

Necropolis 871

Chapter 871: Food

The only way to prod Lu Yun into continuously releasing his strength was through battle! Hence, neither Hebo nor Wahuang paid a visit to the conflict zone. There was only Lu Yun and his own power.

His boxing method of the five elements nurtured and countered each other, repeating in a continuous cycle to unleash enormous might.

In the beginning, Lu Yun was fully suppressed by the two demon gods and suffered great injuries because of it. Blood drenched his body and Huashe even ripped off one of his arms. It was only due to hellfire that the two demon gods didn't dare close in for the kill.

However, his body of the world could absorb the energy of the land and thus restored his arm in short order.

As time went on, Lu Yun discovered that the great dao of the land was becoming more agreeable to his body. His blows were growing stronger, and it seemed that the trajectory of his every move and technique increasingly fit in more with this world.

The two demon gods that'd previously been firmly superior to the human noted these changes with growing horror.

"What's going on?! He's slowly getting stronger. If this continues, we won't be his match for long!" Fuzhu and Huashe were frightened out of their wits.

The human boy was now firmly on their level and in fact, beginning to gain the upper hand! Minor changes were also somehow developing in their own strength, as if they were being weakened!

Indeed, as the heavenly dao changed, so would the connate demon gods born under the primitive great dao naturally be sapped of their strength.

Lu Yun had withdrawn hellfire by now and immersed himself in the vast heavenly dao. He breathed with the rhythm of all living beings, and for this moment, felt like he'd become one with the land.

"If there isn't a part of this world in the flower, how can it exist upon this earth?" Lu Yun suddenly recalled what Hongjun had said to him before.

If there isn't a part of this world in my body, then how would I exist upon this earth? The world is me, and I am the world.

Hummm.

Spontaneous enlightenment struck Lu Yun and his strength underwent a drastic change, reaching unfathomable heights. He suddenly struck out, grabbed Huashe's neck, and twisted the snake's head off.

Puff!

A simple palm strike rendered the snake's corpse into ash.

“Mercy!!” An ashen Fuzhu hit the ground with both knees and pleaded for mercy.

All of heaven and earth fell silent, and the connate demon gods observing the battle were overawed. Two of their kind had gone hunting a human, but Huashe had been dusted into oblivion and Fuzhu was on his knees, begging for his life!

Lu Yun ignored Fuzhu and squeezed Huashe’s head, popping it like an orange so that a murky pearl fell into his hands.

“It’s the Pelagic Orb.” Lu Yun blinked. This would be Situ Zong’s most prized possession, a treasure that would eventually become his body. Situ Zong was one of his most valuable Infernum in the future.

“In that case...” A sudden thought occurred to him and he transferred the strength he’d used to kill Huashe into the pearl. He then flung the treasure into the northern reaches of the great wilderness with every iota of his strength.

“Sign a blood contract and become my steed. Otherwise, I’ll roast you and serve you to the human Yan Tribe. Choose.” Lu Yun looked coldly at Fuzhu.

The demon god’s blood ran cold. How could his august self become food for these insignificant ants? Though Fuxi protected the race, some of Fuzhu’s own subordinates raised humans as pigs for the slaughter. Though humans were latter-day descendants and quite ordinary, they were still related to the great god Pangu, so many demon gods vied to feast on humans.

How could he have ever imagined that a noble demon god such as he would have the tables turned on him?

But to become a human’s steed...

Fuzhu was equally unwilling. A demon god had never become the steed of others! Even Celestial Emperor Taiyi, after conquering the great wilderness with the Bell of Chaos, had only recruited the demon gods to his banner. He’d made them celestial kings and treated them with all due pomp and circumstance!

“So it seems you want to become food for humans instead.” Lu Yun hesitated no longer when he read Fuzhu’s expression and waved a hand at the demon god’s head.

“No, I’ll become your steed, don’t kill me!” Fuzhu shrieked when he saw that the human really intended to kill him!

Unfortunately for him, a move made was one that couldn’t be retracted. Lu Yun smashed Fuzhu’s head to pieces with one blow and refined ninety percent of the strength remaining in the corpse into his own body.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to trouble you, Hebo.” Lu Yun flung the corpse into the Yellow River.

As a connate demon god, Fuzhu’s body instantly ballooned ten thousand meters wide upon his death. Down in the river, the slack-jawed Hebo scrambled into action when he saw the body crash down on him and just barely managed to catch it in time before it smashed into the water.

“This is Fuzhu’s life sphere!” Seeing the life sphere whole and untouched within the corpse, Hebo quickly understood that this was a gift for him. “My thanks to you, Lie Shan!”

Delight overtook the river god. His strength would take another step forward with this life sphere! It was in that moment that Hebo discarded all of his other thoughts and wholeheartedly devoted himself to protecting the humans in the Yellow River basin.

He delivered Fuzhu’s body to the Yan Tribe, where it would fundamentally improve the tribe’s constitution and strength after they ate it. Shennong, Jiang Ti, and the pixiu would become celestial divines, while Ah Bao would reach peak divine king, placing her at the top of her realm. She would have to grasp her own great dao if she wanted to enter empyrean realm, as this wasn’t a cultivation level accessible via outside force.

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After news that Lie Shan of the human race had hunted down Dusk Snake of the former celestial court, the great wilderness erupted in an uproar again after seeing him kill two connate demon gods in broad daylight.

His earlier feat was subject to skepticism since no one knew what had occurred in the cosmos, but he’d now used undeniable power to slay both Fuzhu and Huashe. No one could find any point of criticism anymore.

It would take a premier demon god to claim the Bell of Chaos since it didn’t seem anyone below that could beat Lie Shan. He even possessed the dreadful hellfire!

Lu Yun stood in midair, took stock of his surroundings, then shifted to Mount Buzhou.

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“Yawnnn. You’re here again.” Ah Zhi muttered sleepily as she looked at the suddenly appeared Lu Yun. “You were just a tiny bean sprout last I saw you, but you’ve turned into a big lump in such a short period of time. Go on in, Wahuang’s been waiting for you.”

She flicked a glance at a faction inside the sacred land and said listlessly, “Gai, you can’t beat the big lump this time. Don’t create trouble for him now.”

Gai was the Dongyi man who’d blocked Lu Yun and Shennong’s way last time they visited the sacred land. He shuddered when he heard Ah Zhi’s words, dearly wishing for the ground to open up and swallow him whole.

Create trouble for Lie Shan? He didn’t want to die yet.

Chapter 872: Eternal and Arbiter

“Lieshan, do you fancy yourself a top chaos realm expert in the great wilderness after killing Huashe and Fuzhu?” These were Wahuang’s first words to Lu Yun upon seeing him.

“Why does the holy emperor say so?” Lu Yun replied, flabbergasted. “There’s nothing special about Huashe and Fuzhu. The chaos realm masters who have transformed into suns in the cosmos are all

countless times more powerful than them... Why should I feel any sense of accomplishment after killing the two?

“Besides, there are many more great powers in the great wilderness and many connate demon gods who can take my life. In fact, Luo Houluo can also kill me with a single thought. He must have stayed out of this conflict out of respect for you...”

Wahuang glared at him ferociously. “What am I supposed to say after you’ve said all this? I’ll give you another chance!”

After a bemused pause, Lu Yun ventured tentatively, “The holy emperor is right. Fuzhu and Huashe are both connate demon gods. Since I could kill them, I must be one of the greatest powers in the great wilderness.”

“Watch your arrogance!” Wahuang scoffed. “Fuzhu and Huashe are nothing special. It’s no great deed that you managed to kill them! The connate gods who have transformed into the suns in the cosmos are all far more powerful than they are!”

Ehh... Lu Yun swallowed his protests.

“There’s no place for your arrogance here, you must learn to be humble! There’s no shortage of great powers in the great wilderness who can take your life!”

Lu Yun remained silent until Wahuang shot him a sideways glance. “How droll. Remember not to take the words out of my mouth next time!”

“Understood, I won’t!” Well, this holy emperor of the human race, the Lady Nuwa he’d heard so much about in future legends, was certainly quite different from what he’d imagined.

“Alright, why did you come to Mount Buzhou this time?” Wahuang asked in a softer voice, gracelessly sprawling into a cross-legged position onto a nearby azure rock.

She’d assumed that Lu Yun would either stay in a human tribe and cultivate studiously, or pay a visit to the Mu Tribe in the East Sea so he could ask Ling Weiyang to acquire the Constellation Willow from Luo Houluo.

But here Lieshan was, in Mount Buzhou.

Lu Yun hurried to explain, “In response to the holy emperor...”

Wahuang waved a hand at him and interrupted, “Though you haven’t reached the chaos realm, you are capable of killing those in the realm. That makes you one of us. You may call me ‘fellow daoist’.”

“Fellow daoist!” Lu Yun sucked in a deep breath and nodded. Then, he gingerly set up a formation to create an isolated space, upon which the little fox popped out of Lu Yun’s embrace.

“Tushan? I thought you didn’t have anything to do with the opposite gender.” Wahuang’s eyes shot wide open. “Taiyi almost divorced Yinglong for you... You... you... Why would you put yourself in a man’s arms?”

The little fox twitched her furry ears. With a flash of dreamlike silver light, she manifested as the stunning woman who could topple a city with her beauty.

“He might as well be a hunk of rock. There’s no space left in his brain for anyone else, so he won’t have any untoward thoughts toward me.” Tushan plopped down on the giant boulder much like Wahuang had.

Lu Yun smiled wryly.

“Yinglong entrusted these to Lie Shan.” The little fox brought out the two eggs. “They’re her children with Taiyi!”

“It’s them! They were born in the great wilderness through Taiyi and Yinglong!” Wahuang couldn’t contain herself when she saw the two eggs and hurriedly muffled her exclamations. “I understand now... Follow me!”

She jumped down from the boulder and made her way to the depths of Mount Buzhou. Tushan transformed back into a little fox and burrowed into Lu Yun’s arms.

After a beat, Lu Yun huffed out a resigned laugh and followed Wahuang.

