when he next opened his eyes.

“My cultivation has taken another leap forward, reaching the same heights I’d reached in the future!” Delight and surprise flashed through Lu Yun’s eyes. His cultivation was now the equivalent of empyrean immortal realm under the immortal dao. He’d recovered to his former peak!

“My replica is up in the sky!” Eyes bright, he jerked his head up at the firmament. He could sense that Xing Chen was somewhere distant above the dome, and that something was hindering his communication with his replica.

The Tome of Life and Death remained hidden in his body, which meant he still couldn’t access the death arts or deploy the Gates of the Abyss.

“Ah, right. This isn’t the time of human rule yet, so the kingdom of hell and cycle of reincarnation don’t exist. If the tome and gates do show up now, there’ll likely be serious consequences from their impact on the great dao.

“Nonetheless, I have to sacrifice Xing Chen once I find my way back. He needs to transform into the cosmos and manifest the new dao immortal realm. That’ll knock me back down to my original level of strength and I’ll have to hide in the little patch of land that is Dusk Province for a while.

“You know, I could try shooting for greater heights under this primitive great dao...” Lu Yun was in no hurry now. Though he was in the past, he’d return to the point in which he left for the future once he found his way back.

“Is it night already?” He started when he saw the bright stars in the night sky. “It feels like it’s been only the blink of an eye, but it’s already evening... The primitive great dao really isn’t to be underestimated.”

Lu Yun rose to his feet and casually dismissed a defensive formation he'd set up. Although he didn't have stores of immortal crystals and spirit stones, he was a formidable feng shui master who could set up layouts to create formations anytime and anywhere.

Formations and feng shui layouts were patterns between heaven and earth rather than a cultivation dao. That was why both existed and there was no issue with him creating them, whether the world was ruled by the primitive great dao or immortal dao.

"Wait, that's not right!" Lu Yun jerked in surprise when he realized he was stepping on green shoots of grass. "Is it spring already?"

When he began his breakthrough, it'd been a morning of early winter, but now, it was suddenly a night of spring.

"This primitive great dao is crazy! Cultivators immersed in it lose all sense of time and passing of the seasons. No wonder the human race can't prosper in this world!" Lu Yun sighed.

Humans lived in a hostile environment that required them to carefully consider where to put down every foot. Cultivators of each tribe had to protect their people. If they cultivated like Lu Yun did and spent a few months in meditation every time, their tribes would be razed to the ground during one of their sessions.

They could only dip their toes into the depths rather than fully immerse themselves in cultivation. As a result, any progress they made was moderate at best... Almost no one dared proceed any further once they were initiated in the great connate dao.

"It seems I have to create a more suitable cultivation method for humans now. The elemental breathing and body tempering methods are from the future, in which we have completely different constitutions from the human race now..."

He'd passed down his breathing and body tempering methods, but they might as well be written in the language of gods. None of the tribes could grasp anything other than the most basic ideas.

Thus, while the two methods had greatly improved the strength of the Yan tribesmen, their progress was only significant when compared to other humans.

In the cruel and terrifying great wilderness, the Yan Tribe remained cowering by the banks of the impoverished Wei River—it was only a fertile land compared to other human territories. In the greater picture of things, it was an unassuming corner of the world where great powerhouses couldn't even be bothered to spare a glance for.

"I created the breathing and body tempering methods under the immortal dao to mitigate the weaknesses of immortals. I have to start anew with consideration to the world today." It wasn't difficult for Lu Yun to deduce cultivation methods as the great dao of nature was unusually transparent. He was easily able to observe the patterns of heaven and earth after reaching golden core realm.

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"Hmm? What's going on?"

A sudden commotion kicked up by the banks of the Wei River while the voice of the priest rose in incantation, but the undercurrent of sorrow in his tone suggested an occasion of loss.

“Is the Yan Tribe paying worship to their tribute spirit? No, their tribute spirit is kind and friendly. This isn’t the way they would go about it.” A sense of foreboding weighed heavily on Lu Yun, and he vanished into the air with a single step.

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Shennong, the tribe priest, and various elders were clustered around the river. The priest recited an elegant ancient tribute verse in a resonant voice. Behind them knelt different members of the Yan Tribe; some recited along with the priest while others sobbed and repeatedly called out a name.

A little raft bobbed at the center of the vast Wei River, on top of which stood several girls and boys aged five or six. They looked at the diminishing panorama of their family with lost eyes, oblivious to the fate that awaited them.

“The hour is upon us,” announced the priest. “Please enjoy your tribute, River God!”

Splash splash splash!

The river agitated to life, raising tall waves that threatened to swallow the little bamboo raft.

“Bastards!” A clap of thunder exploded in the air as Lu Yun appeared above the river to scatter the waves. With a simple drag of his hand, he sent the raft back to the riverbank.

“What are you doing?!” he demanded, staring at Shennong and the priest with dark fury.

“Lie Shan!” The tribe screamed, so wrought with fear as if annihilation was staring at them dead in the eye. Even Shennong was no exception.

Chapter 832: God of Wei River

Even without the Karmic Tree, Lu Yun could sense dense desperation and despair choking the scene.

Color drained from the faces of Shennong, the tribe priest, Jiang Ti, and all twelve elders of the Yan Tribe. There wasn’t the slightest spark of hope in their eyes, and they didn’t even have the strength to question or berate Lu Yun.

“This is what mankind is now?” Frowning slightly, his face darkened ominously when he looked at the nine pairs of children he’d saved. These nine boys and girls each possessed splendid physique and were absolute geniuses. If they cultivated, they would progress at a tremendous pace and become the core strength of humanity one day!

“So this is what’s going on!” Lu Yun was no fool; he immediately grasped the situation and flames of fury burst from his heart. “How dare a river monster spirit damage the foundations of the human race. Get out here!”

Boom!

He imprinted a palm strike onto the water surface with a quick backhand, raising tall waves from the river. Despite being several kilometers wide, all of Wei River trembled at the disturbance.

“How dare a mewling human offend my master and ruin my master’s grand ritual! From today forth, the Yan Tribe and humans living around the Wei River will face extinction!”

Splaaaaash.

An even greater wave rose from the Wei River as an enormous yellowish gray fish leapt out of the river. Five hundred meters long, it bit down on Lu Yun with razor-sharp teeth.

“I wondered what was causing the trouble—just a fish spirit? Go die!” With another backhand, a current of hazy sword qi erupted from Lu Yun’s palm. It grew explosively to five kilometers long and slashed the fish spirit in two before it reached him!

Sword dao!

With the sword as dao!

He wielded no sword in his hand, but there was one in his heart. The spirit energy within him spontaneously transmuted to sword qi and released a terrifying gout of sword dao.

Sword dao is the dao of those who walk the heavens, but the primitive great dao has raised it to even greater heights! That fish spirit was at least at peak golden core under the great dao, so the equivalent of a peak peerless immortal... but I still sliced it into two with one move!

The two halves of the monster spirit’s body floated silently in the center of Wei River, dyeing its waters red with scarlet blood. Fear and trepidation reigned supreme on land; the tribe stared dumbly at their future chief, barely comprehending what had just happened and not knowing what to do.

Flipping his hand over, Lu Yun lifted the two halves out of the water and smashed them down onto the banks before Shennong and the others.

“Lie Shan, you’ve committed a grave error today.” Shennong finally forced out through numb lips.

“Sacrificing eighteen human geniuses to this so-called river god is the real error! Do you pray for good weather, or that the river god doesn’t come up and eat more people?” Lu Yun landed from the air. He didn’t look at Shennong with any blame or disdain—such was what naturally developed in this environment. Humans possessed no powerhouses, so surrender and capitulation were the only things they could do in this terrifying great wilderness.

