

Necropolis 921

Chapter 921: A Tomb to Bury All Life

Time trickled past slowly, but with inexorable speed.

With the world of celestials as the battlefield, the human race and connate demon gods clashed in a ghastly war.

There were also native lifeforms and connate races in the world of celestials—they'd all flocked to the celestial court's banner to defy humanity. Despite the grim and gruesome battles that ripped through both armies, Lu Yun didn't interfere.

He'd done enough. Humanity's matters should now be resolved by humans themselves, not have the solution delivered to them on a silver platter by a future descendant.

The birth of the underworld, the formation of hell, the process in which empyrean masters became great emperors, and how the inexhaustible numbers of connate demon gods would eventually go extinct...

All of these had to be given room and space to develop on their own. Though Lu Yun really wanted to see everything for himself, he'd run out of time. He hadn't even made it to the birth of Eternal and Arbiter, or learned why their surname was Carmine. Those were questions that would be answered in the future.

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"Your return is nigh, is fellow daoist eager to be on your way?" a clear voice suddenly traveled into Lu Yun's ears.

He lifted his head to see a smiling, purple-clad Hongjun walk toward him. Lu Yun nodded gently.

"To be frank, there is one question I have." Hongjun looked at the youth with some incomprehension. "Fellow daoist has collected the soul force of everyone around you and even my three disciples, so as to preserve a ray of hope for them. Why haven't you done the same for your disciple Tianqi?"

"I trust that he won't die." Lu Yun smiled faintly.

"Oh?" Hongjun blinked.

"He will not die, because he is my disciple." Tremendous confidence blossomed on Lu Yun's face—faith in Tianqi, the hell of human dao, and the wheel of reincarnation that would be constructed. He had unwavering belief in the future Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak who would set forth heavenly rules regarding punishment, reward, and define good and evil.

Tianqi wouldn't die!

"The path nears, will fellow daoist go bid them farewell?" Hongjun sighed expressively.

"I'm afraid I'd be tempted to stay in this era." Lu Yun shook his head slightly. "I have ties and relationships to this time period now, but I also have people I can't bear to give up in my time. Therefore... let's forgo farewells."

He looked at the strands of soul force wrapped around his fingertips. “Besides, we’ll meet again, won’t we?”

Hongjun smiled. “Say hello to Violetgrave for me when you return to the future. Tell her that an old friend in the chaos is waiting for her return.”

“Are you the one who made the first transaction with Violetgrave?!” Lu Yun’s eyes shot wide open. The first person to transact with the sword and obtain the Nether Fire had become the greatest existence in the world. They’d even destroyed the hell of human dao with their own strength.

Lu Yun had once met the mysterious person when he probed great god Pangu’s body inside the ancient tomb. Was that person Hongjun??

“No.” Hongjun shook his head. “I believe Fuxi once told you that there are only two creators in the three realms of the great wilderness—Pangu and God. He didn’t list me as one of them, did he?”

Lu Yun nodded as he recalled what Fuxi and Wahuang had once said to him.

“That’s because I’m not a life form of the great wilderness, just like Violetgrave and the one you saw in Pangu’s tomb isn’t either,” Hongjun sounded melancholic.

“Are you a survivor of one of the worlds that’s now a realm monster?” Lu Yun asked subconsciously.

“Yes and no,” Hongjun sighed. “The chaos... is much more complicated than you imagine. Akasha ghosts and akasha souls are just minions in the grand scheme of things. You must be much stronger if you’d like to safeguard this realm.

“Ah, the path is at hand. I shall see you off, fellow daoist.” He bowed to Lu Yun, who returned the gesture.

“Hongjun!” The little fox climbed to Lu Yun’s head and couldn’t help asking, “Were you the one who enlightened me all those years back?”

“That I was.” Hongjun smiled. “But you aren’t my disciple, little daoist, but my fellow daoist. If my three disciples see you, they actually need to call you martial-aunt.”

“Why?!” the little fox followed up hastily, but a haze of light had obscured Hongjun and this patch of space.

He and the surroundings suddenly seemed illusory and rapidly receded into a faraway point in the distance. The cosmos, planet, and every being in this realm faded into a mirage. Only the little fox, Lu Yun, and the blood demon were real.

Changes filtered rapidly through heaven and earth while various fantastical images blurred in front of them.

This was the development of history and evolution of life. The group wanted to observe and learn, but the scenes transformed too quickly for the mind to process. A blink of the eye was a hundred million years, and even Lu Yun with his supreme abilities couldn’t force the pictures into clarity.

However, three enormous figures shot upward at a certain point in time and cut down a pair of frigid eyes, snuffing its light out and making way for a vast and magnificent great dao to traverse the void.

The Three Purities acting in concert to slay the akasha ghost and establish the immortal dao!

It was the only event that Lu Yun could make out before a mammoth shadow came yawning up to them. The shadow was the world of immortals! It grew steadily bigger, and bigger, and bigger... until it finally swallowed them whole.

“The world of immortals?!?!?!?” A dumbfounded Lu Yun goggled at his home when he gained a clear look. “How is this possible?! The world of immortals!” His voice had gone shrill with shock.

“What is it?” the little fox asked urgently when she saw Lu Yun like this. “Is something wrong?”

“The world, the world of immortals!” Lu Yun struggled for air, incredulity trembling in his eyes. “The world of immortals is a tomb, it’s a massive tomb that’s buried all life! We, we are all burial goods in the tomb that is the world of immortals!”

It was due to his grasp of the Dragonquake Scripture that he could see the world’s layout in its entirety. The nine majors, ten lands, and four immortal seas, as well as the Central World that Qing Yu had refined were thirty-three levels of burial chambers, while the four great oceans were the tomb’s walls.

“A tomb within a tomb!” Lu Yun gasped again. “The nine majors are nine main tombs and the ten lands are the central points of ten other tombs!”

Xuan Yuan’s tomb was located in Heaven Locus Land and the other nine were also final resting places of other staggering great masters.

“So it turns out that we’re all residents of a tomb... We’re all insignificant life forms eking out survival...” Lu Yun murmured to himself.

“Lu Yun!” The little fox reverted to his real name at this point. “I know you’re skilled in the dao of burial, that you’re even better than Fuxi at it! If you can build a tomb, you can also destroy it.

“Since the world of immortals is a tomb, then you can destroy it and return it to its core essence. You can restore it to being a real world again!”

She looked at him unblinkingly with her baby-blue eyes.

“...yes.” Lu Yun nodded stiltedly. “But... I’m more worried about those who turned the world into a tomb... what insane level of skill does that require? It would seem that even more horrifying existences were born in the world after the extinction of the demon gods... and I suspect that humans somehow brought this down upon ourselves.”

He thought of certain things that Qi Hai had once said and the string of preparations someone had left on Qing Yu. He also thought of the shamanic divines and particular actions taken for revenge after the destruction of human dao.

But it’d never occurred to him that the greatest undertaking of them all would be to fashion the world of immortals into a tomb!

The mausoleum in the skies of the great wilderness was to protect it, but this tomb for immortals was to bury all life.

Chapter 922: Returning Home

The world of immortals had been born, but as a tomb for immortals and for all of life! Lu Yun found this impossible to accept.

Time was still streaking past them when he recovered from his shock. The Dao Flower gracefully bloomed overhead, permitting his primary body to walk down and return to Xing Chen's body, along with the former immortal emperor Meng Wang.

Runes of the immortal dao appeared on the Dao Flower in the next second and it became one with the immortal dao.

Lu Yun heaved a sigh of relief when his primary body settled in place. If he'd stayed behind in the great wilderness while his replica returned to their proper time, he would've eventually become a native life form of the great wilderness while Xing Chen slowly faded away in the future.

Lu Yun's true self and the Dao Flower returned together upon the establishment of the immortal dao and at the exact moment the world of immortals was born.

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"We're finally back." Lu Yun set aside all thought and the fact that the entire planet was a tomb. All he wanted to do now was go home.