“Arbiter bears too much killing intent. If she’s sent into the blood sea, she may very well become the world’s most dangerous, crazed fiend bent on murder. Only sites blessed with the most magnanimous energy of the earth can counter her bloodthirsty nature.

“Mount Buzhou is the origin of the great wilderness. It serves as a pillar for the cosmos above and a doorway to the netherdark. Nurtured here is the purest of earthly energy, Yinglong was born here as well,” Wahuang explained as she walked.

“Eternal is mild-tempered and personable. It will be difficult for someone like her to survive in the great wilderness. Therefore, she must go to the blood sea and inherit its vicious violence and killing intent. Only then she’ll become a vicious god of slaughter for whom nothing is off limits.”

“Will the connate demon gods really go extinct in the future?” Lu Yun asked.

Wahuang answered with a question of her own. “Have you encountered any connate demon gods in your time?”

“In my time?” Lu Yun shook his head. “I am too weak to see the cosmos.”

The world of immortals was a complicated place, much more so than the great wilderness. Here in the wilderness, any sentient being, even the lowliest ones, knew about connate demon gods as the greatest power in the world, rivalling figures such as Celestial Emperor Taiyi. They also knew about the existence of certain creators in their time.

In the world of immortals, on the other hand, such truths were only known to those who had reached a certain height in their cultivation.

Lu Yun had once thought that immortals were the most powerful beings in the world of immortals, with the nine celestial emperors placed at the very top. As he grew stronger and stronger, however, he

learned from what he heard and saw. Still, it felt like he could never see the sky and never glean the deepest truths of the world.

Had connate demon gods really gone extinct in his time? Had realm monsters really been erased?

Lu Yun suddenly couldn't be certain of what was and wasn't in the world of immortals.

Wahuang fell silent as well. She hadn't been to the future and hadn't seen the world of immortals with her own eyes. Although Fuxi had told her about how things would develop from their time, his version of the story might not be entirely accurate.

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A ball of terrifyingly powerful life energy resided at the heart of Mount Buzhou, where a mighty divine beast was to be born.

"There are five cardinal directions between heaven and earth—east, west, south, north, and center." Wahuang stood before the ball of concentrated energy. "Azure Dragon of the east, White Tiger of the west, Vermilion Bird of the south, and Black Tortoise of the north have all been born, each ruling over a cardinal direction... The god of the center is the only one who remains unborn."

"Moat Snake!" Lu Yun voiced his realization.

"That's right, Moat Snake." Wahuang nodded. "It should've been born as the lord of the central world, but my parents, Leize the connate divine dragon and Huaxu the connate divine snake, sealed it away.

"They did it for her." She summoned Carmine Arbiter's egg with a wave of her hand.

"She was to be the first connate god of the netherdark and its ruler, responsible for establishing the cycle of reincarnation," murmured Wahuang. "Unfortunately, her fortuitous opportunity was claimed by Darkriver and so mastery over the rules of the world is her compensation. She will be born into the body of the Moat Snake, but with her own soul."

"What about the original Moat Snake?" Lu Yun frowned. "Won't this be unfair to them?"

Darkriver had taken Carmine Arbiter's chance of life, but now, wasn't she going to do the same to Moat Snake?

"The original Moat Snake?" Wahuang blinked. "You just killed him."

Chapter 873: Netherdark

"Huashe..." Lu Yun groaned weakly.

"Indeed, that was Huashe," Wahuang chuckled merrily. "If it'd been Moat Snake attacking you just now and not Huashe, do you think you'd still be standing here?"

Lu Yun was rendered speechless.

"I think... if it'd been Moat Snake... he wouldn't have come after me for my treasure..." he spoke uncertainly.

"Hmph!" Wahuang said nothing, save for a massive harrumph.

When she placed Arbiter into the enormous ball of life essence, the figure of a hazy yellowish snake flashed through the air and sank into the egg. With that, the egg also turned a yellowish-brown color and slowly descended into the depths of Mount Buzhou.

“Next, you need to deliver Eternal to the depths of the Blood Sea in the netherdark. However, that’s part of Darkriver’s territory and I can’t set foot in it, so it’ll be up to you,” said Wahuang.

“I’m going too!” The little fox jumped onto Lu Yun’s head and waved her furry paws.

“Go on then.” Wahuang nodded. “But be careful, there are countless pairs of eyes staring at the two of you now. The connate demon gods in the netherdark won’t pass up this opportunity for some trouble either.

“Oh, right.” She suddenly slapped her forehead. “I almost forgot—that guy borrowed something from you last time and didn’t pay you back in kind. He gave me this to give to you.”

She opened her hand and sent a lotus flower to Lu Yun. It was translucent and looked like it’d been formed from jade, and occupied a full hundred and eight ranks when it came to treasure rankings.

Lu Yun immediately thought of Hongjun. The ancestor hadn’t repaid him with anything when he borrowed the Stone of Three Lives—not that Lu Yun had minded. But to think that he’d sent his sentiments to Wahuang!

Well, that’s true. The first time I met Hongjun was outside Mount Buzhou.

“What is this?” Lu Yun asked curiously as he took the palm-sized lotus flower in hand.

“This is a spirit-grade connate treasure. Though it’s only spirit grade, it possesses unlimited potential for growth. It’s not inconceivable that it might surpass the Bell of Chaos to become the greatest connate treasure beneath the heavens one day.” Wahuang looked at the lotus flower with some irritation. She’d wanted to refine the flower long ago, but Hongjun had gotten to it one step before her. She wasn’t his match, so had to give up the treasure.

Though it’d been in her hands earlier, she wasn’t going to unscrupulously claim it for herself.

“There’s no predetermined attribute within this flower... it’s just pure strength. Then... won’t it...” Lu Yun shook with excitement and sent his sword dao into the lotus. Sword energy immediately rampaged throughout the flower and each one of its petals transformed into keen blades.

Wahuang looked at the youth with great envy.

“What a treasure, what a great treasure!” When Lu Yun withdrew his sword dao, the lotus returned to its pristine state, not a trace of his sword dao to be found. After thinking for a moment more, he sent hellfire into it.

Whoosh!

The flower petals turned black as blazing hellfire danced upon it.

“Hellfire won’t destroy it either?” This quite shocked Lu Yun.

“Hmph!” Wahuang harrumphed again and pouted. “It’s getting late, you should head to the netherdark!”

Lu Yun scratched his head and put the lotus flower away. He was now peak empyrean realm, so it would be an easy task to refine this flower. A spirit-grade connate treasure was also perfect for his current status.

Though he could deploy the true strength of a connate peerless treasure, it would be very difficult for him to fully refine it within a short amount of time. He had ninety years left to him, but that still wouldn’t be enough for the endeavor.

The lotus flower lacked a name and had always been in Hongjun’s possession. Apart from Wahuang and a few others in the great wilderness, no one else knew of its existence. One had to know that the Chaos Lotus, first of the nine great spirit roots, occupied only thirty-six ranks when evaluated. This lotus flower was a full hundred and eight!

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The road to netherdark was a winding path beneath Mount Buzhou. A section of endless darkness stretched ahead of them as they followed the path; the little fox had burrowed deep into Lu Yun’s arms and wouldn’t take a look no matter what.

“Aren’t you sad at all now that Taiyi’s really gone?” Lu Yun dragged her out and placed her on his shoulder.

“He could never bear to really die,” the little fox snorted. “He prepared the Great Formation of the Nineheavens Gates a long time ago and took advantage of the situation to pull a disappearing act, just like a cicada sloughing off its skin. He’s just waiting for human dao to be established so he can be reborn as a human.

“In the future, someone will bring out the diagram for the Great Formation of the Nineheavens Gates and seal away the great wilderness planet. Someone also sets up the great formation in the Xuan Yuan Tomb. Who do you think does all that?”

Incredulous silence blared from Lu Yun.

“That guy went to the trouble of ruining my reputation so he could get my Bell of Chaos. He said I was his consort! Hmph! Hmmpmph hmph hmph!!” The little fox polished the bell hanging from her neck. “The bell was mine to begin with! That person gave it to me!”

That person was the one who’d enlightened the little fox—very possibly Hongjun.

“Ah, right. I once heard that in the time before Emperors Fall, the great masters rarely revealed their real names out of concern that someone would be able to attack them with that knowledge. Why aren’t the masters of the great wilderness like this?” Lu Yun was rather confused. This had been one of the reasons why he’d gone to the effort of creating the Lie Shan moniker.

“We are in the age of the primitive great dao, a time in which many combat arts and cultivation methods are ridiculously crude. Even an empyrean cultivator like you can smash a chaos realm demon

god to pieces. What kind of intricate art do you think those brutish and absentminded demon gods can come up with?" The little fox rolled her eyes.

"All of that will happen after the human dao is established, and most of the uncanniest combat arts will be invented by the humans."

Lu Yun rubbed his nose. He was just chitchatting because their surroundings were growing increasingly sinister. An evil wind howled on both sides of the path, and ghostly faces seemed to fade in and out of existence beside them.

The netherdark was the world of the dead. Unless one happened to be a great master, dead souls would all be inevitably drawn to this world. He and the little fox had entered it at some unknown point in time.

The path beneath their feet twisted and turned, exuding a faint haze of light. It was their only source of light in this world.

"This path will likely become the Path of the Dead in the future." Fiery sparks flashed through Lu Yun's eyes—hellfire was biding its time and just scaring off the things around them for now.

"But the netherdark should be a world of its own, which isn't the case here. So... we aren't really in the netherdark yet," he murmured to himself.

"Lie Shan of the human race, why do you trespass into the netherdark?!" An intangible voice demanded by his ear.

"What trespass into the netherdark?" A cold smile quirked Lu Yun's lips. "This your home?"

Chapter 874: God of Taishan Mountain

"How dare you!" The being in the darkness flew into a rage and loudly denounced Lu Yun.

"How dare me? Oh, I dare indeed. I've already turned Fuzhu into minced meat." A nasty leer played at the corners of Lu Yun's lips and he walked steadily ahead, the white lotus blooming gracefully over his head.