“All of you can go back now. I’ll take care of this so-called river god. If he dares come ashore, I’ll make sure he can’t go back.” Killing intent flashed through Lu Yun’s eyes.

“Lie Shan, I know what you rely on, but mountain ghosts can’t attack the Wei river god. If she does, the other divine spirits will attack her and there will even be great gods that come to kill her...” the priest said in a trembling voice.

“Ah Bao is still too young, she won’t do anything on behalf of humanity. I’m the one who started all this, so I will naturally be the one to settle it.” Lu Yun’s vast consciousness found Ah Bao in the middle of the tribe. She was asleep in his log cabin and drooling from her dreams.

“Alright, let’s all go home now!” Shennong was a very decisive person and roared at the crowd around the river. Unfortunately, Lu Yun’s words did nothing to comfort the people. In fact, they were even more petrified.

A night passed without conversation, and a murky sky appeared the next day. Thick thunderclouds surrounded the Yan Tribe like a pot lid, but clear blue skies could be found a hundred kilometers away from the tribe.

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An enormous bonfire blazed next to Wei River. Two halves of an enormous fish sizzled enticingly on the flames, the highly fragrant aroma enveloping the entire village.

Ah Bao stooped next to Lu Yun, continuously wiping off drool. Next to her, a dignified and strong young man copied her posture. He was the tribute spirit of the Yan Tribe and had protected the tribe for thousands of years.

“Lie Shan, you’re really in trouble this time!” The youth also gulped down saliva thanks to the aroma. “The Wei river god is very strong. In fact, he’s invincible within five hundred kilometers of the river!”

“Ah Niu, big brother Lieshan is different!” Ah Bao waved her tiny fists in protest.

Ah Niu shrank in slightly on himself. He didn’t dare anger Ah Bao. The little girl was a divine spirit and a mountain ghost born of nature. Mountain ghosts were the strongest mountain gods; they were on the level of divine kings. He was leagues apart from her in comparison and could only be called a tribute spirit at most, not a divine spirit. He’d been born from worship and sacrifice, not from nature.

Lu Yun shook his head and didn’t reply, looking at the sky instead. The heavy clouds were growing blacker, but they were nothing to him. The tribulation clouds he’d faced before were a hundred, a thousand times stronger.

But he was still rather irritated. The thick layer of clouds had already blanketed them for three days and though it wouldn’t affect the tribe in the short run, unforeseen illnesses might develop from a prolonged lack of sunlight—such as plague.

However, Wei River was vast and ran for several thousand kilometers. He didn’t know where the river god was, so on the third morning, he dragged out the dead fish monster spirit and started spit-roasting it by the water.

Surely there could be no greater provocation.

He hadn’t brought Ah Bao and Ah Niu with him originally, but those two fellows had run out of the tribe when they smelled the deliciously cooking fish. Some minor monster spirits poked their heads out of the water surface from time to time and silently observed the three, then flipped around to dive back into the depths of the Wei River.

“It’s done, it’s done!” Ah Bao cheered and tore off a piece of fish meat. She wasn’t afraid of hot food and swallowed the meat ravenously. Ah Niu swallowed hard, but he really didn’t dare eat a fish spirit under the river god’s command.

Rumble—

An enormous clap of thunder blasted from the skies as a large zigzag of lightning lit up the firmament.

“Mountain ghost of Qingqiu Mountain, do you intend to be enemies with me?” A black fish head probed out of the clouds. It seemed to be a carp’s head with two long whiskers by its mouth, but its body was a dragon’s and scales glinted as it hovered in the clouds.

However, Lu Yun could easily tell that it was a divine spirit... a divine spirit born from incense and worship! It wasn’t a naturally born divine spirit like a mountain ghost from the rivers and mountains of the world.

Chapter 833: Subduing a God

Tribute spirits were the ancient name of divine spirits, but in Lu Yun’s eyes, the tribute spirits of this world couldn’t be called divine spirits. Tribute spirits were born with imperfections and couldn’t leave their priest. They lived and died along with their tribe.

Divine spirits, however, were entirely different. Incense and worship enhanced their strength, but they could still survive if they left their priest.

Mountain ghosts were divine spirits, Ah Niu was a tribute spirit. The Wei river god in the clouds was also a tribute spirit instead of a divine one. However, there was a connection between the two of them.

God.

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The river god was extremely strong—many times stronger than Ah Niu, in fact. However, what Lu Yun sensed more clearly was that it was... afraid. It didn’t dare show itself and rain down furious retribution even when a ritual a thousand years old had been interrupted. It could only summon this thick cloud layer and slowly torment the Yan Tribe.

“What is it afraid of? Ah Bao? But that doesn’t make sense. According to what Shennong and the priest said, Ah Bao will attract the fury of nature if she makes a move and disaster will strike her.” Lu Yun frowned slightly. “...the divine decree!”

Light gleamed in his eyes as spirit energy circulated madly within his body. He ran through several deductions about the Wei river god looming in the clouds.

“Ah Bao can’t do anything to it because its divine decree is one recognized by the world. But the decree... doesn’t belong to it! It obtained the decree after swallowing the real river god!

“The river god it swallowed was an embryo and not yet fully formed. I see now!” Formula dao laid bare everything about the river god in front of Lu Yun. “Since that tribute spirit could take the divine decree, why can’t Ah Bao or Ah Niu do the same?”

“In that case...” A smirk flitted across Lu Yun’s lips. “I’m taking your divine decree!”

Up in the clouds, the river god was still eyeing Ah Bao. Just as Lu Yun had inferred, any divine spirit could take its divine decree because it didn’t have right of ownership. However, it’d ruled the river for thousands of years and collected a vast collection of ragtag monster spirits, imps, and lesser demons during this time. There were even a few uncommonly strong divine spirits without divine decrees.

The human tribes along the Wei River had once banded together to defy the river god, but the end result had been the eradication of several tribes stronger than the Yan Tribe. With the Yan Tribe as the remaining leader, the rest of the humans had to bow their heads in submission.

Children were offered as tribute every year, and in return the river god protected the tribes around its waters. Truth be told, it was just corralling humans as livestock.

Sadly, this kind of situation was all too common in the great wilderness. If it wasn't for the human sacred land and two great gods forming its pantheon, humanity as a whole would've long been rounded up as general cattle for other races.

Jiang Ti had benefited from a string of good luck. He'd saved an unweaned pixiu when he was very young and raised it to adulthood, then met Ah Bao after moving to Qingqiu Mountain who further ensured the safety of Ning Village.

He'd brought the villagers back to the tribe not to seek more protection, but because Ah Bao and the pixiu could help the tribe with their prodigious strength. However, he'd never thought of going against the river god... The stronger tribes that existed several thousand years ago had all been razed over the course of one night for their insubordination!

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Lu Yun pointed gently, sending a faint ripple through the air.

Kabooooom.

A pillar of brilliant golden light pierced through the heavens and dispersed the heavy clouds overhead. Blinding sunlight once more scattered over Yan Tribe territory.

Lu Yun shot into the air. "Ah Bao, Ah Niu, the two of you keep watch here. Beat the crap out of anything that dares rush out of the Wei River!" he roared.

Ah Bao couldn't do anything to the river god because of the divine decree that conferred the river's protection. As a natural-born divine spirit, she was subordinate to spirits with a divine decree. It'd be a pyrrhic victory even if she could overcome the river god, so it wasn't worth the attempt. But at the same time, the other entities and divine spirits in the river posed no threat to her.