Although he'd once gone into closed door cultivation for a thousand years in hell, that was different from his time in the great wilderness. He'd experienced a great deal of things, making it completely different from dully sitting in place for a thousand years.

The closer they drew to their original era, the slower time flowed. Lu Yun could start to make out some details in the long river of time.

"The great war of immortals!" He shook when he realized they'd arrived at the great war a hundred thousand years ago. "I... I see! So there was always the nine majors, ten lands, four immortal seas, and the Central World! They all existed in different planes, and the war was to break apart the twenty-four facets!"

The current world of immortals had been polished out of the world of celestials and fashioned into an enormous tomb for immortals not long after its birth. The facets were its various burial chambers, and the great war a hundred thousand years ago had been to destroy the tomb!

That was how a perfect layout of burial had been damaged.

"Of course it happened, my third disciple is alive after all!" A smile curved Lu Yun's lips.

That period of time was now obscured by a huge shadow, one that even he couldn't pierce through with his current abilities. However, he'd discovered traces of Tianqi's presence in his brief scan.

Tianqi... the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak in human hell, master of reincarnation and wielder of life and death throughout the multiverse, the second generation Yin Prince!

Indeed, the great emperor was also the Yin Prince. After the first generation was collected into the little fox's Bell of Chaos, the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak had inherited the title and become the second Yin Prince over the netherworld.

A great weight lifted off of Lu Yun's shoulders.

"But now we run into two tremendous powers fighting each other in this snapshot of time... I wonder who wins?" he murmured to himself.

"I don't know, my cultivation realm then was just human king, so I couldn't see through to that battle at all." Meng Wang's voice sounded in Lu Yun's mind and he chuckled wryly. "I'd thought I was the strongest beneath the heavens when I reached grand pure realm, putting me on par with the human king realm of the Primeval Era. Now I realize that I was just a frog at the bottom of a well."

The two forces battling each other in the river of time were at least in the chaos realm, or even on Leize's level. A great emperor in the world of immortals such as Meng Wang was nothing but an insignificant gnat in their eyes.

"I'm just passing by. Don't annoy me and I won't interfere in your matters," Lu Yun suddenly announced.

Two pillars of black flame burned in his eyes as he narrowed his eyes at the two forces locked in conflict. He fully unleashed Xing Chen's strength, strength that exceeded Leize's and was infinitely close to that of a creator's.

The two powers had both noticed Lu Yun traveling through time, but both chose to remain silent when they sensed his terrifying strength and didn't make a move against him.

Xing Chen's strength was now the strongest across all realms below creator. The two forces had reached a crucial moment in their battle and didn't dare provoke such a fearsome third party at this time.

Lu Yun also didn't know who was friend and who was foe, so he didn't pay further attention to the fight. More importantly, he couldn't see their faces since they were both hidden in the shadows of time.

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Boooooom!!

An earthshaking explosion ripped through the air as an ancient ruin exploded with a fury that rocked the West Sea. The Black Sea on its borders roiled with tidal waves while the catastrophic fallout traveled in all directions, threatening to level all of the West Sea.

The four great oceans around the world of immortals was the common bond between all of the facets. If any part of it was destroyed, the planet would disassemble and become individual worlds again.

Thus, Lu Yun reacted extremely swiftly and grasped at the air, containing the rampaging destructive energy and crushing it to pieces like he would pop an air bubble.

"You!!" Experts from the Purple and Green Firmaments gaped at Lu Yun.

Two great emperors had been fighting in midair and a primordial ruin had exploded... but the young man had casually squeezed all of the backlash away. Was he really just a great emperor?

"I'm finally back." Lu Yun laughed foolishly as he looked down at his hands. With a flourish of his sleeves, he calmed the raging waves of the Black Sea and set everything back like nothing had happened.

Then, he raised a cupped fist salute at the representatives from the Firmaments. "Lie Shan... Lu Yun admires the two seniors for being willing to die for the world of immortals!"

He took one step forward and departed from this part of the world, leaving the experts staring at each other in stupefaction.

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"You're back!" Qing Yu grabbed Lu Yun tightly when he suddenly appeared next to her and wouldn't let go no matter what he said. "I thought... you wouldn't come back..."

"You knew?" Lu Yun started.

"Yeah." Qing Yu bit her lip and nodded gently. "I knew the moment you left. The nine spirit roots aren't in the same era and many of them are only a name after all these years. If you wanted to collect them all, you would have to travel to the past..."

"Thank goodness you came back..." She buried her face in his chest. Lu Yun had only left for a few days, but those days had been filled with some of the worst mental agony she'd ever experienced.

"I'm back, and with eight of the spirit roots." Lu Yun caressed her head as the little fox darted out of his robes and buried herself into Qing Yu's bosom, lying down with great comfort.

"It's so much more comfortable in Qing Yu's arms... so nice and soft..." murmured the little fox.

Qing Yu turned beet red while Lu Yun dragged the little fox back out and threw her into a far off corner. Qing Yu turned an even brighter red at that.

Lu Yun lowered his head and kissed her on the lips, expressing a hundred years of yearning within that one kiss.

Chapter 923: Treasures of Human Dao

In the eyes of everyone at the Dao Academy, Lu Yun had only been gone for a few short days. But to him, everything had changed during this period of time.

The immortal dao in residence at Mount Xuanhuang was only the immortal dao, it wasn't the great dao of this realm. The great dao had vanished, or more accurately speaking, been completely destroyed.

What remained was just the tattered fragments that the world of immortals knew, a broken immortal dao that supported the existence of this realm. If that too was destroyed, then this world would implode and return to the chaos.

Though the path of cultivation had been repaired in the current immortal dao, it still suffered from a thousand boils and a hundred holes, and was broken at the dao immortal realm.

The Dao Tree's existence was as if an enormous parasite; it continuously fed off the immortal dao to strengthen itself. Even though Qing Yu had already sealed it away, it still drew from the immortal dao without pause or interruption.

"I didn't see the Dao Tree when I was in the great wilderness, nor did I see anything related to it. That thing must have appeared after the establishment of the immortal dao." Lu Yun suddenly thought of the existence that'd completely obscured the great war a hundred thousand years ago. It seemed very likely to be the Dao Tree, but he wasn't quite sure yet.

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As the Dao Academy continued to flourish and prosper, cultivators and immortals streamed in to become part of it from all corners of the world of immortals. However, the various peak factions of the world continued to engage in various unsavory deals to secretly oppose the academy.

Lu Yun was aware of it all, but he didn't mind. His mindset had reached completely new heights after his sojourn in the great wilderness and he no longer considered these so-called peak factions as rivals. Rather, he now viewed them as simple whetstones for his disciples.

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"The Chaos Lotus is in the Dao Academy?" Lu Yun started. He'd caught a glimpse of the final spirit root—it was on a female disciple dressed as a male. She was Ling Rumeng, the first genius of the Ling Clan.

She'd attracted a great deal of attention when her phenomenon of ascension had been a chaos lotus, and many guessed that the greatest of the ten spirit root rankings was on her. Thus, she'd been targeted with unceasing ambushes for a long time afterward and nearly died a few times. Out of options, the Ling Clan finally sent Ling Rumeng to the Dao Academy.

This was the safest place in the entire world of immortals right now.

Though Lu Yun had located the last spirit root he lacked, he didn't immediately collect it. Once he refined the Chaos Lotus and broke through to chaos realm, his replica would have to immediately transform into the cosmos and mend the immortal dao.

He couldn't let that happen before certain things were taken care of, such as... the various soul force wrapped around his fingers. Those were his ties to the great wilderness that he'd brought back to his time.

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"So this is your biggest secret," murmured the little fox as she looked at the Karmic Tree in hell.

"Yep, this whole place is my secret." Lu Yun nodded. "You can let them out now. It's safer here than in the Bell of Chaos."