"This is the dao arena of Patriarch Darkriver! Lie Shan of the human race, aren't you afraid of attracting trouble for your race?!" The mysterious being in the darkness seemed to be backing up and didn't dare come face to face with Lu Yun.

"The human race has Leize, Huaxu, Fuxi, and Wahuang as its protectors. Whoever dares provoke humanity will face their combined wrath and be diced into minced meat. Are you looking for trouble with these words, or dragging down your Patriarch Darkriver with you?" Lu Yun sneered.

"You... will depart with all due haste before Patriarch Darkriver is enraged! He will tear you to shreds when that dire moment comes!" the unknown being snarled loudly.

Hummm.

The white lotus of a hundred and eight ranks abruptly unfurled into full blossom and cast a stark white light over the premises. Lu Yun saw a snake, an enormous snake as large as a mountain. It was pitch-

black with scarlet red eyes, its scales flared out as uniformly keen blades. It seemed ready to attack Lu Yun at a moment's notice.

"Bashe." Lu Yun's eyes narrowed when he saw the snake.

He'd learned a bit about the netherdark from the little fox before making this trip. Bashe was a connate demon god in the netherdark roughly on par with Dusk Snake and Huashe. But when physically located in the netherdark, he was stronger than both of them.

He was currently coiled around a mountain, large head slightly dipped downwards and eyes fixed in a deadly stare at Lu Yun. The human's reputation was too renowned as of late. He'd slain Dusk Snake, Fuzhu, and Huashe; there was no one who didn't know him in the three realms of the great wilderness.

Mount Buzhou was a path that led to the netherdark, but one only for ordinary lifeforms. For connate demon gods, the three realms of the great wilderness were their oyster. It was just that denizens of the netherdark rarely voluntarily visited the great wilderness or the cosmos.

Bashe naturally knew about Lie Shan killing Fuzhu and Huashe, so he was momentarily frightened out of his wits to see the infamous human arrive in his home. Of the three connate demon gods dead at his hands, two of them were snake demon gods. This human was a veritable snake killer!

"Lie Shan of the human race, this is the netherdark, a place where you have to toe the line and follow the rules!" Bashe roared, trying to spread word of what was happening here.

"This isn't the real netherdark yet, just the intersection between the great wilderness and the actual netherdark. Only once we pass this mountain do we enter the real world of the dead." Lu Yun smirked coldly at Bashe. "Do you think so little of me that you would bar my way here?"

He absolutely had the right to throw his weight around now. He'd been barehanded when he fought Fuzhu and Huashe, but now he had a treasure in his hands that clocked in at a hundred and eight ranks!

"You..." Bashe's inky-black scales turned stark white as humiliation rose in his heart. How long had it been since someone dared speak to him like this?? Even Patriarch Darkriver treated him with utmost respect.

"Piss off if you don't want to die!"

Hummm.

Lu Yun's lotus erupted with blindingly sharp light with his roar, illumination that shot toward the heavens.

No response was forthcoming from Bashe; he turned into a shadowy mass and disappeared.

"That Bashe dared provoke me means he was protecting something. If my guess is right, the mountain is holding a treasure!" Lu Yun murmured to himself as he looked at the dark landmark ahead of him.

"That's Mount Tai, the mountain that marks the intersection of the great wilderness and netherdark. You'll be in the world of the dead once you pass Mount Tai," the little fox whispered, popping her head out of Lu Yun's robes.

“Mount Tai? The Mount Tai of the Eastern Mountain?” Lu Yun blinked. “What’s Mount Tai doing here? Ah, well, I suppose the Five Great Mountains don’t exist in the great wilderness yet, but what is Mount Tai doing here?”

“Have you never heard of souls returning to Mount Tai?” The little fox curled her lip. “In the future, Mount Tai will be the boundary between the realms of yin and yang. It will be hailed as the mountain of the realms, which is why Mount Tai is the foremost of the Five Great Mountains and the grounds upon which emperors are coronated!”

“Will Mount Buzhou be destroyed at some point?” Another legend occurred to Lu Yun.

Gonggong would body slam Mount Buzhou to pieces at some point, but looking at the mountain now, a hundred, no, a thousand Gonggongs would be powerless before it, to say nothing of a single one.

“Have you seen Mount Buzhou at any point in time in the future?” the little fox asked him in return.

“That’s Wahuang’s lines!” Lu Yun’s expression was dark.

The little fox stuck her tongue out at him, then continued in a mystified tone, “I don’t know either. I really don’t know how Mount Buzhou vanishes... but I know that if it doesn’t, Mount Tai will forever be suppressed beneath it.”

“Perhaps...” Lu Yun sighed and headed toward the legendary mountain. “Hmm?”

He suddenly paused. Mount Tai towered majestically above, and though it wasn’t as grand as Mount Buzhou, the two were about the same. He’d felt a faint thought ripple the moment he set foot into Mount Tai, as if something were... crying out for help?

“It’s him!” Lu Yun set out in a certain direction and headed into the depths of the mountain. A stone fetus roughly one meter tall and depicted with nine orifices lay quietly on the ground. It’d taken the rudimentary form of a human and was about to come back to life.

“It’s an image affected by the primitive great dao, which in turn is affected by me. Therefore, the beings taking other forms now will mostly be human-shaped...”

Lu Yun had fully released himself in his battle against Fuzhu and Huashe. Thus, the great dao within him had begun to influence the primitive great dao, steering it in the direction of human dao.

It was also because of this that Lu Yun’s figure slowly became the mold for the future human dao. One must first take human form to train in the human dao, and lifeforms born beneath the human dao, whether connate or of nature, would ultimately take human form as well.

Lu Yun’s effect on the primitive great dao wasn’t that much yet, but the trends were clear to see.

“Bashe wants to eat me, please save me, milord!” A small thought ripple emanated from the tiny stone fetus.

“Who are you?” Lu Yun waved a hand and took the stone figure in hand.

“My name is Tianqi and I am the mountain god born in Mount Tai,” said the stone figure. Though it hadn’t taken true form, it had its own sentience and thoughts.

As Mount Tai was the boundary between yin and yang, all spirits had to pass through it upon death. As time went on, it accumulated a strong amount of goodwill and gave birth to its own mountain god.

“Tianqi?” Lu Yun frowned, taking a moment to think. “You and I have a shared destiny. Are you willing to take me as your master?”

“This disciple is willing to take milord as my master!” An overjoyed Tianqi quickly responded.

Lu Yun stretched out his hand and tapped lightly between Tianqi’s brows. The stone immediately took human form as a cute little doll less than a meter tall.

“Disciple Tianqi greets the master!” He fell to the ground in a kowtow and cried out in a babyish voice.

“My name is Lie Shan and this flower is my greeting gift to you. This is for your own defense, and you are your master’s third disciple.” With another tap in the air, a bit of hellfire landed on Tianqi.

Whoosh!

It ignited in full fury and became a small black shirt on Tianqi’s body.

“Your first senior sister is Liu Qingmiao, your second senior brother is Zou Longxiu. Remember these names well, if you by chance meet them one day, be sure not to harm them.”

“This disciple will remember!” Tianqi hurriedly assured.

He was Mount Tai’s mountain god, rather than a connate demon god. Born into an empyrean realm cultivation level, Tianqi was inordinately strong. His existence was also different from the others. Though he was a mountain god, he was unfettered by his mountain’s location. Just like the mountain ghosts, he could come and go at will.

Lu Yun had been able to see that as well.

In addition, this little bean sprout possessed the divine decree of Mount Tai. Whoever ate him would inherit it and become its mountain god, all of its power at their beck and call. That was why Bashe had kept an eye on the premises.

“Your master has some business to attend to in the netherdark. Follow this path and seek out Her Majesty Wahuang at Mount Buzhou. She will safeguard you,” Lu Yun said to Tianqi.

“But...” Tianqi remained in place, at a loss of what to do. Though he possessed intelligence, he’d only just taken form so basically knew nothing of the world.

“Worry not, the hellfire I gave you will keep you safe. Remember to keep hellfire burning all over your body.” Lu Yun ruffled his disciple’s little head.

Finally reassured, Tianqi took the path they’d come from and set off on his way, turning back every three steps to look at his master.

“Yo, so the future Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak is my disciple?” Lu Yun rubbed his nose.

The little fox was numb to it all.

“You know, you could’ve just passed him onto Wahuang. There was no need to take him as a disciple!”
The little fox curled her lip.

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“Patriarch! Patriarch Darkriver! Your subordinate has a report to make!” cried out Bashe when he reached the shore of the Blood Sea.

A pungent stench of rotting fish exuded from the boundless seas and a bloody sun hung high in the sky, casting all of the netherdark in its crimson shadow.

Splash!

A great wave reared up in the sea to form an enormous face—Patriarch Darkriver.

“What is it?” he boomed.

“Lie Shan of the human race has come to the netherdark!” Bashe bawled out.

“Then let him be and do not provoke him.” He knew about Lie Shan killing Fuzhu and Huashe and had no desire to get on the bad side of this human with such great patrons.

“But he wants to kill me!” Bashe whined with indignation.

“He wants to kill you? Why does he want to kill you?” Patriarch Darkriver frowned and took a good look at Bashe. There didn’t seem to be any injuries on the snake.

“He took the newly born mountain god of Mount Tai!”

Patriarch Darkriver fell silent. “I thought of saving Fuzhu and Huashe when they were being pursued and have them join the netherdark, but Wahuang was by Lie Shan’s side at the time. If I’d dared save them, she would’ve turned her hand against me.

“I am not afraid of Wahuang, but Fuxi, Leize, and Huaxu stand behind her. If the four of them act in concert, even I would have to flee in disarray.” The patriarch continued with resignation, “It’s just a mountain god’s divine decree, let him have it. Stay in the Blood Sea during this time and don’t head out. Even I will not be able to protect you if you irritate those four devils.”