Lu Yun hadn't wanted her to do anything in the beginning because he'd been afraid she'd catch the eye of heavyweights in the great wilderness. Now however, he changed his mind. He was going to seize the Wei River divine decree for her!

"How dare a pathetic human take action against me?!" The river god flew into a rage at seeing Lu Yun charge up instead of Ah Bao. Gravely insulted, it stretched out a claw to crush the impertinent human to pieces.

Kabooooom.

A second pillar of golden light blasted upward from the ground, slamming right into the river god. With a ghastly shriek, the enormous dragon claw disintegrated into pieces.

"What is that?!" Gaspings, fear flitted through its eyes.

To its great dismay, a strange pattern had somehow appeared by the river banks. The pattern exuded a stern authority that constantly compelled the river god to descend and kowtow before it. Even more terrifying was that its connection to its divine decree had been cut off!

“You ant!” Dense malice glittered in its eyes as it glared fixedly at Lu Yun. Everything originated from this human youth that’d just set foot into the golden core realm. All would be over if he were disposed of.

But...

The light emanating from the dark-golden diagram prevented the strong divine spirits under its command from showing their faces, while the mountain ghost had the remainder of the river god’s forces firmly in hand.

“Ant? Watch as this ant personally butchers you!” roared Lu Yun. Fingers dancing through sword seals, currents of the world’s energies gathered in the air as a terrifying sword formation around the river god.

Formations without foundation!

The same dark-gold pattern could be found in the formation—the Exalted Divine Emperor’s Sacred Origin Runes. These were the divine emperor’s sacred runes; both divines and divine spirits had to worship them upon sight. These runes exerted control over divines and divine spirits, and were Lu Yun’s ultimate trump card in facing off against the Wei river god!

Besides, the river god was only a tribute spirit and half a step away from becoming a true divine spirit.

“Come down here!” Lu Yun shouted, bringing the sword formation and Sacred Origin Runes to bear on the river god. He slammed the tribute spirit onto the ground, activating the runes in the dirt to function as restraints.

However, he’d been the one to draw these Sacred Origin Runes and not the Exalted Divine Emperor himself, so they were of limited use against the river god. Once the river god recovered its wits, it could easily struggle free of these mid-tier runes.

Therefore, Lu Yun would never allow it the opportunity to do so.

Chapter 834: Body as Sky, Earth as Forge

Though Lu Yun had only recovered to his peak strength and was thus leagues away from the Wei river god, he came from the future. Marvelous cultivation methods and battle styles abounded in his repertoire; it’d take only one small opening for him to doom the river god beyond any hope of reincarnation.

Sacred Origin Runes flared with dark-golden light overhead as Lu Yun crossed his arms in front of his chest and voiced a long hum. In this moment, all of the rivers, mountains, plants, and the rippling Wei River... everything in the vicinity was isolated from the world.

Shrieking and wailing, the river god watched with horrified eyes as beams of cerulean blue erupted from its chest. A ball of blue light roughly the size of a human head flowed out of its chest, and its eyes dimmed the moment it appeared.

Its large body began to dissipate and return to the world. As it was only a tribute spirit and not a divine spirit, it could no longer exist after losing both its priest and divine decree.

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“The divine decree of the Wei river god!” a delighted shout echoed. “If I get my hands on that, won’t I be the god of Wei River and rule over all fifteen thousand of its kilometers?”

The gleeful voice cut off the next second as it seemed to realize some things were better left unsaid. Hidden in the murky depths, it shot at Lu Yun, revealing itself to be an enormous spotted python, a riot of multiple colors splashed across its five-hundred-meter long body. Three feet thick and spitting out rainbow poison mist, it launched itself at Lu Yun to swallow the divine decree in the human’s hand.

This spotted python was far weaker than the river god from earlier, but it was neither a divine spirit nor a tribute spirit, so what remained of the Sacred Origin Runes on the ground couldn’t restrain it.

It was a gremlin of the water, which also didn’t make it a monster spirit. Monster spirits had their own power and could call upon monster spirit abilities, whereas gremlins made use of their natural talents and strong physical bodies.

However, though it was weaker than the river god, that still didn’t mean Lu Yun could easily fend it off. Its overbearing body came crashing down and smashed through everything the human youth had set up.

Wei River instantly boiled over as gremlins, monsters, and various divine spirits in its watery depths went mad with greed when they saw the divine decree. Ah Bao and Ah Niu scrambled to drive them back, striking them down wherever they popped up.

Roar!!

An enormous challenge rang out as an exotic beast charged out of the tribe. It rushed to Lu Yun’s side in one thousandth of a second and ripped the python’s head off with a swipe of its iron-like claws.

The pixiu!

In a critical moment of need, the tribe’s guardian showed itself. It blazed with the aura of a divine spirit and flooded the vicinity with its stormy presence, snarling and tearing the ground with fearsome power.

All of the beings that’d rushed out of the river ran off with whines and yelps, their tails between their legs after an utter rout. The pixiu was incomparably strong and had torn apart even the Bi Fang! It’d only been afraid before because the river god possessed a divine decree. Now that the river god was no longer, it was the unchallenged sovereign of the area.

ROOOOARRRRR!!

It threw its head back again and sent its voice across five hundred kilometers in all directions. Everything that heard it fell to the ground in a prostrate position of surrender, while cheers rang out from the Yan Tribe.

“Big brother Lieshan!” Ah Bao bounced back to Lu Yun’s side and tugged hard on his clothes. There was the tiniest bit of fear in her eyes as she had to meet enemies here with her own strength. She was no longer in the mountain, and thus unable to nimbly call upon her real power.

This was also the greatest reason why Lu Yun hadn’t wanted her to take the field.

“Eat this.” He shoved the divine decree into Ah Bao’s mouth. Off to the side, Ah Niu swallowed surreptitiously as he, too, wanted the decree since he was the Yan Tribe’s tribute spirit.

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Ah Bao fell into a deep sleep after she devoured the river god’s divine decree.

Despite the lack of a boss, everything was deathly silent in the Wei River. The pixiu residing in the human tribe was a great deterrent—it was the mightiest powerhouse in the area after Ah Bao when there was no river god around.

Meanwhile, the Yan Tribe busied themselves with celebrations. They hadn’t thought that Lie Shan would truly succeed and eradicate the river god that’d plagued them for so many years!

Free from the river god’s exploitation and with the pixiu as great reassurance, the tribe entered a phase of high speed development. Their strength bounded forward based on the breathing and body tempering methods that Lie Shan taught them, and they rose to the position of the greatest human tribe of the Wei River.

Throughout all of this, Lu Yun sat cross-legged by the banks of the river and contemplated it blankly. He didn’t cultivate or deduce new cultivation methods, just stared into space at what was happening around him and the world.

He sat for three years, and nothing changed about him during this time. He remained looking like a thin eighteen-year-old boy.

Kerrrrrack!

Spring thunderstorms raged during the third year, sending a tremor through him and focusing his eyes on the gaily blowing spring rains in front of him.

“That’s right, as we model ourselves after heaven and earth and the great dao itself is of nature... why am I rigidly sticking to specific cultivation methods?” He stood up and looked at the sky, suddenly opening his arms and taking in a deep breath. Rainwater streamed toward him and collected as an enormous ball of water, then dispersed when he breathed out.

Lu Yun’s eyes lit up—he seemed to be communicating with nature right now, taking in the most basic, fundamental energy of the world: chaos!

Rumble—

Echoing booms as if rolling thunder sounded from his body, and every pore on his skin opened wide, breathing in the energy of the world.