The little fox exhaled slowly and summoned the bell, releasing the Deaf Prince and his six friends, Houtu, Shentu, and Yulei. They were all deep in meditation as they slowly refined Vastspace Mountain and Timelight Tower.

“Vastspace Mountain and Timelight Tower... one controls space and the other time. Neither of them are treasures that any empyrean realm great emperor could’ve refined,” the little fox explained softly.

“Rather, the heavens borrowed Empress Vastspace and Timelight’s power to manifest in that era. The empresses could traverse time and space not because of their great dao, but because we sent them to the time of the immortal dao.

“The treasures of human dao!” she declared solemnly. “Vastspace Mountain and Timelight Tower are the treasures of human dao!”

The dao weapons of the primitive great dao had been a tower, a cauldron, and a bell. The ones for human dao were a mountain and tower. As for the treasure of the immortal dao... Lu Yun had already seen it during the battle of the Sovereign Rankings. The enormous plate inside the arena was the immortal dao’s weapon.

When Fuxi and the others traveled through time, their trip hadn’t been like Lu Yun’s in which he floated along the river of time and dropped down in his era. They’d become part of the world and experienced all of its changes and reformations from the Primeval Era to the Primordial Era.

They’d taken up different roles to witness, and even participate in, the many transformations of heaven and earth. However, the price they’d paid for that was the little fox entering the wheel of reincarnation and becoming a native of the future, Ah Zhi separating into two and almost dying, while God... really did die.

“Human dao is the foundation of immortal dao, so its treasures cannot be destroyed. That’s why God sacrificed his realm of creator and deployed his last trace of power over time and space to rip apart the river of time, so that he could send Vastspace Mountain and Timelight Tower to the immortal dao’s era,” the little fox said softly.

If God hadn’t lost his cultivation realm, the four of them would’ve returned safely to their time and nipped all trouble in the bud during the great wilderness. They could’ve reformed the future to avoid all of the pitfalls they’d observed.

However, God’s death was the clearest indicator of everything—they could not change the future from the past.

“Is my future also set in stone?” murmuring to himself, Lu Yun lifted his head and seemed to peer into the depths of the river of time.

“No, your future isn’t set!” The little fox shook her head firmly. “I didn’t see you in the river of time. In fact, I’ve never seen you anywhere!”

Lu Yun started, then thought of the Tome of Life and Death on him—the ultimate treasure that not even Hongjun could see through.

The Deaf Prince, Jing Dichen, Bai Qi, Beicang Qiong, Lin Yan, and Feng Ruyu were jointly refining Vastspace Mountain. Jing Huaci and Houtu were tackling Timelight Tower together.

As for Shentu and Yulei, they were Houtu’s subordinates. Though they were powerful connate demon gods, they could only be her guards while she existed. They could not be considered on par with her and refine the treasures of human dao together.

“Hmm?” Lu Yun’s eyes widened when he felt one of the tendrils of soul force tugging at him. It disengaged from his hand and slowly melded into Jing Dichen.

“Changxi! Jing Dichen is Changxi!” He gaped at the princess.

He’d spent some of his last days in the great wilderness collecting the soul force of everyone he’d gotten to know, the insignificant energy leakage representing a little spark of hope.

Judging from the behavior of a lot of the tendrils, many of them were unexpectedly still alive! Though they’d died after the system of reincarnation had been established, they’d been reborn into this world through that system and lived life after life to people he possibly knew now. The goddess of the moon had reincarnated into Jing Dichen.

Chapter 924: Despondent

“What about the others?” Hope rose in Lu Yun’s heart when he looked at the alliance of prodigals. If Changxi had become the third princess of the Unsullied Sea, Jing Dichen, and Deaf Prince Xiangliu Hongzhen was the reincarnated fragment of Goumang’s soul... then what about the others?? Were Bai Qi, Beicang Qiong, Lin Yan, and Feng Ruyi also reincarnated demon gods of the great wilderness?

Of those in front of him, the Deaf Prince was the only one who still looked the same. Lu Yun tested the rest by gently waving each strand of soul force in front of them.

Two more disengaged from his fingers and melded into Beicang Qiong and Feng Ruyi’s bodies. Those strands belonged to Zhurong and Gonggong.

Though they hadn’t been connate demon gods, they were peak chaos realm experts of the great wilderness. They, too, had perished in the cataclysm that struck the human dao. But since Lu Yun had obtained a strand of their soul force before his departure, they would be able to regain their strength after they absorbed the tendril back into them—despite having gone through the wheel of reincarnation.

“What about Lin Yan and Bai Qi?” Lu Yun looked hopefully at the two of them. They couldn’t be ordinary individuals if the treasures of human dao had chosen them. Surely they’d once been awe-inspiring connate great gods as well.

“One of them must be Rushou!” Inspiration struck him. Rushou had died to Dijiang, right in front of Lu Yun’s eyes. He hadn’t been able to call upon his death arts then and could only watch Rushou pass away.

Lu Yun scanned the Deaf Prince, Beicang Qiong, and Feng Ruyi. If the three of them were the reincarnated first generation rulers of the four great nations, then Jin nation ruler Rushou must be among them. Lu Yun didn’t believe that Rushou would just scatter away on the wind like this.

“But who’s the other person?” He sank into deep thought.

Not that many strands of soul force had come back with him because their owners had mostly been connate demon gods—chaos realm entities born of nature. He would’ve elicited backlash from the great dao of that era if he’d left with too many souvenirs.

There was nothing he could've done about it. If not for that restriction, he would've journeyed through the great wilderness and collected some from all of the connate great gods to plant into the sea of Hell Flowers.

"Jing Dichen is the reincarnated Changxi, which means that out of Bai Qi and Lin Yan, one of them has something to do with the moon or sun," Lu Yun muttered to himself.

The little fox jumped on top of his head and peered intently at the Deaf Prince and the others, then looked at Jing Huaci.

"I know who she is!" she suddenly shrieked. "Queen Mother of the West! She's the reincarnated Queen Mother!"

"I always thought she seemed very familiar, like the Queen Mother.... But I'd always thought the Queen Mother was still alive somewhere in this realm..." A despondent tone crept into her voice.

The Queen Mother of the West was the mistress of Kunlun Mountain, once home to the celestial court. Since the little fox had been the court's celestial master, she shared an uncommon bond with the Queen Mother. The little fox would've recognized the goddess even in reincarnated form.

It was just, in the little fox's heart, the Queen Mother couldn't possibly die. She had to be alive somewhere in the world. But when she and Lu Yun traveled to Kunlun Mountain and learned from Kaiming the reason behind the goddess' death, that was when she'd accepted her hunch that Jing Huaci was the Queen Mother.

The river of time in this realm had formed after the little fox and others traveled to the future. Its core essence was the core essence of the Queen Mother of the West, which was also why the treasure of human dao had chosen Jing Huaci.

As for the treasure of space, Goumang, Rushou, Gonggong, and Zhurong represented metal, wood, water, and fire. Changxi and another demon god that Lu Yun was unfamiliar with represented yin and yang. The combination of all of these elements formed the power of space.

Earth was absent from this line up, and rightly so. If all five elements were present, then the treasure would produce a real world instead of the power of space.

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Lu Yun had never met the Queen Mother of the West, so he nodded gently at the identification. "Let's leave them be so they can cultivate."

Not too far off in the distance, Ge Long and Fuying silently watched Lu Yun's return. Carmine Eternal and Arbiter were in their usual haunts in the City of the Dead, immensely enjoying themselves with the city's residents.

Rueful smiles wreathed Ge Long's face at the moment. "So that lord is him? No wonder he seemed very familiar with me the first time we met."

"Who?" Fuying asked with surprise.

"Can't say, I can't say." Ge Long shook his head rapidly.

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Lu Yun arrived by the sea of Hell Flowers and gently scattered soul force over the flowers. A dozen of them found a flower and attached to it, becoming one with their new home and emanating subtle ripples of soul force.