Splash—

The patriarch’s great face scattered back in the seas, leaving a staring Bashe slack-jawed with disbelief.

1. Bashe was a python-like Chinese mythological giant snake that ate elephants.

Chapter 875: Darkriver, Do You Know Your Crimes

“We have to seek out Patriarch Darkriver in order to send Carmine Eternal into the Blood Sea, don’t we?” Lu Yun had never met the personage before, but the name was familiar.

Patriarch Darkriver was a top demonic fiend rivalling Luo Houluo, and he felt a pang of worry when thinking of an assuredly fearsome opponent.

“Don’t worry, Darkriver is as cowardly as a mouse. Mentioning the great and powerful Leize and Huaxu is enough to scare any thoughts of wrongdoing from his mind. Besides, the hundred-and-eight-ranked white lotus is a gift from that man. Once Darkriver sees it, he’ll treat Carmine Eternal like his own daughter.” The little fox was absolutely certain of her prediction.

Past Mount Tai was the real netherdark.

Remains of what’d once been living scattered the vast black land. In stark contrast was the crimson sky above and the bloody sun hung at an angle against the backdrop.

Lu Yun noticed spirits of living souls following in his path and wandering aimlessly into the netherdark. They had died in the great wilderness and wouldn’t reincarnate into another life after entering the world of the dead, but would instead dissipate and return to the world.

“Strange... these souls all possess their true spirits!” Lu Yun voiced his realization.

In the future, living beings in the world of immortals weren’t born with true spirits. Only after ascending to the dao immortal realm could one form their own true spirit with the power of heaven and earth, thus completing their soul.

However, Lu Yun recalled that living beings possessed a complete soul at the inception of the immortal dao. Only after the war that severed the path of cultivation and erased the void realm did the living lose their true spirits, leaving them with only ethereal and corporal soul-parts.

“That’s right. Those in this era are born with a complete soul, containing the true spirit, three ethereal soul-parts, and seven corporal soul-parts.” The little fox added in a quiet voice, “The disappearance of the true spirits was actually God’s doing.”

Lu Yun started. “What?”

God? He was the one who’d extracted true spirits from the living souls?

That doesn’t make sense.

“That’s right.” The little fox nodded. “You’ll understand once you acquire your true spirit, it’s actually a good thing! That earth-shattering battle enabled God to work in secret, separating true spirits from the living’s souls.”

Although Lu Yun’s replica had reached the empyrean realm, his true form remained at the golden core great dao, the equivalent of the peerless immortal realm in the future. Only after ascending to the immortal dao realm could he conjure his own true spirit.

“Do you know why he did it? What was his motivation?” Lu Yun was eager to find out the answer.

“I suppose I can tell you the truth.” After a thoughtful pause, the little fox explained, “The true spirits tempered under the future immortal dao can rival those of the connate demon gods today.

“True spirits are gifts from heaven and earth. Since the chaos realm demon gods were born from nature, their true spirits are the most powerful, granted directly by the world. Their children, the powerful empyrean realm elites, have lesser true spirits. You can follow the logic down the pecking order... Regular living souls who came late into the world are born with unusually weak true spirits.

“Nascent spirits, constitution, and realms can all be improved through cultivation, but true spirits cannot!

“In the future, Demon God Ji Du possesses the true spirit of the Exalted Divine Emperor. Do you think he’s become any more powerful because of it? The divine emperor’s true spirit contained his residue power, that’s why the demon god seems stronger.”

In the future, Ji Du would become the demon god. After countless reincarnations, he’d long forgotten who he was. He’d lose his name and just called himself the demon god.

Of course, his master Luo Houluo had also had a hand in the loss of his identity.

Although Luo Houluo was Ji Du’s master, their relationship was less than sincere. Master and disciple were constantly scheming against each other, looking to devour the other if a chance ever presented itself.

“The true spirits of latter-day beings are too weak to support them through their rise to the peak. The empyrean realm is their limit!”

Latter-day beings were those who were born without cultivation, including the human race and herself. Fortunately, Hongjun’s guidance had raised the little fox’s soul to the level of the connate demon gods.

“Under the immortal dao, the true spirits cultivated by the living can rival those of the connate demon gods. Further cultivation will bring endless possibilities if they continue along their path. It’s possible that one may cultivate their way into becoming a creator themselves.”

Lu Yun chewed over the revelation. No wonder Fuxi and the others held the immortal dao in such regard, putting in foundational work for it even when the human dao had yet to be established. It was astounding that the immortal dao could give latter-day beings such powerful true spirits.

Lu Yun felt that the greatest feat Fuxi and his companions had achieved by travelling to the future wasn’t to bring him between the two time periods, but that they’d separated the true spirits of the living from their souls.

“Does that mean I am to set up the foundation of immortal dao as well?” Lu Yun asked with uncertainty.

“No!” The little fox shook her head. “Just follow everything to its natural conclusion. Don’t do or not do anything on purpose.”

Lu Yun nodded.

Since Darkriver had given his orders, all living souls in the netherdark gave the human visitor a wide berth, lest they attract the troublemaker’s attention.

“Bashe has gone to tattle to Darkriver. Someone like him, though, will consider you public enemy number one and avoid you like the plague.” The little fox said with great self-satisfaction. “After all, Darkriver is in the wrong here. He stole Arbiter’s fortuitous opportunity all those years ago and worries that she’ll come after him for it... He’s probably going to cry with gratitude that we brought Eternal here instead.”

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead with resignation. "As a patriarch and the ruler of the netherdark, should he really be this cowardly?"

"He's not a coward per se, but he's terrified of dying!" the little fox corrected. "Both Leize and Huaxu are able to kill him even when he's in the netherdark."

"Alright..." Lu Yun nodded. "The netherdark is too small for him to hole up in a hiding place."

.....

Lu Yun rushed straight toward the Blood Sea, stirring up concern and sowing panic in his wake. The subordinates Darkriver sent to keep an eye on him hurried back to the Blood Sea to make their reports.

Darkriver was at a loss; he didn't know what Lie Shan was trying to do.

"I seized Arbiter's opportunity from her. She's close to Leize, Huaxu, and Taiyi. Did Leize send Lie Shan to enact the first step of their revenge against me?" Panic seized the patriarch.

Leize, Huaxu, and Darkriver were among the first connate demon gods to be born into this world. Before they manifested physically, their spirits had become acquainted with each other and some of them had formed a friendly bond.

If Eternal and Arbiter had successfully gained a physical form, they would've become one of the greatest powers in the world, rivalling Leize and Huaxu.

"Do you know your crimes, Darkriver?!" A tremor passed through the netherdark, brought about by Lu Yun's booming accusation.

Beneath the Blood Sea, Darkriver shuddered violently. "My doom has come, Leize sent him to avenge Arbiter!"

Chapter 876: Where They Should Be

Lu Yun's voice rang out with great resonance, projecting into every corner of the netherdark. He'd arrived at the shores of the Blood Sea.

"Wait, this is the Blood Sea?" Confusion flashed through his eyes when he looked at the endless waters.

The Blood Sea was vast, so vast that it seemed boundless, and the carcasses of countless beings drifted in its depths. However, it didn't seem as strong as Lu Yun remembered. He even had the strangest feeling that this genuine article was less than the Blood Sea in Life Province to the southwest of Nephrite Major.

"This is indeed the Blood Sea in which flows the blood of all beings... but why's it so weak?" Lu Yun muttered to himself.

"The Blood Sea of the future has been refined into a treasure and this one hasn't. Naturally, that makes it weaker than its future self," explained the little fox when she saw the befuddlement in Lu Yun's eyes.

"Legend has it that Darkriver wanted to refine the Blood Sea as his replica, but Leize warned him that if he dared refine the Blood Sea, he would kill Darkriver even if he had to evaporate the sea!"

“Damn, that’s a statement alright.” Lu Yun swallowed hard and felt a twinge of admiration for this great god.

The netherdark was the future foundation of hell of human dao and the Blood Sea an important site within it. It couldn’t be claimed by another, no matter what.

.....

Rumble—

The Blood Sea frothed as Darkriver’s enormous face coalesced again.

“Lie Shan of the human race!” roared Darkriver. “I can say in good faith that I have not provoked you after you visited the netherdark, so for what reason do you come insult me on my doorstep?!”

A bit of suffering and highly strung nerves sounded in his tone. This Lie Shan had killed three connate demon gods in only a few days and even turned one of them into roast meat for some ants to eat. He was the number one bastard of the great wilderness, but he was also backed by some terrifying existences.

Who dared incur his displeasure?

But Lie Shan had come to the netherdark and demanded Darkriver answer for his crimes. If the patriarch was just a little bolder, he would have smacked the impertinent rat dead.

“For what reason?” Lu Yun leered. “An envoy from Leize is here to interrogate you, do you know your crimes?!”

Darkriver’s enormous face immediately froze with awkwardness when he heard Leize’s name. It was as clear as if it’d happened yesterday—Leize had annihilated his Blood Sea replica with a single punch all those years ago.

“I, I, I know my crimes, I know them!” he stammered.

“And hand over Bashe!” Lu Yun chuckled darkly. “He dared threaten me when I first arrived in the netherdark...”

“No!” Darkriver flew into a panic when he heard the demand. “Bashe is my subordinate and you cannot kill him! You’ve already obtained the mountain god, so why must you kill Bashe!”

His surprisingly firm tone threw Lu Yun for a loop. Down in the Blood Sea, the lurking Bashe had spasmed with fright when he heard Lie Shan’s words, but then breathed a little easier when he heard the patriarch’s response.

However, everyone also realized at this point that Darkriver had been bluffing earlier about being wary of the four gods in concert. Just Leize by himself was enough to send the patriarch into paroxysms of fear.

“Alright, you don’t have to hand over Bashe.” Lu Yun nodded slightly. He regarded Darkriver with a bit of newfound respect. Though the demon god was cowardly and afraid of death, he treated his subordinates well.

“Put this egg into the Blood Sea.” Lu Yun raised his hand and showcased Eternal’s egg floating motionlessly above his palm.