This was the realm of breathing in tandem with heaven and earth.

Lu Yun opened his mouth and sucked it all to his stomach, then used his body as a forge to meld the energy into his body.

“With the body as sky and earth as forge... Creation as craftsmanship for will, yin yang as fuel for qi, and all living beings as bronze for cultivation!”

Hummm.

An invisible fire rippled out from his body and the shadow of the Tome of Life and Death flashed through his eyes.

“Breathing method? Body tempering? No, this is refining qi!” A smile floated onto his face. “With heaven and earth as a furnace and collection of the qi in the world, we reach the level of fusing all living beings!”

He didn’t call upon formula dao to trace out this qi refinement method. Instead, he let it progress as it would to its natural conclusion. What he overlooked was that the world trembled gently when the qi refinement method appeared.

Countless experts had opened their eyes at the same time and looked in the direction of the Wei River, and a giant hand probed soundlessly from the sky, intending to grab Lu Yun.

But at the same time, another giant hand reached down and smashed apart the first hand.

“Fuxi!” a furious voice traveled in from the distance.

A refined man with the body of a snake opened his eyes in front of a verdant segment of bamboo. He looked into the air.

“Do you think you can do whatever you like just because you have Leize and Huaxu backing you up??” A man covered in white bones popped into existence and glared at the man with a snake’s body.

“Well, of course. That’s precisely why I do whatever I want. What can you do about it? Beat me up for it?” Fuxi grinned brilliantly.

Chapter 835: Fuxi

The demon god in midair shuddered when he looked again at Fuxi. Fuxi’s patrons were too strong. Whether it be Leize or Huaxu, both were the greatest powerhouses in the world and they were exceptionally biased toward their own.

If anyone dared touch Fuxi, they’d likely quickly find themselves skinned and stripped of their meridians, then flung into the sea to feed the fish.

In the eyes of all living beings, Fuxi was a bonafide young master. He did whatever he wanted and stirred up endless trouble just because Leize and Huaxu spoiled him. If it wasn’t for sibling duo Fuxi and Wahuang protecting those humans, the demon gods of the great wilderness would’ve rounded them up as chickens or pigs a long time ago.

It was also precisely this matter that brother and sister had earned the dissatisfaction and almost enmity of many demon gods.

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“If you’re not going to beat me up, then I’ll beat you instead.” Joviality slid off Fuxi’s face and he waved a hand to summon the jade-green bamboo behind him. It shot out of the ground with vigor and landed in his hand as a staff.

He then floated into the air and waved it gently, somehow bringing it down on the demon god with a savage crack!

Screeching in pain, the demon god’s broken bones and meridians jumbled together in a mess from the force of the blow. Now high up in the sky, Fuxi brought his staff down again and again on his yelping visitor.

“Embittered Bamboo! You refined Embittered Bamboo into a treasure!” Wailing from the abuse, the demon god screeched again when he took a good look at the staff in Fuxi’s hand.

“Um... I didn’t.” Fuxi shook his head. “I took a bit of juice from the Embittered Bamboo and raised it as a piece of ordinary bamboo...” His expression abruptly froze over. “Humans are the descendants of the great god Pangu. Don’t you dare think that the rest of you can terrorize them as you will just because Pangu has passed on! [ref]Pangu is a primordial being and creation figure in Chinese mythology who separated heaven and earth and became geographic features such as mountains and rivers.[/ref]

“I normally let things go if you guys don’t harm the foundations of the human race since I can’t be bothered with everything all the time. But if you dare ruin their future this time, that means making an enemy out of me!”

Hummmm.

Emerald radiance exploded out of the bamboo staff and pierced through the sky, locking down the premises within five thousand kilometers.

This brought a drastic shift to the demon god’s expression. It wasn’t until now that he realized Fuxi wasn’t the useless young master he thought—Fuxi was a heavyweight of the world in his own right even without Leize and Huaxu’s backing!

Heavy regret descended in spades. Why had he set eyes on the human that’d resonated with the great dao, and why had he come here to threaten Fuxi after Fuxi stopped him??

All was too late now.

The bamboo staff descended one final time. It smashed the demon god’s head into his body and turned his entire body into dust.

“Have you finally come?” Fuxi turned and looked at the banks of the Wei River, where a young boy was slowly adapting to the world of the great wilderness. A meaningful smile floated across his face as he manifested a tortoise shell in his hand. The shell exploded with hazy gray radiance that pierced through the sky while Fuxi concealed the changes rippling through the great dao.

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By the edge of the water, Lu Yun looked up at the sky with beads of sweat dotting his forehead.

“I was way too overconfident! The human bloodline is different from others, so there are many experts in the world who don’t want humans to grow stronger!

“Thankfully, there are also experts protecting the human race. Otherwise, that would’ve been the end of me just now. Good thing the qi refinement method is now part of the great dao and one of its cultivation methods. And... did the Tome of Life and Death appear as well? Lu Yun stared off into space.

Only the Tome of Life and Death could integrate his newly invented qi refinement method into the great dao and have it become a primitive cultivation method.

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Three years proved time enough for Ah Bao to digest her meal. When she awoke, she was more than just the mountain ghost of Qingqiu Mountain, she was also the river god of Wei River and ruled over its fifteen kilometers of territory. With the divine decree on her, she no longer had to fear that someone could take her away.

However, her actual battle experience was pitifully sparse. In the days to come, when he wasn’t imparting the qi refinement method, Lu Yun spent his time teaching Ah Bao and the eighteen children he’d saved three years ago.

His strength was less than the mountain ghost’s, but he possessed numerous divine combat arts. Though these arts came from the future, he was able to easily modify them after experiencing how he’d created the qi refinement method.

As a result, Ah Bao’s capabilities and battle strength grew in leaps and bounds, and she quickly subdued the gremlins and divine spirits in the Wei River. The eighteen children possessed the highest potential in the Yan Tribe; with Lu Yun as their personal teacher, all of them would be pillars of the tribe in the future.

Apart from all this, he carried on his mission of tasting all the plants in the world. He deduced the properties of a number of herbs he’d never seen before and recorded the uses of various poisonous grasses. As his strength increased, some toxic plants no longer affected him.

In all of this, agriculture and livestock were his primary areas of focus. Humans now were too weak and fragile, far less than their descendants in the future. Ordinary mortals who didn’t cultivate could live at most forty to fifty years.

It came down to the coarse nature of their food. Therefore, Lu Yun and Ah Bao joined hands and conducted multiple experiments to derive some better seeds, fruits, and vegetables.

In the tenth year of Lu Yun’s arrival in the great wilderness, the ninth of him joining the Yan Tribe, there was little doubt that the tribe was well entrenched in flourishing development. Fertile land surrounded the tribe in a five hundred meter radius and was densely covered with prime farmland and orchards. Cows mooed, sheep bleated, and all sorts of livestock roamed through Yan territory. There were even several acres of medicine gardens by the banks of the Wei River, where qi was the most abundant.

In the tribe, other than those who really lacked talent and potential to the point where even Lu Yun couldn’t do anything, everyone cultivated and more than half of them had set foot onto the connate great dao thanks to his qi refinement method.

Ah Zhuang and another large portion of the youths were now golden core cultivators. The tribe's current status quo was something they'd never dreamed of before!

Humans used to be afraid of winter as the season marked the advent of cold and hunger. People froze or starved to death in the chilly months every year, or died from related illness.

But all this changed with Lie Shan's appearance.