From this, he could tell that Bai Zhaoju, Zhi Guangji, Chi Biaonu, and the Yellow Emperor had all perished. Now safeguarding their soul force, Hell Flowers borrowed the power of reincarnation in hell to rebuild their souls.

“Huaxu and Leize died in the end... Hongjun, Xuanyuan’s master, and Hongjun’s third disciple whom I’ve never met also died.” Lu Yun shook slightly. “Wahuang and Ah Zhi also died... Shaodian, Jiang Ti, Ah Niu and the others didn’t survive either.”

Dejection crept across his face. To him, they’d only parted for a short decade. But for them, the farewell had been eternal. Death in his eyes wasn’t the process of turning from a living being to a yin soul, then a ghost, and finally a dead spirit... but to be completely scattered and true spirit extinguished.

Bai Ze, Xiangliu, and Kuafu that Lu Yun had stolen a bit of soul force from, as well as sun goddess Xihe who’d tried to use him as a shield had all dissipated upon the wind. He’d forgiven the sun goddess in the end, but they were never to meet again.

“Yellow Emperor Han Shuniu was the main protagonist of that era and ushered in the glory age of human dao by himself. But he also died at some point.” Melancholy wrapped around Lu Yun as he gazed upon Han Shuniu’s sleeping soul force in one of the flowers.

He’d also made a few trips to search out connate great gods who’d once protected the human race, including poor Kaiming who’d fallen into the great wilderness along with Kunlun Mountain. Lu Yun had soundlessly stolen some soul force from them, but here they slumbered, dead in this current era.

“Wait, Ah Bao’s alive!” Lu Yun’s eyes lit up at the sight of a tendril still drifting over a flower. He’d never forgotten the young girl who’d sacrificed her own core essence to pull him back from the brink of death with the most primitive strength possible.

“Ah Bao’s alive, she’s still alive! Where’s her reincarnated body?” He waved a hand and called upon the six paths of his nascent spirit, utilizing the mountain ghost’s soul force to determine where she was now.

“She’s... Wanfeng?!” A smile curved Lu Yun’s lips. “No wonder, no wonder Fuxi took her as a disciple in this era!”

It was an enormous comfort to him that Ah Bao was still alive. As for the others, he could only make use of Hell Flowers to slowly reform their souls. He couldn’t bring them back to life immediately and restore their sense of self, but he believed that day wasn’t too far off.

Chapter 925: The Origins of the Dao Tree

Xing Chen sat cross-legged in hell, continuously employing the great dao within him to refine and reinforce the kingdom of hell. It’d once been overrun by akasha ghosts, and many awful existences yet lurked in the deepest parts of the netherworld. Lu Yun didn’t want his final retreat to be breached again.

After the blood demon entered hell, he bounced off joyously to the deepest parts of the realm. That innermost layer hadn't ever been part of human hell, but instead the most mysterious layer of prisons beneath the Sea of Hellfire in the netherdark.

It held some of the most vile criminals since the dawn of time, but no one knew who'd locked them there and why they were incarcerated there. There was another name for that particular prison—Hadal Battlefield.

Luo Houluo's Hadal Bonfire originated from there.

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"Wanfeng, come here for a moment." Back in Dao City, Lu Yun smiled happily to see the capable maid. Despite having grown into a fine young lady, she would always be a child in his eyes.

There were three hundred and sixty-five cities in Dusk Province now, and apart from Dao City, all of them were fully opened to the public as part of the academy campus.

Lu Yun refused to run provincial affairs and Qing Yu was even more of a recluse. His ten Yama Kings busied themselves with teaching classes in the Dao Academy, so the reins of Dusk naturally fell into Wanfeng's hands.

After a period of tempering, Wanfeng had shed her childishness and adopted a stern and decisive style. Her immense abilities cowed even top experts of peak factions.

"Sir!" She always chattered like an exuberant little bird whenever she saw her young master.

Lu Yun reached out and tousled her hair, an action that creased her eyes into crescents from the force of her broad grin. He suddenly imprinted the strand of soul force on his fingertip into her mind.

It immediately felt like a thunderbolt had crashed into Wanfeng. She shook like a leaf as a lost look flashed through her eyes.

"...big brother Lieshan..." Wanfeng looked dumbly at Lu Yun after an indeterminable silence and suddenly threw herself into his arms with loud sobs.

"There's a good girl. Don't cry, Ah Bao, big brother has come back." He stroked her hair with a smile.

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Lu Yun had refined Ah Bao's soul force with the power of reincarnation, so Wanfeng didn't lose her sense of self after reabsorbing the tendril. All that happened was that she recovered the memories of her past life.

She buzzed around Lu Yun, chattering for three days and nights before she fully conveyed everything that Ah Bao had seen and knew. Finally, she sat on the ground in vexation.

"What's wrong, Wanfeng?" Lu Yun was carefully digesting everything that'd happened after his departure, so he was surprised by her long face.

"Do I call you big brother now, or still sir?" She pouted, highly troubled by what to call Lu Yun.

“Call me big brother.” He tousled her hair with a chuckle. “Affinity is a strange thing. You were the first person I saw when I came to the world of immortals... and you were also the first person I saw when I went to the great wilderness.”

“Okay!” Wanfeng nodded emphatically, not knowing why the young master had said that, but not asking further as well.

.....

Winter. First month of the twentieth year in the Xuanhuang calendar.

Big, fat snowflakes drifted down upon the northern reaches of the world of immortals. Now in the twentieth year since the calendar’s establishment, laws of the four seasons were taking shape and dictating the changes of the season according to the calendar.

Lu Yun and Qing Yu stood hand in hand at the peak of Mount Xuanhuang, overlooking the world of immortals. The mountain was now the greatest sacred mountain of the world and one could see almost all of twenty-four facets from its peak.

“It’s time.” Lu Yun looked up into the sky to where the World Gates were and sighed softly. “There’s still eighty more years to go, but that’s enough.”

Qing Yu smiled and turned her hand over; a hazy lotus bloomed gracefully on her palm. Ling Rumeng had become her second disciple, and she’d offered up the Chaos Lotus of her own volition.

She knew that she wouldn’t be able to leave Dusk Province as long as the spirit root was on her, that she would die sooner or later for it. As exceptionally quick-witted as she was, she also knew why Qing Yu had accepted her as a disciple.

“It is indeed time, my primary body has reached extreme peerless immortal. If I continue to keep it down, I’m afraid the Dao Fruit will struggle free of the seal.”

In the current world of immortals and all of the other worlds outside it, a critical mass of extreme peerless immortals had collected and continued to grow by the day. If the situation continued down the same path, the Dao Fruit would be so attracted to their strength that it would forcibly break out of Qing Yu’s control.

Her cultivation realm now was also extreme peerless immortal.

Over the past couple of years, Lu Yun’s replica had refined hell to an unfathomable level. He’d also told Qing Yu everything that happened to him in the great wilderness and recorded it all in the history book he was writing.

Yuying, Feinie, Aoxue, Xuanxi, Huangqing, Cangyin, Suxiaoxiao, Xingzi, Luli, and Zhaoqing walked out of the void, also at extreme peerless immortal.

Qing Yu slowly began to free the Dao Tree. “We only need to go to the first level, there’s no need to venture down to the third.”

“Understood!” Yuying and the others reported back.

Hummm.

Lu Yun and the others vanished as the void trembled. When they next appeared, they were by the banks of the Dao Tree.

Though Qing Yu had sealed it away, that seal only severed the tree's connection to the outside world. Its surroundings formed a world of its own, which housed a horde of long-haired monsters that opened crimson eyes at the sudden appearance of Lu Yun's group. The ones with black fur wielded a dao weapon that looked like Worldcarver, while the scarlet ones wielded bronze spears.

The dao weapons in the hands of the black furs weren't weapons of the immortal, human, or the primitive great dao. The Dao Tree had absorbed some of the heavenly dao and formed its own to create these weapons.