“Arbiter!” Darkriver’s true form leapt out of the Blood Sea when he saw the egg. He shrieked with fright, “Leize really does want to kill me! If Arbiter enters the Blood Sea, she’ll kill me on the spot!”

“This isn’t Arbiter, it’s Eternal.” Lu Yun frowned.

“Eternal... Eternal... It’s not Arbiter? It really isn’t Arbiter!” Darkriver put his mind at ease after observing the egg in the human’s hand. “...where’s Arbiter?!”

“Arbiter is beneath Mount Buzhou,” responded Lu Yun.

“Then Leize’s forgiven me?!” Surprise flashed through Darkriver’s eyes when he heard this.

What he was most afraid of was that Leize would have Arbiter return to the Blood Sea and strip everything from Darkriver. He spent his days on pins and needles, with even the slightest breeze arousing his greatest wariness.

But now that Arbiter was below Mount Buzhou, the mountain’s earth energy would change her temperament as she absorbed it and cause her to give up her revenge. That also meant that Leize had forgiven him for what he’d done that year and Darkriver was truly lord of the netherdark.

“Place Eternal in the deepest depths of the Blood Sea and don’t even think about touching her,” Lu Yun repeated.

Light flickered in Darkriver’s eyes—he was present in his true form now. As another entity who took the form of whoever looked at him, he appeared to be a slightly ordinary young man with bright-red hair.

A cold sneer curved Lu Yun’s lips when he saw the other’s face. He opened his palm to reveal a white lotus that then wrapped around Eternal’s egg.

Darkriver’s eyes went wide with surprise.

“This lotus is something that you cannot provoke. If you dare think of doing anything to it, I guarantee that even Leize won’t be able to save you, even if he came here in person.” As he spoke, Lu Yun waved a hand and sent the lotus with Eternal into the Blood Sea.

Color drained out of Darkriver’s face. As the oldest connate demon god in the world, he naturally knew who this spirit-grade connate treasure belonged to.

“It’s not Leize backing you, it’s Hongjun!” he shrieked. “That lotus of a hundred and eight ranks is his greatest treasure, how would he give it to you so easily...”

After Taiyi’s demise, there were only two publicly acknowledged creators—Pangu and God. Leize was the strongest of the connate demon gods.

Hongjun was a taboo existence in the great wilderness that not many knew of, but Darkriver was one of them. Before he’d taken form, he’d once seen Hongjun stroll through the chaos hand in hand with God and chatting merrily with Pangu.

Though he didn't possess a creator's presence, in the eyes of the connate demon gods, Hongjun wasn't any less weaker than a creator.

"Yup, he gave it to me, what about it? And now it's Eternal's." Lu Yun wagged his head, looking impertinently at Darkriver. "Alright, I've delivered Eternal to the Blood Sea and will be taking my leave now."

He raised a cupped fist salute to Darkriver, who sighed in relief and wordlessly returned to the sea.

Lu Yun had spent his days in trepidation when Arbiter and Eternal were on him. He was deathly afraid of revealing their presences and causing something untoward to happen, but now they'd returned to where they should be and awaited their return to the great wilderness.

Whether it was Mount Buzhou or the Blood Sea, both were the safest places for them. He no longer worried about them, and reality would prove him right, because the two sisters were currently in hell.

Chapter 877: Leize

"Finally leaving this blasted place!" The little fox popped her head out of Lu Yun's robes and heaved a long sigh of relief.

"Leaving?" Lu Yun shook his head. "Not yet. I've given my wisp of hellfire to Tianqi, so I have to go to the Sea of Hellfire to get a little more."

He had no treasures on him at the moment.

"Besides, that Patriarch Darkriver is a two-faced, two-timing crook. He's extremely calculative and does things in the background that are completely different from what he presents to others. He pretended to be immensely fearful just now, but if I'd shown him any weakness, he would've attacked me as soon as I left the netherdark!" A cold sneer crossed Lu Yun's face when he looked back at the Blood Sea.

A premier connate demon god bending the knee and scared mindless by the mere mention of Hongjun and Leize's name?

As a human from Earth, he would never believe the scene he'd just seen. Whoever believed that Darkriver really was as timid as a mouse and terrified of death would be dead themselves before they knew it.

"Come on, let's go check out the Sea of Hellfire." He headed off in the opposite direction from the Blood Sea.

Down in the Blood Sea, Darkriver's expression was broodingly ominous. He sat cross-legged on a scarlet seat cushion and looked out with slightly lidded eyes. Next to him, two vicious swords sparkling with crimson light howled with killing intent.

"Is he gone?" His voice was cold as ice.

"Patriarch, they've gone to the fiery sea." Bashe swam down from the surface.

"The Sea of Hellfire? What are they going there for?" Darkriver's expression remained unchanged and he murmured, "Lie Shan is no simple character, I wonder where Fuxi found him. Though he's human,

he's wholly different from the humans now. He can attract and cause enormous changes in the connate great dao...

"But no matter what, I must obtain Tushan's Bell of Chaos! With it in hand, I will be able to protect myself when the future cataclysm arrives!"

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The Sea of Hellfire was directly opposite the Blood Sea. This was the true zone of prohibition in the netherdark and its most dangerous site. If ordinary beings approached within five thousand kilometers of the hellfire, their souls would be burned to nothingness by the deadly flames.

Hellfire was called such because legends spoke of a hell deep within the ocean of fire. It imprisoned all of the most infamous and villainous beings in the history of the great wilderness.

Such were the natural laws bestowed by nature.

Lu Yun didn't know whether the saying was true or not, but from the depths of the fiery sea, there were indeed occasional wails of anguish that barely seemed to exist in the ear.

"The torch dragon has been born... who would've thought that the Sea of Hellfire would be its home?!" Shock filtered through Lu Yun's eyes as he looked at the fiery ocean not in the least bit inferior to the Blood Sea.

The torch dragon was a guardian of human dao and a connate divine beast born of hell. Well, that was how he was described in the human dao era. According to how things were now, he'd be called a connate demon god.

"Wait, my death arts have returned to me?" He blinked with surprise.

A tremendous life form was being nurtured in the depths of hellfire—it hadn't fully taken shape yet as it was currently a fetus and hadn't even formed a consciousness. This ponderous being was the yet unborn torch dragon.

Spectral Eye!

Lu Yun's death arts could somehow be activated again in the Sea of Hellfire, and he could even call upon the Gates of the Abyss if he so wished. However, he wouldn't be entering his kingdom of hell in that case, but the hell at the deepest part of the Sea of Hellfire!

The locale of a naturally occurring hell and where countless great masters who'd sinned were interred!

Lu Yun put one foot out and stepped into the fiery ocean.

"W-w-wh-what WHAT are you doing?! Don't go rushing to your death!" the little fox shrieked upon seeing Lu Yun walk straight into the flames of doom.

The Sea of Hellfire was a prohibited zone that spelled death for all who set foot in it unless they were a special life form. Even Leize was no exception and would be burned to a crisp if he dared venture forth.

Even though Lu Yun had once seized Dusk Snake's hellfire, the little fox didn't think the boy would be able to survive this blinding inferno. And even if he wasn't afraid, the little fox didn't think the same went for her at all.

"Eh?" Dazed, she suddenly realized that the terrifying flames that could incinerate her true spirit were harmless, despite burning merrily on her.

"What's going on?" She tilted her head up at Lu Yun.

Lu Yun was completely submerged in the fiery ocean now and hadn't used his own strength to fend off the flames. Hellfire seemed to be sentient in this moment and nuzzled him affectionately like a docile little kitty.

"Is this because of the Tome of Life and Death?" Lu Yun could come up with no other reason than the treasure lodged deep within his soul.

Fire surged to his hands when he turned them outward, condensing into an enormous fireball. With that, his body sank into the depths of the sea.

"He... he went inside?!" Darkriver had appeared by the shores of the Sea of Hellfire at some point and was staring incredulously into it.

Even he didn't dare dip a toe in it, and neither had Dusk Snake, who'd once possessed the Stone of Three Lives and a strand of hellfire. But this human boy had submerged himself into its fiery depths just like that and vanished into them!

Darkriver could still sense Lie Shan's enormous life force. Instead of beginning to dwindle, it seemed to grow ever more vigorous.

"Darkriver, do you know something? Lie Shan saved your life just now." A solemn voice descended from the heavens as a man in purple robes with purple hair appeared in front of the patriarch.

Appearing in the form of whoever looked upon him, he was a middle-aged man with stern gravity written across his face. Indistinct beams of hazy purple light shot out of his purple eyes and he exuded a wild and unrestrained presence at all times, as if the very world was his to keep underfoot.

"Leize!" Darkriver shrieked with fear after he saw the man. This was his greatest nightmare come to life!

"If Lie Shan suffers any attacks after leaving the netherdark, I will kill you," Leize proclaimed coldly. "No matter who the attacker is."

Darkriver turned as white as a sheet; even his eyeballs were white.

"But since Lie Shan means to let you live, I will pardon you this one time as well." Leize stood on the shore with his hands behind his back and quietly watched the youth in the flames.

Darkriver didn't dare say a word. Leize was too strong! Even Taiyi could only fight him to a standstill if he was equipped with the Bell of Chaos. Without that treasure... Leize could probably beat Taiyi to a pulp with one hand behind his back!

"But if Lie Shan is injured in the Sea of Hellfire at all... I'll still kill you."

Chapter 878: Defying the Heavens

Dread flashed through Darkriver's face. He ducked his head, seemingly too afraid to utter a word. Crimson flames and thick venom, though, burned deep within his eyes. Leize looked at him with derision, feigning ignorance of the other's true intentions.

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Lu Yun continued making his way to the heart of the fiery sea, hellfire serving as his staircase. Finally, he came face to face with the torch dragon in its infancy.

"The torch dragon is so powerful..." The little fox goggled at the dragon below. "It wasn't this powerful last time I saw this silly dragon!"

"What?" Lu Yun paused. "Have you met the torch dragon before?"