Grain, fruits, vegetables, and domesticated animals were now found in abundance—altering the condition of the human body on a fundamental level. The grains they ate now were true provisions, no longer the wild seeds they scavenged before. Their food now fortified the body, enhanced physical health, and bolstered mental acuity so that humans could bring a better mindset to cultivation.

In this day and age, qi suffused the world and charged all of the seeds that Lu Yun derived. Everything that grew could be labeled spirit rice and spirit vegetables.

Of course, the Yan Tribe's development also made neighboring tribes uneasy, and battles never ceased during this time.

Chapter 836: War

To future generations, such conflicts were civil wars between their ancestors, but to contemporaries of this era, every clan or tribe was an independent entity with its own tribute spirit and totem, and the chiefs held absolute power over their people.

The Yan Tribe was already one of the most powerful in the Wei River basin. If they continued to develop at this rate, they would one day be powerful enough to conquer all of the human tribes in the area and even the banks of the Yellow River at large.

So although the Yan Tribe had yet to start a war, neighboring tribes had formed an alliance to harass them.

Some things, however, couldn't be changed.

Over the past six years, the Yan Tribe had established a formidable city and its population had exploded from thirty thousand to fifty thousand. Shennong had offered to step down from his position many times, but Lu Yun always turned him down.

Battle formations also emerged in human battles, but that was unplanned. Lu Yun never became directly involved in the scuffles between the primitive tribes, instead focusing on improving the Yan Tribe's strength. Naturally, his end goal wasn't to facilitate the progress of only one tribe, but the entire human race as a whole.

Unfortunately, he knew from history that for humans to come together as a single entity, a period of war was an inevitability. At the same time, he was only theoretically aware of what was to come, since this was a world with a completely different progression of history compared to Earth.

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"The human sacred land?" Lu Yun perked up at Shennong's words.

“You don’t know about it, Lie Shan?” The boy’s obvious confusion caught Shennong off guard, and his surprise showed. He’d always believed that Lu Yun came from the human sacred land, but now, he wasn’t so sure.

“The human sacred land? It must be a place that guards humanity...” Lu Yun first shook his head, then nodded. “No wonder the human race has managed to survive in the great wilderness despite our lack of strength.”

Shennong smiled wryly. He hadn’t expected his pet theory to be so off the mark... Fortunately, his misunderstanding hadn’t led to disaster, and had instead enabled the tribe to grow rapidly and become the greatest faction along the banks of the Wei River.

Lie Shan’s status in the tribe now rivaled Shennong’s. Even Qingyou, who’d been openly hostile to Lie Shan before, was a firm follower.

“The human sacred land not only protects mankind, but also preserves and passes on human civilization!” Shennong turned solemn. “Suiren drilled into wood to obtain fire, Youchou built houses, Cangjie created the written language, Xuanyuan invented wheels, and Shennong discovered edible crops... These findings have all been passed down to humanity via the sacred land.

“Our feats are recorded in the sacred land too. You, Lie Shan, created the qi refinement method, tested all kinds of plants, pioneered agriculture... Such feats should be reported to the sacred land and shared with all of the human race as well!”

Lu Yun gave Shennong a close look without immediately answering. The chief looked much older than the man he’d met nine years ago, and his hair was peppered with white. Although he cultivated the qi refinement method and was now a ‘qi cultivator’, he was a late bloomer and couldn’t replace his inner energy quickly enough.

He was aging; it couldn’t be avoided.

Although Lu Yun’s cultivation method prolonged life, Shennong’s physical health had been greatly damaged after years of overtaxing himself. Not even Lu Yun could cure him of all his old injuries.

Instead of responding, Lu Yun posed a question of his own.

“The sacred land preserves the spark of the human race... But have you considered another way to popularize everything that the tribe has undergone?”

Shennong blinked and fell silent.

“War,” Lu Yun continued. He got to his feet and raised his voice. “Start a war and conquer all of the tribes in the Wei River and Yellow River basins. Bring all of their members into our fold! Then the Yan Tribe and the human race will be one and the same, and everything in the tribe will be shared by the human race!”

“Don’t you know how many will die if you do that?!” Veins bulged on Shennong’s forehead. “We don’t fear war, but have you considered how many will lose their homes and be caught in the crossfire as a result?”

“How is that different from our situation now? Do you think the human race is living a good life now? Are there no displaced people without homes, is death not a common occurrence for us?” Shennong was a good man and a good leader, but Lu Yun felt that he stuck too stubbornly to outdated ideas.

“Nine years ago, on my way to the tribe from Ning Village, I witnessed at least three major tribes and ten lesser ones slaughtered by monsters and spirits.

“Too weak, we’re all too weak compared to everyone else in the great wilderness. In this world where the winner takes all, there is no other way for the human race to survive other than to unite together as a single entity.

“The human sacred land? It may be able to save humanity when we’re on the brink of extinction, but at this moment... the only one who can save us is ourselves.

“Do you really think it’s enough for us to share our knowledge to the other tribes through the sacred land? I can tell you, the answer is a resounding no!

“Why do you think powerful monsters and beasts dare not invade the Yan Tribe? It’s because we have a large population, which allows us to concentrate our strength to protect our tribe. The same logic applies if we are to protect the entire race!

“The human sacred land alone cannot sustain humanity, we must rely on ourselves. As the world never halts from progressing, so must we constantly exert ourselves!”

As if he’d been struck by lightning, Shennong stared dumbly at Lu Yun for a long while.

“I will go to the human sacred land, but a war must be waged! If you refuse to start it, I’ll do it once you hand over your position to me.” Lu Yun’s tone was steely and determined. “Besides, do you really think a war is anything but inevitable? Even if you don’t land the first blow, our neighbors will not tolerate the tribe’s continuous expansion... And the powerful beings in the shadows will not allow the human race to rise in strength.

“A war between humans is the only thing that will make them relax their guard.”

Shennong sighed. “I understand... But for that I have to pay Holy Emperor Fuxi a visit. He has to make the final decision.”

Holy Emperor Fuxi!

Lu Yun felt a pang in his heart and his anticipation was tinged with a trace of panic.

Chapter 837: Observing the Stars and Weaving Fate

The human sacred land could be found at the foot of Mount Buzhou—a legendary divine mountain that held up the skies and body slammed to pieces by Gonggong at some point in the future.

The latter two descriptions belonged to indistinct myths and legends that no one knew the truth of. According to the tales that Lu Yun had heard, Gonggong running afoul of Mount Buzhou happened in an era after humans became masters of the world. As for whether the mountain was indeed a pillar of the world or was formed from the spine of the mythical Pangu, that remained to be seen.

What Lu Yun was certain of was that the land beneath his feet belonged to a ponderous planet, a world unlike the world of immortals. In fact, he had a more specific guess that perhaps... this was humanity's ancestral planet: Earth. Except, this Earth was hundreds of thousands times larger than the homeland he remembered.

Mount Buzhou was enormous and from a distance, it really did look like it propped up the clear blue skies. If one stood at the foot of the mountain and peered up, the mountain peak would be nowhere in sight. A teeming forest of bamboo carpeted the bottom of the landmass and multiple winding paths led into its depths.

This was the sacred land of humanity.

Legend had it that this used to be a place where demon gods gathered, but Holy Emperors Fuxi and Wahuang joined hands to run them off. Thus occupying this wondrous divine mountain, magnificent even in the great wilderness, they established a sacred land for mankind so they could protect humanity.

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There were several thousand kilometers between Mount Buzhou and Yan territory; Lu Yun was to travel with Shennong while the others stayed behind. They were in a period of constant battles—though true war hadn't yet broken out, enemies came by to harass them from time to time.