"I see... so the Dao Tree evolved from the fragments of the Builder Tree that absorbed Kunlun Mountain's life point!" Lu Yun finally understood the tree's origins when he saw it once again.

The fragments of the Builder Tree had combined with the heavenly vein on Kunlun Mountain, and Lu Yun had broken the mountain's life point with the nameless spear. He'd chopped down the Builder Tree with Worldcarver and left the spear driven into the heavenly vein.

When the mountain had fallen to the great wilderness, someone had collected the tattered heavenly vein and a section of the Builder Tree. They'd then refined it into a cancerous tumor for the immortal dao after the new dao had been born.

Since the presence of the two dao weapons lingered on the Builder Tree and Kunlun Mountain, that was why the long-haired monsters wielded these weapons.

Chapter 926: Flame Emperor of the Human Race

The two great dao weapons of the human race were space and time. The one to refine the Dao Tree must have once obtained the great weapons and imbued their characteristics onto its spear and axe to create its own.

.....

"Lu Yun, how dare you actually come!" A crimson long-haired monster that towered like a mountain brandished its bronze spear at the human.

The Dao Tree was extensive without end, like a real world. Dao fruits dotted its branches, all of them the result of the tree drawing from the immortal dao's strength.

"The master of the Dao Tree plainly wants to use it to seize the immortal dao." Lu Yun frowned faintly before looking at the enormous creature that'd addressed him.

"Why wouldn't I come? What do you nonexistent things think you can do to me?" He recognized the long-haired creatures this time; they had tangible forms now, which whittled away at their strength. He'd seen them in Pangu's tomb before, but he'd only been able to see their footprints then since they didn't have a physical form.

Akasha souls. The things that the enormous akasha ghost had nurtured in its body.

“And, Dao Tree, I know you bear a grudge, but you still would’ve died even if we’d allowed the akasha ghost to crawl to the world of celestials back then! In fact, your death would’ve been even more grisly if that had happened,” Lu Yun roared. “Though I destroyed you, I left you a ray of hope. How could you turn around to ravage life instead?!”

Kerrrrack.

An ear-piercing crack came from the top of the enormous tree as a pair of blood-red eyes gradually opened upon it.

“Flame Emperor of the human race!” A bloody mouth slowly ripped open for it to howl back, “I am the foremost divine tree of the heavens! I would have lived in the chaos even if the great wilderness had fallen to fire and water, and the world returned to the chaos! Nothing could have destroyed me apart from Worldcarver!

“But you destroyed mine body for the sake of insignificant ants! So I will seek my vengeance upon those ants you cherish so dearly! KILL!!”

It’d gone completely mad; there were no other thoughts in its mind other than revenge.

Revenge.

If it couldn’t kill the Flame Emperor, then it would destroy the human race and world that he wanted to safeguard!

“What?! Lu Yun is the Flame Emperor of the human race?! How is that possible?!” The bottom dropped out of the akasha souls’ stomach when they heard the exchange.

The Flame Emperor’s dreadful might had long been woven into the stories of their tribe. The first akasha ghost to invade the great wilderness had attempted to control Pangu’s body, but the Flame Emperor had injured it gravely and thrown it out, ultimately to die at the hands of the three founders of immortal dao.

The mighty akasha ghosts had to join their side if they were to vie against the Flame Emperor! Akasha souls that had already taken true form would only perish in front of this legendary human.

The Dao Tree flew into a rage when it saw the akasha souls refusing to move. Gray flames burst from its body and shot toward the horizon.

“That’s not good, it wants to break the seal!” Eyes widening in alarm, Qing Yu’s heavenly palace floated over her head and trailed down mesmerizing radiance, protecting Lu Yun and the Ten Yama Kings.

“No worries, this is Mount Xuanhuang. It won’t be able to cause any trouble here.” A leer quirked Lu Yun’s lips.

Rumble—

The void split open as a mammoth black tree descended from space, taking root on Mount Xuanhuang.

.....

“The Dao Tree!”

All of the immortals who'd reached dao immortal realm in the world of immortals, and multiverse as a whole, jerked their heads upward at the tree. It'd suddenly appeared in all of their eyes like the Dao Flower once had.

"It's Lu Yun, he really wants to destroy the tree!" Countless immortals gasped with shock.

"Flame Emperor of the human race!" the Dao Tree snarled. "Since you wish to protect these lives and this realm, then I shall personally end everything you care for!"

.....

"Flame Emperor?!" In the depths of the South Sea within Destiny City, Qi Hai and his junior brother leapt up with overwhelming shock.

"Did it say Flame Emperor?! Is His Majesty Flame Emperor still alive?!" Incredulity filled their eyes.

Their legacies hailed from the three hundred and sixty-five geniuses that Lu Yun had selected from the Yan Tribe. Though all of them—first generation city lords of humanity's three hundred and sixty-five sacred cities—had voluntarily offered up their lives and great dao at Emperors Fall, their legacies lived on.

Qi Hai and the city lord of Destiny City were two of their heirs. Since Lu Yun had selected those three hundred and sixty-five geniuses, their inheritance contained everything there was to know about the Flame Emperor, even though the human dao was no longer.

Born of Qingqiu Mountain, raised by the banks of the Wei River, the great wilderness knew of his glories and the heavens trembled at his might!

"His Majesty... which one is the Flame Emperor?!" Shaking uncontrollably, Qi Hai fixed his eyes on Lu Yun's figure in front of the Dao Tree. "Can it be that Lu Yun is the reincarnated Flame Emperor?!"

.....

"The Flame Emperor?!" Traveling through the world, the diligently working Xuanyuan Xiaoyue paused and stared at the figure in front of the Dao Tree. She was trying to integrate herself into this realm's laws, and had once stood like this by her father's side to gaze upon that man.

"It really is him! He took a strand of father's soul force when he left, so father will be coming back now that he's returned!"

Upon her smile, it seemed as if all of the flowers in the world bloomed in unison and joy echoed beneath the heavens.

.....

"The Flame Emperor of the human race..." The two scarlet apes in the depths of the North Sea remained silent. They'd both experienced the era of human dao; though the period before it had been erased, the Flame Emperor had still been revered by the human race in their time.

.....

“I’m a sheep that’s entered the lion’s den.” Down in Dao City, the demon god that’d become the dean of demonic dao also stared dumbly at Lu Yun upon the mountain. He’d gradually recovered himself after being nourished by the immortal dao and knew who he was now. He also remembered the Flame Emperor who’d arrived on the scene like a meteor in his youth and killed countless connate demon gods, terrifying them with just the sound of his name.

“So he’s the Flame Emperor? How is he the Flame Emperor? How is this possible??” the demon god shook.

.....

In this moment, countless taboo existences that’d survived since the age of mythology shrank back and fell silent. In their era, the Yellow Emperor had been the protagonist of the heavens and the one to usher in an era.

But the one they all feared the most was the Flame Emperor!

Chapter 927: Enormous Akasha Ghost

The Dao Tree was too terrifying. Fragments of the Builder Tree had regrown for a second life, but they’d been controlled by a terrible resentment. After absorbing the strength of the heavenly vein, it’d grown for another hundred million years and now drew off the immortal dao.

The Dao Tree was the singular most terrifying thing in the world at the moment, even more dreadful than Leize of the great wilderness!

The immortal dao residing in Mount Xuanhuang barreled out of the mountain and assimilated into Lu Yun’s replica, becoming one with Xing Chen. The body of the world swiftly blended with the immortal dao, becoming a body of the immortal dao.

Lu Yun could tell from this sight that his replica wouldn’t belong to him anymore after this battle. The time had finally come to give it up.

All of Mount Xuanhuang trembled ferociously as rays of bronze radiance erupted from the bronze core of the mountain, forming a true world of its own. It encompassed the mountain and was a world of the immortal dao, a place where the strength of the immortal dao could be unleashed in its fullest glory.