"It's the dragon beneath the Xuan Yuan Tomb!" said the little fox. "It's the first torch dragon to ever be born into this world! When I time-travelled to the eve of Emperors Fall, I used a little trick and trapped it in the tomb to keep it alive. It was only in the empyrean realm then, so how..."

"It was in the empyrean realm when you encountered it?" Lu Yun started. "It was in the human king realm when I met it."

The little fox was stunned as well. Though the torch dragon was still an embryo, it radiated power greater than even Darkriver! Once it was born from the flames of hell, it would very likely rival Leize and Taiyi.

"This dragon is too heaven-defying for the world to tolerate it. Born in the Sea of Hellfire, it will absorb the flames' power and acquire the ability to control yin and yang... But it's unlikely to survive its birth." Lu Yun considered the unborn torch dragon, deep in thought.

The embryo was formed from concentrated hellfire; he could see the faint figure of a dragon twisting through the light of the flames. Once the torch dragon was born, the torch above its head would burn with hellfire.

However, a being that rivaled Taiyi and Leize while wielding the tremendous power to reverse yin and yang would never be allowed to walk the world. Lu Yun was certain that heavenly tribulations would strike it dead the moment it formed physical shape, or trouble from the living would come knocking.

This torch dragon wasn't supposed to exist.

"Humanity's foundations are still too shallow," Lu Yun muttered. "I alone won't be enough to raise it upwards. Fuxi has entered the chaos while Wahuang guards Mount Buzhou... The great Leize and Huaxu are too important to take a stand for the human race. Humans need a powerful guardian to keep those with malicious intentions at bay!"

There was something he'd left unspoken—according to Fuxi, both Leize and Huaxu were gravely injured. They might not even be able to protect themselves.

The little fox gaped at Lu Yun. "In the future, the torch dragons will die with the human race. The guardians go down with their wards... Is that due to your doing?"

Lu Yun rubbed his nose. "I'd thought that would be Tianqi's handiwork, but he isn't powerful enough yet. I guess it must have been me."

"What are you going to do?" The little fox popped out from Lu Yun's arms and added conspiratorially, "That silly dragon isn't really what you'd call quick-witted. Do you break its brains?"

Lu Yun suppressed an eyeroll. "It's only pretending to be a fool, there's nothing wrong with its brains!"

The torch dragon had yet to gain its physical form or develop intelligence. If it hadn't been born into the Sea of Hellfire, it would've long been possessed by other living souls, or been robbed of its chance at living.

"Here, nothing can rival me." Lu Yun scanned the surroundings, his eyes bright with confidence.

He had access to his death arts in the Sea of Hellfire and he could derive countless combat arts with hellfire as their basis. The fires here burned at their greatest intensity. If released, they would be able to burn down the heavens, turning the great wilderness and even the cosmos outside into seas of flame!

Hellfire was the most powerful fire in all worlds, barring none.

"You may not be sentient at the moment, but once you are, you will know your duty," Lu Yun declared gravely before the torch dragon. "This is no transaction, but an obligation I'm assigning to you... You will protect the human race!"

He would meet the torch dragon in the future, but he wouldn't be Lie Shan at that time, thus there would be no bond between him and the dragon. Now that he was on his way to becoming Lieshan, first great emperor of the human race, he was to be the Flame Emperor. After these events, the torch dragon would recognize him after he returned to the future, even though it'd never met Lie Shan in person.

With a point at his own chest, Lu Yun extracted some of his heart blood and cast it into the Sea of Hellfire. Hellfire surged with sudden ferocity, pulling in local power of the land to form a tremendous grand influence. It fell heavily onto the unborn torch dragon to envelop it.

Rumble!

Thick crimson clouds emerged to overshadow the entire Sea of Hellfire, jagged bolts of crimson lightning howling through them. This was the dragon's tribulation, and it was supposed to strike when the dragon was born.

However, Lu Yun had drawn upon the power of hellfire to protect the torch dragon. Thus, the tribulation struck now, attempting to kill the torch dragon before the protective circle could be completed.

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"What's going on?!" Darkriver stared at the abruptly materializing crimson clouds, his expression grave.

This was a chaos heavenly tribulation. Only those the world couldn't tolerate would trigger such a tribulation. It struck only once, and overcoming it would win one the approval of the heavens.

"He's going against heaven and earth..." Leize muttered, his eyes fixed on the crimson clouds looming over the Sea of Hellfire.

Bam!

Hellfire surged and transformed into a giant human that gazed up at the bloody clouds in the sky. It looked identical to Lu Yun, but was tens of millions of times more powerful than he was. Nothing could defeat him here.

“The lightning of a chaos tribulation isn’t real lightning, but a type of force that corresponds to order. I can’t absorb it with Thunder Palmstrike since it’s the most primal power of the world.” Lu Yun murmured his observations as he met the cold eyes deep within the clouds. Those were the eye of the tribulation.

The world itself wasn’t sentient, but the denizens living within it were. The dao of the world was the dao of the living, and the will of the living was the will of the world.

The eye of the tribulation... was the eye of the living.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

.....

A series of powerful explosions heralded the arrival of a crimson force of order, which blasted down at the Sea of Hellfire in mighty pillars of light that were aimed at the unborn torch dragon.

“Scatter!!” Lu Yun snarled as he threw a punch at the thick crimson pillars. Hellfire surged and belched beneath his feet, turning into a giant fist.

Rumble!

The tremendous impact shook all of the netherdark, and a tiny crack snaked through the void.

Chapter 879: Lie Shan, Again

This was a clash between hellfire and the heavens, and all of the netherdark was their battlefield.

Lu Yun stood in front of the torch dragon, deploying the nascent spirit observation method and borrowing the might of the hellfire giant to contend against heaven’s frenzied wrath.

The nascent spirit observation method was a creation under the immortal dao. Though it didn’t currently exist in the great wilderness, Lu Yun had been able to forcefully deploy it after he reclaimed his Xing Chen replica and combined the world with it.

A titanic inferno of hellfire transformed into a torso and unfurled an arm to furiously smash against the thick crimson pillar. The entire sea of flames had become Lu Yun’s replica and stood before him as an enormous protective barrier.

“The Sal Tree of Life and Death! It really does grow beneath the Sea of Hellfire!” His expression shifted slightly when he suddenly felt a consciousness float up through the fiery ocean—it was the Sal Tree’s consciousness.

“The Sal Tree of Life and Death is a unique treasure of the world that outranks peerless-grade connate treasures and the great spirit roots, but it’s subordinate to the Tome of Life and Death!” Lu Yun quickly understood what was going on here.

If it hadn't been for the tree taking the initiative to contact him, he wouldn't have discovered its presence beneath all the fire. In addition, the strength displayed by the tree exceeded what Lu Yun had experienced from Luo Houluo and Darkriver. It was on another level entirely!

"...the Sal Tree of Life and Death is a creator?" Lu Yun's mind hummed from the unexpected. "That's... right. The tree lacks sentience and has only a wisp of instinct. It's very strong, but it doesn't have the will to match it. However, it almost gets destroyed in the future... Just what is it that will destroy the hell of human dao and human dao itself?"

The Sal Tree's sudden appearance and support from the Sea of Hellfire made things very easy for Lu Yun. In fact, he even had room to spare for some contemplation. Sensing how strong the tree was threw certain things into uncertainty and confusion.

"Human dao is only a transition and immortal dao is the true fundamentality. No wonder Fuxi and the others put their hopes into the immortal dao." Lu Yun turned around and looked at the shores of the Sea of Hellfire.

Leize had departed the premises. Since Lie Shan was raising mountainous waves in the fiery ocean and could withstand the heavens, there was no need for him to remain any longer.

Darkriver, however, was still there. His eyes glinted coldly as he looked out upon the Sea of Hellfire, killing intent suffusing his glare.

"I was wrong!" A murderous look flashed through Lu Yun's eyes when he saw Darkriver. "In the future, the key figure who follows me back to the great wilderness isn't Ji Du's master Luo Houluo, but Darkriver!"

Imbued with the power of hellfire, Lu Yun instantly saw through the patriarch's core. He too was born of the Blood Sea, and his true form was that of a blood demon! This shared kinship was why he'd been able to create the blood dragon, phoenix, qilin, and turtle in the future and send them out to plague the world.

"In that case..." Lu Yun suddenly split off half of the hellfire and formed it into an enormous palm that blotted out the sky. He sent it slamming down on Darkriver.

"Lie Shan, what do you want?!" Darkriver shrieked with panic when he saw the human entertain a distraction whilst facing off against a heavenly tribulation. Though he was the ruler of the netherdark, he was still afraid of hellfire. Not to mention, what Lie Shan stirred up was simply too savage!

He crossed both arms in front of his chest and flared with crimson light, summoning the Blood Sea to him to defend himself from hellfire.

Everything in the Blood Sea immediately perished from hellfire, including Bashe. With how strongly the flames were blazing and reinforced by the Sal Tree of Life and Death, even regular demon gods weren't able to survive for a single breath in the Sea of Hellfire.

When all life in the crimson depths had been annihilated, the fire continued to eat away at the water, evaporating the Blood Sea itself. Crimson clouds formed in the skies above the netherdark and cast out crimson precipitation.

“Lie Shan, if you force my hand any further, I’ll destroy Eternal’s egg!” Darkriver raged and roared, frantic over the destruction of his forces.

“Oh yeah? Go ahead and try it.” Under Lu Yun’s nascent spirit observation method, a second Lu Yun walked out of the void and faced Darkriver.

Though the patriarch wielded two peerless-grade connate treasures in his hand, his face was as white as a sheet. Lie Shan’s double was too terrifying! Everywhere he walked turned into an ocean of hellfire, and he seemed invincible in it!

“I don’t know what will happen in the future or how things will be, but I know that I’m not leaving you alive today!”

Boooooom!

Lu Yun punched out with all of his strength, fortified by leaping and exploding hellfire.