The two refrained from flying; though both of them could, it was an act of suicide to fly in the great wilderness. Thankfully, their walking abilities were unparalleled, especially as Lu Yun had reached mid golden core realm, putting him on par with the golden immortals of his time. Shennong had exceeded connate great dao as well, but in this world, that still placed him on the level of an ant.

In the world before Emperors Fall, great emperors were as common as cabbages and human kings as numerous as dogs. Theirs was a time of legends and mythology, which also put them before Emperors Fall. The world surged forward on a grand scale in these times, the human race just didn't have the right to take their place on the stage yet.

Shennong and Lu Yun weren't very strong, but their strength was sufficient for travel. All would be fine as long as they avoided any beings they couldn't afford to provoke.

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"This is the Yellow River!" Awe flashed through Lu Yun's eyes when he looked at the roaring river in front of him. He'd once visited the Yellow River back on Earth, but that river paled far in comparison to this one.

"That's right, this big river is called the Yellow River. It's the river that nurtures all of humanity!" Shennong looked emotionally at its waters.

Locations where humans currently thrived, be they the basins of the Wei River or Ji River, were all valleys formed by the branches of the Yellow River. This great river was one of the most preeminent water systems in the great wilderness.

Of course, humans occupied only a few small branches as sites along the main channel were all claimed by other races. If one followed the Yellow River to the west, one would eventually make it to Mount Buzhou.

“Be careful!” Shennong suddenly paused and cocked his head, as if listening for something. “We need to leave!” He grabbed Lu Yun and whirled around.

Boooooom.

A huge foot descended from the skies and stomped right next to Lu Yun and Shennong, sending the two flying into the distance.

Blood agitating, Lu Yun spat out a mouthful of fresh blood and gaped at the gigantic figure in front of him.

It was a humanoid being five hundred kilometers tall, an animal pelt wrapped around his waist and a white bone club in hand. However, he exuded terrifying monster spirit energy; Lu Yun felt like he was facing the two scarlet apes of Levitating Island. This was a monster spirit, and an exceedingly dreadful one at that.

Monster spirits in the great wilderness usually maintained their true forms. Since he’d taken humanoid form, that meant he didn’t want anything to recognize him.

“Monster spirit, how dare you attack humans in the Yellow River basin! Have you forgotten Fuxi’s warning?!” Shennong struggled to his feet and roared furiously at their attacker.

“Fuxi’s warning?” grumbled the monster spirit. “I’m not a resident of the Yellow River, I’m leaving as soon as I kill you two. No one will recognize me in human form, and as mighty as Fuxi might be, how’s he going to catch me?”

He raised his bone club as he spoke and brought it whistling down on Lu Yun. Plainly, his target was Lu Yun!

However, an enormous spider web suddenly blinked into existence in the sky and enveloped the local space. The descending bone club halted in midair, and even the great monster spirit was frozen in a deadly grip.

“A Fated Spider observes the stars and weaves fate, do you want to die, scaled-dragon?” A lazy voice sounded as a sleepy-eyed girl dressed in mauve silks gently floated down. She took a look at the monster spirit in front of her and yawned softly. “No answer huh? Looks like you really do want to die.”

“Mmph mmph MMPH!!” The scaled-dragon struggled furiously and emitted guttural noises, but couldn’t form a single word no matter how hard it tried.

“You say nothing and don’t do anything. Alright then, I shall fulfill your death wish.” The girl yawned and limply waved her slender hand, contracting the spider web around the scaled-dragon.

Puff.

The scaled-dragon that’d seemed petrifying beyond compare exploded like a balloon, filling the air with dust.

The girl in mauve silks turned to Shennong and Lu Yun. “Annoying, so annoying. My nap was disturbed because of you two humans.”

“Thank you for saving us, Miss Ah Zhi!” Shennong quickly bowed in gratitude and threw a meaningful look at Lu Yun.

“Eh? It’s you! Where have I seen you before?” Ah Zhi ignored Shennong in favor of Lu Yun. She stared off into space and then smacked her forehead lightly. “Ah, whatever. I’m going back to nap. Yaaaawn—”

Another great yawn attacking her, she turned around and vanished into thin air.

“Who is she?” Incredulity crossed Lu Yun’s face when the girl left.

“She’s Miss Ah Zhi, guardian of the human sacred land.” Shennong answered and walked over to where the scaled-dragon had died. The club of white bone was still there. “What a treasure, what a treasure!! This is refined from the bones of a divine beast...” He flung the club onto his shoulder with a merry grin. This item could definitely be called a treasure, something that current humans sorely lacked. They used only ordinary metal weapons at most.

Chapter 838: Dongyi

The duo reached Mount Buzhou after another dozen days of walking.

“So this is the legendary Mount Buzhou...” Lu Yun tsk’ed with amazement when he saw the monumental landmass in front of him. If he wasn’t so certain that he was on a planet, he’d really think that this was a pillar holding up the sky.

“Hmm? What are you doing?” He caught a glimpse of a figure stooped on the ground, seemingly studying something. Attention caught, Lu Yun walked over to an erudite-looking young man. Dressed in long purple robes, the young man wore a tiny golden crown in his hair and held a strange looking plate in his hand.

“I’m looking at a part of this world,” the young man replied woodenly as he fixated on a small flower.

“A part of this world?” Lu Yun blinked and crouched down as well to observe the flower.

It was an ordinary flower with no qi or special medicinal qualities. Soft and fragile, it bloomed quietly upon the vast earth.

“There’s a part of our world in this flower?” a baffled Lu Yun asked.

“Of course,” the young man replied absentmindedly. “If our world wasn’t a part of it, how would it exist upon this earth?”

A bolt of lightning seemed to crash into Lu Yun and he goggled at the youth in purple, unable to form words for the longest time. He seemed to be understanding something, but that something remained tantalizingly out of reach. It was like a layer of paper over a window, something just a little foggy and hazy, but strongly resistant to being poked or seen through.

“What are you doing, Lie Shan? Come on!” Shennong’s voice came from far away, sending a tremor through Lu Yun. The youth beside him was gone, leaving just the dainty blossom blooming gently.

“If our world wasn’t a part of the flower, how would it exist upon this earth?” Lu Yun mulled over the last words he’d heard.

“What’s wrong?” Shennong looked askance at the young man.

“Nothing, let’s keep going!” Lu Yun waved his hand.

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“This is... the human sacred land?” Shock filtered through his eyes when he looked at the bamboo forest teeming with life at the foot of Mount Buzhou. “Is this really the human sacred land?!” His eyes were wide with disbelief.

“This is indeed the human sacred land... the Bamboo Forest. Holy Emperors Fuxi and Wahuang live in the depths of the forest,” Shennong replied hesitantly. Lie Shan had been acting weird ever since meeting Miss Ah Zhi.

Lu Yun took in a deep breath and whispered, “This is plainly a huge tomb, a magnificent, spectacular, and extensive tomb... The human sacred land is established over a tomb?!”

One glance was sufficient to identify a layout to bury heaven and earth. The one resting in this tomb wasn’t buried in just the tomb itself, but in the embrace of all living things. Whoever it was possessed an absolutely unbelievable background. This was the singular grandest and most majestic tomb Lu Yun had ever seen in his life!

“Who goes there, halt and state your names!” A soft whistle came from the bamboo forest ahead of them as a dozen emerald-green feathers nailed the ground before Lu Yun and Shennong.

“Shennong of the Yan Tribe by the Wei River is here with the next Shennong. We wish to meet with the holy emperors!” Shennong announced loudly.