Gray flames shot into the clouds from the branches of the Dao Tree and set the akasha souls afire. That instantly restored their original strength and reverted them to barely perceptible shadows. They swiftly gathered in the void, forming the figure of an enormous akasha ghost. Bleak howls and desolate wails echoed through the air while a myriad of ghostly faces took shape in the sky, dyeing the world of immortal dao with an eerie and sinister air.

Beings in other parts of the world of immortals looked to Mount Xuanhuang, horror prickling at their hearts. It wasn’t until this moment that they finally understood why Lu Yun and Qing Yu had had to seal away the Dao Tree.

Instead of being the sacred tree of their cultivation, it was a demonic one!

.....

Ling Weiyang's soul force had long been returned to Ashu's body—he stood in the middle of the Dao Academy at the moment, silently watching everything taking place upon the sacred mountain. Though he'd regained his sense of self, he had yet to recover his old strength.

“So he's the Flame Emperor... the karma between me and the legendary emperor manifests now, but its cause lies in the past,” he murmured to himself.

Holy Kings Atrophy, Antiquity, Desolation, and Violetshade walked out of the underworld together, descending upon Dusk Province in a mighty formation and surrounding the world of immortal dao that Mount Xuanhuang had created.

Up in the void, a sword cauldron, sword bell, and... a sword-shaped pagoda slowly drifted down, likewise protecting this world.

The Sugato Sword had returned to its roots of being a sword pagoda, and so Lu Yun returned it to the Green Firmament. He'd made use of it for the past twenty decades to return to his prime, and he now finally understood where the three Firmaments came from.

When he'd deployed the Dragonspike Litany upon Kunlun Mountain, he'd preserved a trace of fortune for the connate demon gods. These three Firmaments were the last of the celestial court legacy.

Some of the demon gods had grasped the chance he left for them and successfully wrestled their fates free of disaster from the Death Spike. However, they'd still fallen to the cataclysm at the end of the era, and the Firmaments were their legacies.

The sword pagoda, bell, and cauldron were derived from the three treasures of the primitive great dao, and they likely had the Yellow Emperor to thank for being related to swords. The three prodigious weapons arrayed themselves in an enormous triangle and surrounded Mount Xuanhuang.

Of course, even the four holy kings of the underworld didn't have the right to be involved in this fight. What they could do was to protect the sacred mountain and ensure that the Dao Tree wouldn't destroy the world that the mountain had created.

.....

“So you didn't die, but purposefully let the three founders of immortal dao cut you down!” Color drained from Lu Yun's face to see ghostly faces melt together within the void. This all seemed like a dream. The enormous akasha ghost in the sky was the one that'd been in Pangu's tomb!

On his way back to his time, Lu Yun had seen the three founders of the immortal dao cut it down with his own eyes. When he saw it bubble up from the Dao Tree, he immediately realized what the akasha ghost had been plotting.

It was so strong that it'd dared to latch on to even the great god Pangu's body. How would Hongjun's three disciples—the three founders—have the strength to exterminate it? Instead, it'd used their hand to integrate into the immortal dao.

As strong as the Dao Tree was with the fragments of the Builder Tree and Kunlun's heavenly vein, it couldn't become a parasite of the immortal dao. However, the akasha ghost had used the founders to exit the stage and create a backdoor into the newly-established immortal dao to facilitate its entry.

The Dao Tree had sunk teeth into the immortal dao because of this akasha ghost and successfully replaced the dao immortal realm. It continuously fed off the immortal dao and even dictated the lives of those beneath it.

The immortal dao was a perfect great dao that shouldered this realm, but the living beings under it had never broken through the three purities realm to reach empyrean realm, much less chaos realm. All of that could be attributed to the Dao Tree.

With the akasha ghost overlaid on the tree, their combined strength shook Mount Xuanhuang and tore ugly cracks through the bronze landmass.

“Creator realm?” Lu Yun looked warily at the ghost and tree combination.

His ten Yama Kings had returned to hell. Though they rivaled the old Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak since they controlled the path of reincarnation, they were too weak since they were mere peak peerless immortals. They wouldn’t be of any help if they stayed, other than to be negligible cannon fodder.

Pure white curtains of light cascaded from the heavenly palace over Qing Yu’s head, protecting its mistress. A scroll as if a white cloud bank revolved outside the shifting radiance—the Scroll of Shepherding Immortals. Fuxi had drawn it with the core essence of God and depicted the core essence of divine spirits on it.

This treasure had the ability to counter akasha ghosts, but the one before them was too strong since it was nearly a creator. If it’d been Fuxi or Leize wielding the scroll, it would be able to firmly suppress the akasha ghost.

But in Qing Yu’s hands, she could barely manage to defend herself. Unfortunately, she couldn’t leave. Once Lu Yun destroyed the Dao Tree, she would have to immediately re-sculpt the dao immortal realm.

Chapter 928: Vengeance for Human Dao

“Lu Yun, the source of akasha ghosts in this era lies with that one,” Qing Yu’s voice suddenly sounded in his mind. “It’s the one who’s turned all of the fallen great emperors into akasha ghosts!”

“I see.” Lu Yun took a deep breath as an axe and spear brightened in his hands, flaring with the power of space and time.

Within hell, two answering beams of profound light blossomed from Mount Vastspace and the Timelight Tower, rushing into Lu Yun’s nascent spirit.

Boom.

The intersection of space and time formed a reincarnation of spacetime; the two dao weapons combined together and flung themselves at the Dao Tree.

Lu Yun’s goal wasn’t the big akasha ghost, but the Dao Tree. The akasha ghost wouldn’t be a threat anymore once the tree was a pile of splinters.

“Gyakkkkk—” A human face materialized on the tree’s trunk, imitating the akasha ghost’s expression of laughing and crying at the same time. Its black branches crisscrossed in midair, forming eight arms while four enormous heads slowly budded from the tree’s crown.

Four heads and eight arms! This was the appearance of the origin divine!

“The origin divine!” Lu Yun went slack jawed with shock when he saw the change.

The origin divine that’d escaped from the mother altar ultimately revealed itself in the era of human dao, calling itself the foremost divine spirit of the world. Upon its reappearance, the Exalted divines established the divine race and slowly developed the four cardinal tribes.

However, the origin divine and its tribe afterward remained enemies of the human race and the divine race at large!

Its sculpture could be found in the Exalted Tomb, one that’d become a horrifying stone spirit and had to be terminated by the demon god. The stone spirit had been the one to wreck the empty mother altar there as well.

Unbeknownst to them all, the real origin divine had become part of the Dao Tree a long time ago!

Or rather... its obsession. Yellow Emperor Xuanyuan had killed the origin divine in his time, but its lingering obsession was enough to impart all of its strength to the Dao Tree and akasha ghost.

Four heads and eight arms represented the four core essences of the world—earth, air, fire, and water!

Their energy accumulated furiously on the Dao Tree and projected a world as well, one that could vie with the world of immortal dao. This was what Lu Yun’s axe and spear ruthlessly drilled into.

Heaven and earth shook from the blow as a gaping fissure opened on the world of divine elements. Howling, the akasha ghost sent its akasha souls forth like a swarm of locusts, devouring all of the qi in their path as they dived at Lu Yun.

“Die!!” Lu Yun swung with the reincarnation of spacetime once more when he saw the horde screaming down upon him and Qing Yu.

His cultivation level was truly at the chaos realm now, and his strength infinitely close to that of a creator’s! Combat arts like the reincarnation of spacetime could be deployed to their maximum in his hands.

Space and time were the core strengths of human dao. When the strengths of human dao were distilled into combat arts and combined with reincarnation, the trifecta rivalled the peak of any realm’s great dao!

Spacetime reincarnation swept through the void, shredding every akasha soul it came across. But as long as the big akasha ghost remained, the akasha souls were nearly immortal. When they vanished, new black and crimson monsters shot to their feet, charging at Lu Yun with their dao weapons.