With the Blood Sea as his shield and twin sword as his weapons, Darkriver snarled and screamed in his counter attack. There was no point in trying to flee now. If he tried to run, then Lie Shan would fill all of the netherdark with hellfire. No matter where he headed to, he wouldn’t be able to escape the onslaught of hellfire.

Run to the outside world?

Leize would throw him back in here with a single punch!

Unfortunately for him, Darkriver had no idea that Leize was all bark and no bite from his grave injuries.

Up in the air, the crimson pillar continued drilling into the sea of flames, but its dreadful power was parried by the Sal Tree of Life and Death. Meanwhile, all of Lu Yun’s attention was on battling Darkriver.

Though the patriarch hadn’t commanded the Blood Sea to become his replica, he was still its master and could maneuver its strength at will to protect himself.

However, as more of the Blood Sea evaporated, it became purer and more viscous.

“What? What’s going on here?” Darkriver suddenly looked around him. It was becoming steadily harder to deploy the Blood Sea as it decreased in volume.

In the end, the boundless waters disobeyed his orders and flowed back to where they’d stood. He was left standing blankly in midair, alone and at a loss of what to do.

“You can go die now, Darkriver.” Lu Yun’s projection threw his head back in a long peal of laughter. He stepped forward to smash Darkriver’s face in.

“Lie Shan, I’ve been waiting for you!” An overwhelming consciousness suddenly descended from the skies as a hand of white bone pulverized Lu Yun’s projection with one swift move. “Let’s see who can save you this time without Tushan’s Bell of Chaos!”

The voice blared piercingly, making Lu Yun’s ears ring. Stark-white flames flared up on the large hand, which then made for the depths of the Sea of Hellfire where Lu Yun’s true form was.

“Luo Houluo?!” Lu Yun jerked backward. That was Hadal Bonefire burning on the bony hand!

“Hadal Bonefire belongs to Luo Houluo?!” He looked up and ignited the nascent spirit observation method, forming hellfire into three thousand, six hundred and fifty layers of protection that stood in front of him.

The white bony hand simultaneously broke through three thousand, six hundred and forty-nine layers. Only at the last layer did hellfire reduce the hand to ashes.

Hadal Bonefire was less than hellfire, but Luo Houluo’s strength was far superior to Lu Yun’s. In addition to the bonefire, there was Luo Houluo’s own power added to the flame. The two combined proved too much for hellfire to resist.

Luo Houluo’s second punch followed swiftly on the heels of his first—another bony hand blazing with Hadal Bonefire.

However, Lu Yun was ready this time.

Humm.

A black haze blossomed from his body and the image of the Tome of Life and Death flashed through the air. Utilizing fire for his sword, Lu Yun fashioned hellfire into a black sword and slashed at the hand.

“He’s still fighting against the heavens, we need to act together!” Luo Houluo yelled. “We’re following heavens’ will if we attack him now, so we’ll reap bountiful benefits for our deeds!”

“Alright!” Darkriver trembled and sent his twin swords to redeploy the Blood Sea. He howled a challenge as he swept toward Lu Yun.

With the destruction of his nascent spirit projection, Lu Yun huddled in the center of the fiery ocean and fended off the three forces simultaneously bearing down on him. He was up against the awe of the heavens and the two most terrifying demons in the great wilderness!

Full power from the Sal Tree of Life and Death streamed out to bolster the Sea of Hellfire. If it wasn’t for Lu Yun standing in the fiery ocean, he would’ve been blown to pieces already.

“Lu Yun, are you alright?” The little fox poked out of his robes to ask with worry.

She’d discovered that though Lu Yun wasn’t concerned about Luo Houluo or Darkriver as long as he remained surrounded by hellfire, the pressure from the heavens was too great. With Luo Houluo and Darkriver following heavens’ wishes, they could bring more strength to bear when they attacked him.

Even Leize and Wahuang didn’t dare help Lu Yun at this moment. To help him was to defy the heavens and go against the natural order. Leize wouldn’t be able to endure one blow from the heavens in his current state.

“I’ll do it myself, you don’t need to do anything.” Lu Yun stuffed the little fox back in.

Pressure from above grew increasingly stronger, and the two demons’ attacks fired with growing madness. However, Lu Yun remained unmoving in the blazing inferno of hellfire. Things were a little rough, but he could still hold his ground against the combined assault.

As time went on, he grasped hellfire ever more skillfully and he even built a tenuous connection with the Sal Tree.

Numerous eyes opened in the skies of the netherdark, mutely observing the great battle here.

“Lie Shan, again!” some exclaimed with surprise to see the figure in the flames. “He’s battling connate demon gods again? Does he want to kill Darkriver and Luo Houluo this time?”

Chapter 880.1: The Relationship Between Two Ungovernable Delinquents

Many connate demon gods didn’t know what to make of the situation. It seemed that every time they heard the name Lie Shan, it was because he had another bone to pick with one of their kind.

The first time they’d heard the name, the human had resonated with the primitive great dao and drawn an attack from a connate demon god as a result. That demon god had gone mysteriously missing afterwards, and rumors had it that he’d perished.

No one knew who was behind his death, but judging from Lie Shan’s aggressive bearing, it was more than likely that he’d killed that poor demon god. The boy had plainly been a wolf in sheep’s clothing when he attracted the heavenly dao—he’d purposefully attracted attention from the demon gods so he could close in for the kill!

He now stood in the middle of the Sea of Hellfire, battling against two supreme fiends in the great wilderness. This level of charisma was on par with Leize’s!

The combination of three sources of apex battle strength appearing at the same time and pressure from the heavens almost broke the netherworld into pieces.

“Ahhhh—” An anguished wail reverberated through the land. The Blood Sea had suddenly pierced through Darkriver and flooded his internal organs, bursting through his body and nascent spirit.

“Save me, Luo Houluo!” wailed Darkriver.

“You piece of trash!” Luo Houluo’s face sank and he grabbed Darkriver’s soul, then shot for the outside world in a blaze of stark-white flame. He’d lost his support in this fight the moment the Blood Sea suddenly recoiled onto Darkriver; hellfire had also defeated Hadal Bonefire and almost harmed his own body.

There was no possibility of victory if he remained in this fight.

“Master, I finally see an opening on you.” A soft murmuring sounded at his ear.

“Don’t you dare, Ji Du!” Luo Houluo paled with fright.

Hummm.

A black blade flashed through the air, the keen edge of a sickle five hundred kilometers wide! The terrifying light almost sliced the void in half.

Schick!

Luo Houluo's body split apart like he was a block of tofu. He shrieked, bursting with a tongue of unnatural black flame that covered his panicked retreat out of the netherdark.

"Tsk tsk tsk. Master may be the lord of all demons, but even he has to go up in smoke when he eats one of my slashes." Ji Du revealed his true form in the skies over the netherdark and looked smugly in the direction where Luo Houluo had vanished. "But now, the master of the netherdark is me, isn't it?"

He materialized in human form as he wasn't an existence that took the form of whoever looked at him. At first glance, Ji Du looked quite handsome with long blackish-green hair straight to his waist and wielding a matte-black sickle with skulls on it. However, the black smoke that drifted around him made him look incomparably sinister.

"Hey, little fellow in the hellfire. You don't mind if I enter the netherdark as its lord, do you?" He chuckled as he looked at Lu Yun.

Lu Yun had refocused his efforts to wholly fighting against heaven's judgement. The layer of crimson clouds in the sky had become denser, and the pillars of crimson light blasting into the fiery ocean were shaking all of hell itself.

"It looks like you know what's good for you and don't plan on blocking my way." Ji Du smiled faintly and approached the shore of the Blood Sea.

It was now a third as big as before, but much more viscous than it'd been previously. Every drop of seawater was now five hundred million kilograms heavy; even the most preeminent connate demon god wouldn't be able to move it.

The Blood Sea had become much purer after being refined by hellfire, which was why it'd backlashed onto Darkriver and broken his body and nascent spirit.

"Well, this is a bit thorny. The Blood Sea is so powerful now that even I can't refine it. I can only make slow and steady plans for it." Ji Du paused, deep in thought. "Eh? What's that?"

He suddenly peered into the depths of the bloody ocean. There laid a translucent egg as white as jade and shaded with red, as well as a hundred-and-eight-ranked white lotus beside it.

"There's nothing special about the white lotus as it's just a spirit-grade connate treasure. But that egg... that looks quite delicious." Ji Du snaked out a long tongue and licked his lips. "A connate demon god in gestation... I'll become stronger if I eat her!"

He waved his sickle and parted the sea to wade further into it.

Hummm.

A piercing hum rang through the sky as black sword light crackling with fiery sparks arrived behind him.

Startled, Ji Du whirled around and easily destroyed the streak of sword light. However, an ugly expression hung on his face. His strength was far below Luo Houluo and Darkriver, so he wasn't able to withstand hellfire at all.

"Lie Shan of the human race, others may be afraid of Leize and thus leave your race alone, but I'm not concerned about that!" Ji Du coldly threatened.

Lu Yun sent a hellfire projection of an enormous dragon in the shape of a sword behind the demon god.

“In that case, I’ll have to kill you first,” he sneered.

Want to attack Eternal? Lu Yun wouldn’t let him off the hook for this even though he would eventually swear loyalty to Lu Yun and become a dean of the Dao Academy in the future.

Rumble—

Lu Yun twisted his body, sending the enormous dragon down upon Ji Du like a giant dragon-shaped sword.

“AhhHHHH!!” He couldn’t withstand hellfire! Ji Du had never dreamed that Lie Shan would turn around and attack him for an egg. What a complete lunatic! Did he want to make enemies out of all the chaos realm demon gods in the world??

Lie Shan was just a human, a latter-day descendant that’d grown into a great master of the combat arts. He wasn’t a connate demon god himself! Randomly slaughtering demon gods at will would only arouse their collective fury sooner or later!

But Lu Yun wasn’t concerned about this at all. Vast Dragon Seaturner twisting and churning through an ocean of hellfire, it blasted toward Ji Du in fiery fury. The demon god’s black sickle erupted with black radiance, but it couldn’t halt the human’s tyrannical strength.