“The holy emperors are hosting guests and cannot see you. Go home!” A young man with three feathers stuck in his hair walked out of the bamboo forest. Contempt danced across his face when he looked at the two visitors.

“If they are busy, we can wait here. Why have us leave?” Shennong frowned and yelled back.

“Piss off when I tell you to. Shouting and yelling like this in front of the sacred land, do you have a death wish?!” The young man notched an arrow to his bow and aimed it at Shennong when he saw the man grow angry.

“I am Shennong, my title was personally bestowed by the emperors themselves. I am one of the greatest leaders of humanity, and you would dare kill me?” Shennong drove the white bone club in his hand into the ground and stood with his head held high.

“So what if I do?” snorted the young man. “This is the sacred land, not your pathetic little Yan Tribe. I’d kill even Xuanyuan, Suiren, or Youchao if they dared give offense in the sacred land, much less you!”

Swoosh!

He loosed the fletching in his hand and shot the arrow at Shennong's ear, piercing through a stalk of bamboo behind the man.

"Get out!" roared the young man. "Or the next one goes through your throat!"

A vein throbbed on Shennong's forehead and he almost threw a punch, but Lu Yun clapped a hand on his shoulder.

"Hold it in." Lu Yun shook his head. "We were attacked by a huge monster spirit when we passed through the Yellow River basin on our way here. I bet that has something to do with this fellow. Judging from the feathers in his hair, he should be from the Dongyi Tribe?"

"Since the Dongyi are colluding with monster spirits to assassinate a leader of the human race, we'll go back immediately and declare war on the Dongyi tribes. We'll wipe them all out!"

After ten years in the great wilderness, Lu Yun was quite familiar with the local customs of the various large tribes. Skill in archery and wearing feathers in their hair were the trademark of the Dongyi tribes.

Dongyi was an identifier for the many tribes to the north of Qingqiu Mountain. They were a branch of the human race that resided by the banks of the Yellow River, but they weren't as numerous as those living in the basin proper.

Dongyi and those who lived by the Yellow River often fought each other, their battles actually more devastating than scuffles between tribes along the river. Now that the Yan Tribe had grown so much stronger and all of its people were qi refiners, it wouldn't be too difficult to destroy all of the Dongyi tribes.

Shennong blinked, then nodded. "Alright, let's go back!"

The two turned without a second word.

"Hah! Destroy the Dongyi tribes? You'll have to make it back alive first." A cold sneer still hung on the young man's face.

"Ah, yes." Lu Yun stopped and turned back with a brilliant grin. "Please say hello to Miss Ah Zhi for me and thank her for saving our lives. If it wasn't for her, we wouldn't have made it here safely and will probably have to trouble her on our way back as well."

"What?? Miss Ah Zhi?!" The youth's face changed drastically. "Get back here!"

"Who's raising a fuss here and disturbing my sleep?" a lazy girlish voice rose again. "Eh? It's Shennong and... Lie Shan. Why aren't you coming inside since you're already here?"

Yawning, Ah Zhi appeared out of nowhere.

His face now in an appropriate expression, the young man didn't say anything after Ah Zhi appeared on the scene.

"Miss Ah Zhi, he..." Shennong pointed at the young man, but Lu Yun cut him off.

"We are weary from our long journey and have just arrived at the sacred land. We'll have to trouble Miss Ah Zhi to show us the way." He took a thorough look at the lady, then shifted his eyes away.

He didn't intend on rattling off the young man's crimes. With Ah Zhi and Fuxi's strength, there was no way they didn't know everything that was happening here. For some reason, a strange mixture of unease and anticipation had grown stronger in Lu Yun's heart since they'd arrived at the sacred land.

Chapter 839: It's You!

Past the bamboo forest at the foot of Mount Buzhou lay the human sacred land. Its overall arrangement was similar to that of the tribes outside, but the humans here were much more powerful.

Initiates in the great connate dao and golden core cultivators were plentiful. There were even some who'd exceeded golden core and reached true divinity like Shennong. However, all of them looked at the two newcomers with burning hostility, which confused Shennong.

Yawning, Ah Zhi waved Shennong and Lu Yun away and started vanishing as she walked off. "I'm going back to sleep. Fuxi will see you once he's free."

The moment she disappeared, a good number of humans swarmed Shennong and Lu Yun.

"Explain yourself, Shennong!" A tall, strongly-built old man grabbed Shennong by the collar and lifted him up with a shriek. "There is no bad blood between the Yu and Yan Tribes. Why did you destroy my people?!"

His cultivation was no less stronger than Shennong's, but Shennong was now a qi refiner. Shennong could easily defeat him.

"Heavens pity my tribe, gone are our bloodlines!" He threw Shennong to the ground and stomped on the latter's chest.

Shennong's eyes were wide with shock. "What? The Yu Tribe has been destroyed?!"

The Yu Tribe was a major tribe by the banks of the Yellow River, weaker than the Yan Tribe by only a small margin.

Shennong knew what the old man meant. In a conflict between two human tribes, the winner usually destroyed the totem and tribute spirit of the loser, but spared the tribesmen for slavery. If the loser surrendered and agreed to worship the winner's totem and tribute spirit, the two tribes could gradually come together as one.

The main surname in the Yan Tribe was Jiang, but there were other families in the tribe who'd been brought in after past battles. That was what Lu Yun meant when he suggested Shennong start a war to unite the human race. Those who surrendered would become their kin, while those who refused would become their slaves.

Destroying and slaughtering another tribe down to the last... that was something very rarely done.

"Stop playing dumb, Shennong!" The Yu elder glared so hard that the corners of his eyes cracked and bled. Although there were still many members of the Yu Tribe in the human sacred land, they were no longer tribesmen after joining the faction.

Hum.

Shennong's presence surged, knocking the old man off his feet.

"What nonsense are you spouting, Di?!" Shennong matched the old man's volume. "My son married the daughter of Dafeng, chief of the Yu Tribe! Why would I destroy my in-laws?! Speak! What's going on here? Who told you the Yans destroyed the Yus? When did all this happen?!"

His gaze was as vicious as that of a fierce tiger found in the deepest parts of a jungle.

Elder Di couldn't help but shudder and take a few involuntary steps back. The other humans nearby paled in response as well.

Shennong's strength was too great, greater than all of the other true divines present. His was a strength that belonged to a completely different system.

They were like two physically equal adults fighting, but one with a wooden stick and the other with a great sword that could slice through iron like butter. There was no contest.

"You really don't know?!" Di picked himself up and peered into Shennong's eyes.

Shennong responded coolly, "I am Shennong!"

His name was almost magical, instantly calming down the humans in the area.

"It was Gai, Gai told us!" someone volunteered the information. "He saw you lead Yan warriors in slaughtering the Yu Tribe, not sparing even three-year-olds."

Gai was the Dongyi man who'd stopped Shennong and Lu Yun from entering the sacred land earlier.

"The Yu Tribe has indeed been destroyed, as confirmed by the sacred land. Traces of the Yan tribute spirit were found at the scene." Di panted heavily from the ground. He'd confirmed the annihilation of his tribe himself. If others from the sacred land hadn't stopped him at the time, he would've charged to the Yan Tribe then and there to enact his vengeance.

"The demise of the Yu Tribe has nothing to do with the Yan Tribe." Lu Yun took a step forward and prevented Shennong from protesting. "Everything is twisted and it's all lies. The truth will come out once we meet with the holy emperor. Nothing will be solved by standing around here."

Faces softened at the mention of the holy emperor. Off to the side, Gai stared at Shennong, his smile cold and his gaze icy. However, the smile froze when the young man by Shennong's side—Lie Shan—suddenly turned and flashed him a toothy grin.