However, Lu Yun still had only eyes for the Dao Tree.

Boooooom.

A tremendous boom exploded from the world of immortal dao as sheets of aureate brilliance sparkled through the air. A golden tree slowly loomed out of the void, suppressing the Dao Tree the moment it appeared.

The Karmic Tree!

The tree that the Sal Tree of Life and Death had evolved into after absorbing goodwill, an existence even more dominating than the Sal Tree! It'd once been viewed as a demonic tree in the great wilderness—far more terrifying than the Builder Tree. Likewise, the Karmic Tree now still surpassed the Builder-Dao Tree!

Ring—

Ring—

Ring—

Golden ripples emanated from the Karmic Tree and crashed into the world of divine elements. It'd already been reeling from Lu Yun's blow and immediately fell apart from the new offensive.

A slight hint of emotions traveled from the Karmic Tree. It seemed to be... disdainful of the Dao Tree. In their former lives, the Sal Tree had outmatched the Builder Tree to be the greatest divine tree in the world. And now, it was still better than the Dao Tree!

Bright radiance shimmered on the Karmic Tree as its fruit gleamed and glistened between its leaves, further outshining the dao fruits on the Dao Tree.

"Break!!" Lu Yun charged to the tree when its world was broken, calling upon the Size Manipulation death art. His body and weapons expanded explosively to a giant five thousand kilometers tall.

Keen edges sliced a harrowing curve through the air; the enormous axe threatened to chop down the Dao Tree from the glint of its edge alone.

"Why aren't you helping yet?!" the akasha ghost suddenly bawled, using its body to block the axe.

"Flame Emperor, though you set down the foundation for the glories of human dao and are its ancestor, vengeance must be enacted for the human dao. If human dao is to be reinstated, immortal dao must be destroyed!" A respectful and apologetic voice sounded in the air, swiftly followed by a bronze sword light that bit into Lu Yun's axe light and shattered it to pieces.

Lu Yun frowned slightly, peering into the void with Spectral Eye and making out an enormously strong yin soul standing there. He wielded a black sword—a dead Xuanyuan Sword.

As for its wielder, a yin soul so strong that even the Tome of Life and Death couldn't subdue it, Lu Yun didn't recognize him. He was plainly a human expert born after the time of the great wilderness.

"Yu Rang of the human race greets the Flame Emperor." Yu Rang was a yin soul, but his soul force was so formidable that it affected the world. It affected the world so much that the world's energy gathered to form a real body for him.

He wore a tall hat and loose white robes, the uniform of a court official. He seemed dashing and handsome, but resolution burned in his eyes that were as bright as the stars. Revenge for human dao and a return to human dao, even if he faced the human dao ancestor—Flame Emperor!

Chapter 929: Interrogation

Yu Rang deployed such marvelous sword dao that even the dead Xuanyuan Sword had transformed into a sword soul in his hands. The sword was the greatest manmade treasure in the world, and one of the strongest as well.

Lu Yun inclined his head at the human descendant. "It is the honor of the human race to have such a warrior as you." He put away the spear and axe, dismissed the Size Manipulation death art, and raised cupped fists at Yu Rang—greatly startling the yin soul.

Though he was battling Lu Yun, Lu Yun's identity was the Flame Emperor and a most venerable senior of the human race. Yu Rang felt completely unworthy of the courtesy, even though he'd just smashed one of the Flame Emperor's attacks to pieces.

"But!!" Twin black flames burned in Lu Yun's eyes when he jerked his head back up. "How dare you run around with this akasha ghost?!"

Swoosh!

He vanished where he stood to reemerge in front of Yu Rang, slapping the yin soul with everything he had. Lu Yun put so much force behind the slap that he punched through Yu Rang's body of qi, shattering half of the yin soul's face and revealing his true form beneath.

"Do you know that this akasha ghost latched onto the great Pangu's body like a parasite and blasphemed against his true form?! Pangu is the father god of the human race and our ancestor! How dare you conspire with the akasha ghost that desecrated the great god!!"

SMACK!

Lu Yun slapped Yu Rang's other cheek and pulverized the yin soul's head this time.

"Do you know that when humanity conquered the heavens, it was this akasha ghost who backed the celestial court and killed countless members of our kin?!"

Boom!

Lu Yun slapped Yu Rang a third time and crushed his body of qi to pieces, dragging the yin soul out with his bare hands.

Lu Yun burned with hatred!

Humans had conquered the heavens in the ninetieth year of his arrival in the great wilderness, but he hadn't been able to contribute to their efforts after breaking apart the formation that the celestial court had set up around Mount Buzhou. At the time, he couldn't afford to fight again in the great wilderness.

Despite that, he kept abreast of many developments.

When the human race and celestial court met in their final clash, the court hadn't been able to put up any semblance of a fight. Haotian's confidence and valor, as well as that of numerous other connate demon gods, had deserted them after Lu Yun's heaven-defying punch.

But against all odds, the celestial court still made the human race pay a heavy price and many great gods fighting for humanity even died. All of that could be traced to the akasha ghost supporting the celestial court.

After the court lost and Haotian surrendered in defeat, the akasha ghost continued to plot and scheme from the shadows. Lu Yun learned from Wanfeng that peace and tranquillity hadn't descended after his departure, that a great deal had still happened.

Ah Bao and Shaodian all became chaos realm experts, but somehow died to the akasha souls. No one knew how Leize and Huaxu died, but in Lu Yun's eyes, there was none that could threaten them apart from this akasha ghost.

The destruction of human dao hadn't been a side effect of establishing immortal dao or betrayal of all life either, but because this akasha ghost and its tribe had attacked it!

If the human dao had been whole and able to resist the akasha ghost and whatever was turning dead worlds into realm monsters, would Hongjun and Daoist Yuyu have needed to slaughter innocents and establish an immortal dao drenched with blood?

And now, someone who claimed he wanted to take revenge for human dao and revitalize it shared the same path as the real enemy of the human race!

Hellfire danced in Lu Yun's hand as he delivered a crazed barrage of face slaps to Yu Rang's form.

Dazed, the yin soul's mind spun from the abuse. He'd congratulated himself just moments ago for being stronger than the Flame Emperor, but now that he'd gotten a clearer look, he realized that this ancestor was infinitely close to the creator realm.

Yu Rang was nothing but a baby in Lu Yun's hands.

"And you, Xuanyuan Sword!" Eyes on fire, Lu Yun bared his teeth at the sword. "Why have you betrayed the human race?!"

Betrayed the human race!!

The accusation stabbed into Yu Rang's heart. He'd always thought that he was working on behalf of the human dao and for humanity at large. But now this forefather of human dao, the Flame Emperor who'd single handedly built the foundations for human dao, passed judgment on him as a traitor of the human race!

Yu Rang's soul wanted to cry—how cruel an interrogation was this to drive an incorporeal being to tears!

The Xuanyuan Sword vibrated softly, pouring its heart out.

Lu Yun's expression darkened. He was certain that these great masters who wanted to enact revenge for the human race had been corrupted by something and become a tool in another's hand.

To set humans against humans.

The Xuanyuan Sword was Yellow Emperor Xuanyuan's sword, the first manmade treasure ever to be refined by his master. It'd absorbed some of Lu Yun's sword dao when the Yellow Emperor trained in the sword formation, so it immediately capitulated when faced with Lu Yun.

"Ling Weiyang, I'm sending him to you!" Lu Yun waved a hand and flung Yu Rang to the Dao Academy.

"Azure Emperor Ling Weiyang!" Yu Rang's heart quailed again. He might've somehow overlooked the Flame Emperor being here, but his last hope for self-redemption shattered when even the Azure Emperor appeared.

Lu Yun looked around the premises at other humans who'd shown up. They were yin souls like Yu Rang, but their eyes glinted coldly without the slightest hint of respect toward the Flame Emperor. Their hearts held only revenge.

Destroy the immortal dao and take revenge for the human dao!