“Lie Shan, just you wait for my revenge!” Seeing that the human was out for blood and that he’d never win, Ji Du suddenly exploded, leaving nothing behind and his sickle dropping into Lu Yun’s hands.

“Huh? Self-detonation?” Lu Yun looked blankly at the skull-headed sickle in his hand. That had indeed been Ji Du’s true body just now... and it’d scattered away in the wind after his detonation, leaving nothing behind.

“He must have other bodies at his disposal, no wonder he’s not afraid of Leize...” His projection traveled back on hellfire and delivered the sickle into his hands.

This was a peerless-grade connate treasure that left behind a ghostly presence and lingering howls of countless souls when waved through the air. Ji Du was an evil fiend himself who’d killed numerous beings; his hands dripped with blood.

However, Lu Yun saw no retribution on him.

“Ah, yes, the wheel of reincarnation hasn’t been established yet and there’s no system of reward and punishment either. Therefore, goodwill and retribution don’t exist yet.” Lu Yun shook his head in pity.

Humm.

He whirled the sickle through the air and sent every ember of hellfire up into the sky, finally destroying the crimson cloud bank in the firmament.

The great battle was finally over, but there was no more life in the netherdark. All had died in the terrible battle.

This outcome didn't affect Lu Yun. The netherdark would become hell sooner or later, so all life in here would have to die at a certain point in time. As opposed to dying in the hands of others, they might as well fall to his hands. This way, they would have a chance to return as a denizen of the hell of human dao when it formed.

Standing in front of the torch dragon fetus, he pointed again and imprinted the torch dragon's mission into the developing form. Lu Yun had helped it endure its tribulation, so when it could successfully take form, the torch dragon had to execute its mission of protecting the human race!

The little fox climbed carefully out of his robes and stood on his head, looking in all directions.

"This isn't hell yet, so how is hell formed in the future?" She sprawled on his head and dipped her head down to look into his eyes.

Chapter 880.2: The Relationship Between Two Ungovernable Delinquents

"I don't know... if my guess is right, Tianqi's going to be the kid who creates it, so it's up to him. I've already interfered with too much, if I go any further, I'll exceed the limits of what this era can tolerate."

He was slowly gaining a sense of what could and couldn't be done during his time here.

"Now that the netherdark's empty and Eternal's lost her protection, she'll be very vulnerable to attack..." Lu Yun frowned.

"Don't worry about that, fellow daoist." A crisp voice suddenly traveled into his ears.

As he turned around, another youth wearing flaming red robes came into view. The youth's hair was messily piled up on top of his head and barely secured by a topknot; one hand loosely gripped a sword while a wine gourd dangled from the other. He reached Lu Yun's side in just a few steps.

"This modest one is Yuyu. Greetings to my fellow daoist." A devil-may-care attitude marking his every gesture, the daoist bowed to Lu Yun.

"Ge Long?" Lu Yun asked subconsciously when he saw the newcomer.

"Huh?" The youth blinked. "This modest one is not a connate dragon, you have the wrong person, fellow daoist."

"Nothing!" Lu Yun quickly brushed off the moment. He'd recognized the newcomer in flamboyant red robes—it was Ge Long in a past life, before he became one of Lu Yun's most trusted subordinates. That ungovernable delinquent for whom nothing was off limits was right in front of him!

"This modest one's cultivation has reached a bottleneck and my master has ordered me to train in the netherdark. I can help look after Daoist Eternal during my time here," Yuyu said with a smile.

"Then I am at ease with fellow daoist's arrival." Lu Yun raised a cupped fist salute.

"You trust me so easily?" Yuyu's eyes shot wide open with disbelief. This was their first meeting, wasn't it? Wasn't Lie Shan afraid that he'd boil Eternal's egg and eat it?

"Fellow daoist's character is first in the great wilderness. There are many who I wouldn't trust, but I will always trust you!" Lu Yun laughed heartily.

Yuyu poured a mouthful of wine into his mouth, garbling back something unintelligible in the same spirit.

“Since fellow daoist is here now, I will take my leave!” Lu Yun raised a cupped fist salute and drifted out of the netherdark, leaving a gaping Yuyu standing where he was.

“My character is first in the great wilderness?” Yuyu blinked rapidly. “He trusts me that much?”

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Mount Tai remained steadfastly in place, and the path of the netherdark hadn’t been affected by the battle earlier. It twisted and turned back into the great wilderness.

“Is he the Ge Long who takes his head off and uses it as a treasure?” the little fox asked curiously.

Daoist Yuyu was an unknown in the current great wilderness, and even his master Hongjun was rarely recognized. But as someone from the future, Lu Yun naturally knew of their names.

“Right, that’s him.” Lu Yun nodded. “No wonder Eternal’s close with Ge Long in the future. They struck up a friendship before she was even born.”

Some of the major events to take place before Emperors Fall—decimating the peak clans and destroying almost all connate treasures in the world—had been accomplished by Daoist Yuyu in tandem with Carmine Eternal.

When Emperors Fall came to pass, Carmine Eternal could’ve stayed out of it, but she still chose to stand by Daoist Yuyu’s side and complete his goal of slaughtering all great emperors in the world. It was now more readily apparent why she’d done so.

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Mount Buzhou loomed in his eyes before long. A boy dressed in a black outfit stooped on the ground, casting glances into the netherdark from time to time. When he saw Lu Yun, he came running like the wind.

“Master, you’re finally back!” The child almost cried when he saw Lu Yun. Fresh faced and fair skinned, the child’s red lips offset gleaming white teeth. He looked just a little delicate and happened to be Lu Yun’s third disciple—Tianqi.

“Tianqi? How are you so big?” Lu Yun blinked, taken aback.

“Master, it’s been eight years... of course I grew up!” The boy wiped away tears from the corner of his eyes and replied mournfully.

“Eight years... That’s right, I was fighting off the heavens in the Sea of Hellfire. I didn’t notice how much time was passing by.” Lu Yun nodded.

The heavenly dao wouldn’t send only a simple tribulation to obliterate the torch dragon; the terrifying chaos had lasted a full eight years. In that period of time, Lu Yun had defied heaven’s wrath and two major demon gods, astounding the world with his feats.

“What’s wrong? You seem to have suffered quite a bit.” Lu Yun frowned when he looked at Tianqi.

“Her Majesty Wahuang wants me to cultivate, but it feels like I’m ripping apart every time I do...” Tianqi responded plaintively. “But Her Majesty says that’s because I’m lazy, so she still forces me to cultivate...”

Two fiery sparks gleamed in Lu Yun’s eyes as he scanned his disciple’s body. “Alright then, you don’t have to cultivate starting from today. Just stay by my side.”

“Thank you, master!” Tianqi was overjoyed.

“Lie Shan, why send him to me if you don’t want him to train under my tutelage?” Wahuang leveled an ominous look at the newly returned youth. “This kid isn’t a connate demon god, but he’s a diamond in the rough all the same. He’ll become a chaos realm master of combat arts in my hands sooner or later. What future does he have with you? You’re just empyrean realm, the same as him.”

“What method are you passing onto him, Your Majesty?” Lu Yun asked curiously.

The great masters of this age almost all eschewed cultivation methods, as they followed whatever the divine spirits taught them. Wahuang herself cultivated the rhythm of all living beings, which was how she’d reached her current heights.

“The method that Fuxi created from observing heaven and earth, of course. Do you fancy yourself stronger than Fuxi?” Wahuang was growing slightly frantic. She had no disciples or heir for her legacy, so she’d felt a rare itch stir in her heart when Tianqi came knocking. This was something she would fight Lu Yun on!

“Your Majesty, this kid will be teaching Tianqi a connate method,” Lu Yun answered solemnly. “It’s the method I practice!”

That took Wahuang greatly aback. “A connate method... your method can deploy the hellfire of the netherdark. Are you really willing to pass it onto him?”

Lu Yun waved a hand and displayed the Method of Life and Death as a section of writing in the air.

“The Method of Life and Death? ...life and death? ...reincarnation?!” Shock gripped Wahuang and she destroyed the writing in the air with a hasty wave.

“Just pass this method on to Tianqi.” She heaved a long sigh. Reincarnation didn’t exist yet—it would only appear when the hell of human dao was established. But it wasn’t until this moment that she realized who this god of Mount Tai was. Lu Yun had delivered the future master of hell and ruler of reincarnation right to her doorstep!

“However, his identity is crucial to too many things, so I will take him as my disciple as well. He, um, ah, I need to pass on a few lifesaving measures to him so that he won’t die in the cataclysm to come.” Wahuang hedged her words with an awkward expression.

“Well? Go on and greet your new master!” Lu Yun swiftly kicked Tianqi in the rear.

“Disciple Tianqi... greets the second master!” Tianqi dutifully complied with a long face.

“I’m the senior master, he’s the junior master.” Wahuang glared ferociously.

Tianqi looked blankly at Lu Yun.

“Let’s settle things as Her Majesty wishes.” Lu Yun smiled ruefully. He had only eighty-some more years left in the great wilderness. Tianqi would still have much to learn from Wahuang in the future.

“Understood... senior master!” Tianqi wanted to cry again.

“Your Majesty, Tianqi should train with me for the time being. I’ll bring him back after eighty years,” Lu Yun proposed gravely.

“Go on, your connate method requires personal instruction. But remember, you can’t let him go back to the netherdark before he reaches chaos realm!” Wahuang solemnly reminded.

“Since you’ve officially taken me as your master, I won’t be miserly with you. This seal is a peerless-grade connate treasure that I took from bratty Darkriver’s hands. It’s yours now, for self protection.” Wahuang placed a large black seal into Tianqi’s hands.

“This disciple thanks the senior master!” Tianqi quickly fell to the ground in thanks.

“Be on your way now, you two. Mount Buzhou has not been quiet as of late. Ah, yes, you must be careful of Ji Du. You destroyed one of his copies in the netherdark and took his greatest treasure. This isn’t the last you’ve seen of him,” Wahuang issued a final reminder.