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"Is there bad blood between you and that Gai?" Lu Yun asked curiously.

"Bad blood?" Shennong chuckled darkly. "Of course there is. I killed Gai's father with a spear through his torso. Hehehe, I wasn't Shennong yet back then."

Now he understood. Gai was the one behind everything; the only person in this sacred land who had any reason to set him up was Gai.

"I thought that boy would challenge me fair and square to avenge his father after entering the sacred land and learning from Holy Emperor Fuxi... But he resorted to lowly tricks instead and even wiped out all of the Yu Tribe!" Veins throbbed in Shennong's forehead.

"You two, follow me to His Majesty the Holy Emperor!" A lilting childlike voice sounded from a blue bird, one that dove down from the sky to hover before them.

"Understood!" Lu Yun got to his feet and followed the bird with an excited glint in his eyes. Shennong was right behind him.

Once they passed the residential area, they reached the foot of Mount Buzhou proper. Fuxi sat cross-legged on top of a great azure rock with bare feet. A thirty-something man dressed in linen, he gave Lu Yun a beatific smile.

"There you are, Lu Yun!" Fuxi jumped down from the rock. "But you look different!"

"It's you!!" Lu Yun cried out in disbelief, goggling at Fuxi.

Chapter 840: Hope is in the Future

Shennong looked dumbly at the two, not understanding what they were playing at. He understood even less why Fuxi was calling Lie Shan by the name of Lu Yun, and why Lie Shan seemed to be quite familiar with the holy emperor.

"Shennong, I know everything that's happened in the Yan Tribe. Since you've chosen Lie Shan to be the next Shennong, we can have everything proceed according to his ideas." Fuxi chose to address the Yan chief instead of responding to Lu Yun.

"I will follow the holy emperor's decree!" Shennong responded respectfully.

"Alright, you may head to the Heritage Dais and pass on your knowledge. What the sacred land grasps belongs only to the sacred land. You will have to do things yourself if you wish to share something with the entire human race." Fuxi waved a hand.

"Understood." Shennong looked at Lu Yun before taking his leave.

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"Have a seat." Fuxi sat cross-legged on the ground and looked at Lu Yun.

Lu Yun took a deep breath and followed suit. "My appearance has indeed changed. I'm much tanner compared to before."

He rubbed his cheek. After being reborn in the world of immortals, he'd been a fine dandy living in the lap of luxury. He spent every second reveling in a luxurious life, at most entering a few tombs and engaging in a few fights every now and then. Of course he'd been pale and soft-skinned then.

After arriving in this primitive world, he spent his days weathering wind and rain as he studied agriculture and tasted various plants. He looked much more rough around the edges compared to before, and was much stockier.

“You, however, haven’t changed much. You look very much like how you do in the future.” Lu Yun scratched his nose. “Your eyes look brighter though.”

Fuxi smiled and didn’t respond.

“I’d like to know... did you become Fuxi, or did Fuxi become you?” Lu Yun looked curiously at Fuxi’s eyes.

“Is there a difference?” Fuxi grinned brilliantly. “Just like you—do you think you’ve become Lie Shan or has Lie Shan become you?”

Lu Yun remained silent.

“There is no Wayfarer in the future or Celestial Master Zhang. In fact, the celestial masters don’t exist at all, they’re just a dream.” Fuxi rose and looked at the sky.

“Do you mean that... all four of you come from this period of time?!” Lu Yun’s eyes grew wide.

Wayfarer, Celestial Master Zhang! The Fuxi in front of him was Wayfarer, which made him Celestial Master Zhang of the Primordial Era!

Lu Yun would’ve never thought that Wayfarer would be Fuxi. In fact, the Wayfarer he knew wasn’t the real one. It was just his skin. Art Saint, Zither Saint, the Gorb Demon, and some other fellow he hadn’t met yet were all evolved from his senses.

It was also immensely apparent that Fuxi would always exist in the future as Wayfarer, the two saints, and the Gorb Demon. He knew the development and future direction of the world.

“Mm.” Fuxi nodded. “The current world is a chaotic miasma in which a single spark of hope cannot be gleaned. Therefore, Ah Zhi and Tushan built an enormous dream for us to head to the future.

“However, none of us counted on Ah Zhi and Tushan losing themselves in the dream. Thankfully, they all returned safely in the end.”

Lu Yun remained silent.

So Tushan and Ah Zhi had joined hands to weave an enormous dream that brought them to the future... When Lu Yun first met the little fox, she’d been living in a dream of reality and took Lu Yun and the others to be a figment of her imagination.

As for Ah Zhi... she was Yu Hengluo.

“Do you want to know who the other person is?” Fuxi looked at Lu Yun with a smile.

“You’ve already refined him into the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals, haven’t you? He’s the legendary creator, God.” Lu Yun raised his head and looked at Wayfarer’s familiar face.

Fuxi sighed. “The immortal dao needed a treasure to support it and a simple jade creation disk wasn’t enough. It needed a stronger treasure to make it whole...

“The divine race once built an ancient divine court to complete it, but that was still far from enough. Thus, God sacrificed himself and used his core essence to supplement the immortal dao.

"It was also because of this that immortal dao didn't shatter to pieces in that war. Our hope lies in the future," Fuxi sighed softly.

"A god from the past died in the future..." Lu Yun grinned ruefully. "Why the immortal dao?"

"Because it is the dao of all. Take a look at this primitive dao, God created it for divine spirits." Fuxi raised his hand, looking as if he was holding something up. "What do you think about it?"

"This kind of dao isn't suitable for humans." Lu Yun frowned.

"Right, it's not suitable for humans... or any other races." Fuxi nodded. "Therefore, you're here as Lie Shan. Only you can modify the primitive dao, and you've succeeded!" He grinned broadly. "The qi refiners among humans now are a spark of hope that will light up the entire great wilderness sooner or later. They will illuminate the great dao!"

"I'd always thought that the greatest accomplishment of us four traveling to the future was for God willingly turning himself into a treasure to protect the immortal dao. I hadn't thought that it'd be to bring you back!"

"Our hope is in the future, and you've created the future here!"

"I created the future here?" Lu Yun frowned slightly.

"That's right, you've created the future. You are the future world, and you're unique! That's why I've selected you and pulled you back from the future!" Fuxi nodded.

Lu Yun heaved a long sigh of relief. Fuxi wasn't looking for him, he was looking for the Tome of Life and Death. What was unique was the book and not him, and it was the book that'd created the future. It'd only made use of his hands to do so.

"I'd thought that the little fox had lost Yu Hengluo. So she actually brought Yu Hengluo back instead." Lu Yun smiled wryly.

Fuxi shook his head. "Tushan completely lost herself. Ah Zhi and my eyes saw the birth of an enormous demon and were almost corrupted ourselves."

"An enormous demon? The demon god? Or the demon god's master?" Lu Yun blinked.

"Demon god? The demon god's master? Ji Du and Luo Houluo?" Fuxi shook his head. "They're just minor characters compared to the great demon. The great demon will be born in the future and will become the greatest enemy of immortal dao."

Lu Yun nodded. "So what happened to Ah Zhi? In my time, I saw two Yu Hengluos and one of them was missing her skin. Does that have something to do with the great demon?"

"Yes." Fuxi nodded. "One of them is Ah Zhi in a dream, and the other is her actual body. The one missing her skin is her body."

Lu Yun trembled.

"Would you like to meet God?" Fuxi suddenly asked.

God, the only creator in all of the heavens.