.....

"No wonder, no wonder the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak sent me drifting through the wheel of reincarnation." Qi Hai trembled like a leaf.

Before he met Lu Yun, he'd spent every minute and second obsessing over how to topple the immortal dao and rebuild human dao. He'd even cursed and sealed away all of the divines—the cardinal tribes—that'd betrayed humanity.

Spontaneous enlightenment struck him when he heard Lu Yun's words, and he saw clearly through the circle of life and death.

"So I... I was the first to be chosen among the Flame Emperor's three hundred sixty-five, the first of the star divinities and city lord of humanity's first major city!" Memories from his past life surfaced as he awoke from the endless cycle of reincarnation.

It hadn't been only him to continuously undergo reincarnation, the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak had bestowed the same power to all three hundred sixty-five geniuses and sent them through life after life.

All succeeding three hundred sixty-five city lords had been the first generation original!

But after countless catastrophes, all of the others had truly died or lost themselves within one of their lives, leaving only Qi Hai and the lord of Destiny City out of their cohort. Out of the three hundred sixty-five cities, only Destiny City was left.

"The great emperor knew a long time ago that the enemy would infiltrate the human race. That's why he chose us and used endless reincarnation to help us keep our core essence," sighed the Destiny city lord as he, too, perused newly returned memories. He'd also broken out of the endlessly repeating cycle with Lu Yun's words. "Ah, but, senior brother was lord of the first city. So... they set up plots within schemes within plans on you so that you would continuously lose your sense of self."

Qi Hai smiled ruefully. "That I did... to the point where I plotted against the Flame Emperor and almost killed him myself."

He thought back to the Blood Formation of Ten Thousand Spirits and rotten flesh of many lives.

Chapter 930: Pangu and God

Lu Yun was willing to let bygones be bygones. It was a very good thing that Qi Hai had found himself again in the wheel of reincarnation. After all, the ancient master's grasp of pill dao was nothing short of magical, and it would be a great boon to the world of immortals if he was willing to come to the Dao Academy and become the dean of pill dao.

.....

The fight raged on.

Humans who'd survived the era of human dao didn't dare reveal themselves as Lu Yun's beating of Yu Rang was still fresh on their minds.

However, countless akasha ghosts took shape out of the air. These were the transformations of great emperors who'd died in Emperors Fall. Though they weren't as dreadful as the big akasha ghost, their strength and uncanny eeriness were superior to the akasha souls.

Lu Yun had almost died a few times in their hands, and they'd breached hell once. They fed off nothingness and he had no idea how many of them like Zhi Guangji there were. Now that they showed themselves, they immediately contaminated the space they came in contact with.

Strange paths extended from the void; the akasha ghosts brandished chains and shackles that had once belonged to hell, seeking to hook Lu Yun and Qing Yu's soul out of them.

However, Lu Yun was no longer the weak youth of yesteryear. Xing Chen was almost a creator, while the heavenly palace and Scroll of Shepherding Immortals hovered around Qing Yu. He didn't fear these chains and shackles at all.

"Turn back now and I vow in the name of the Flame Emperor that I will pull you back from this state of nonbeing. I will see to your rebirth in this world!" Lu Yun hectorated. He'd considered these akasha ghosts with great sympathy ever since learning of how they were born.

All things in life had the right to choose, but Daoist Yuyu and the others hadn't been able to do anything other than take that choice from the great emperors so they could establish the immortal dao.

Therefore, Lu Yun pitied them and came to the conclusion long ago that once he possessed sufficient strength, he would retrieve them from the boundary of life and death and facilitate their rebirth into this world. They weren't irredeemable evils, they just wanted to live.

"Wauuuuuugh!!" Piercing shrieks echoed through the air; the akasha ghosts were completely crazy and came churning toward Lu Yun.

Each and every one of them was a moving layout of absolute death. Realistic mirages flickered and replicated through the air as they dove down on him.

Lu Yun looked on with slight horror. He didn't mind one or two of these layouts, but there were ten thousand akasha ghosts in front of him that'd created a jumbled zone of absolute death. He couldn't make anything out and would certainly get lost here.

“My goal isn’t these akasha ghosts or even that big one... it’s the Dao Tree!” He reminded himself of what was the task at hand.

Whoosh!

The Karmic Tree behind him flared with radiant golden light while hellfire roared to life.

Hummm.

A massive man rippling with muscles stepped out of the void. He wielded a large axe in one hand and exuded an incomparably prodigious presence.

Pangu!

Lu Yun ignored the caterwauling akasha ghosts in front of him and the big one posturing threateningly at him, focusing on the nascent spirit observation method instead. He projected Pangu’s true form and even manifested him with Worldcarver in hand.

Pangu’s level of strength was exactly the same as Xing Chen’s, but this projection possessed the unique characteristics of his strength. Wherever he passed, his presence alone was sufficient to decimate the manifold levels of absolute death layouts.

“Pangu!!” snarled the big akasha ghost as fear emanated from the Dao Tree.

Humm.

A second form walked out of the void.

God!

He cut a handsome figure in a long purple robe, the epitome of all that was perfect in the world. Likewise, he wielded a bronze spear traced by Lu Yun’s mind. God strode through the air and made for the big akasha ghost.

“God!!!” Fear colored the big one’s eyes to see God walking toward him.

God was a creator born of the world and possessed the power to restrain akasha ghosts, and happened to be the only entity that the big one was afraid of.

It hadn’t dared stir up any trouble when God was still alive. The akasha ghost had only shown up after God traveled and died in the future; it’d paid a visit to Pangu’s tomb and attempted to possess the great god’s body.

Lu Yun’s projection of God wasn’t the actual legendary being himself, but his true form and abilities. That enabled it to counter the akasha ghosts all the same.

“Flame Emperor of the human race! Though you manifest Pangu and God’s bodies with combat arts, it’s only their bodies. They can’t do anything to us,” suddenly spoke the Dao Tree as it faced off against Pangu. The grain of wood, branches, and leaves on it swiftly receded into a hulking form—the origin divine!

After absorbing the origin divine's resentment, the Dao Tree had gained the ability to change form and emerge from the restraints of a tree's physical body. However, the face it wore was the crying and laughing ghostly face of an akasha ghost.

"Is that so?" An ethereal voice suddenly came from God's mouth and the look in his eyes, so similar to Lu Yun's, faded away to become a foreign stare.

The same happened to Pangu's eyes as two incredible presences billowed out from their bodies—creator realm!

Noting the development, the immortal dao of Mount Xuanhuang greedily soaked up the strength of a creator to improve itself.

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Heaven and earth fell silent at this moment. Countless beings around Mount Xuanhuang trembled uncontrollably, including the humans who'd become weapons of other beings.

Pangu and God had materialized in this era through Lu Yun's projections!

Worldcarver and the bronze spear blossomed with hazy light in their hands, transforming from mental projections to actual divine weapons. Lu Yun's eyes widened from the unexpected development and he leaned backward in surprise.

After returning to the world of immortals, he moved God's body from the Tome of Life and Death and placed it in the celestial master tomb in the underworld. It wasn't until then that he understood the real purpose of the celestial master tomb. It wasn't to perpetuate the fortunes of the primordial immortal court, but to house God's soul fragment!

And Fuxi had also said that Pangu was in the future!

Lu Yun had just never imagined the two creators would choose to make use of his projections to make themselves known.

"The origin divine wasn't part of our realm to begin with. I facilitated its rebirth into the world in a moment of kindness, but to think that not only does it not know gratitude, it dares plot against the living beings of our world!" Colossal killing intent flashed through God's eyes when he looked at the Dao Tree that the origin divine was using for a body.

"It attempts to ruin our world and massacres the realm's living beings. It dares to resent us after its death. It well deserved its execution!" A ball of scintillating radiance bloomed from the ancient bronze spear in God's hands and drilled at the Dao Tree. "This spear shall fell the heavens!"