

The Heavens 1041

Chapter 1041: The Origin

Don't provoke me!

Meng Hao didn't actually speak the words, but based on everything he had said, the message to all his enemies was clear:

Don't provoke me!

If you do, be prepared to deal with the consequences!

Today, I killed one Demonic cultivator and captured 33 more. Well then... if you dare to provoke me tomorrow, then I'll do the same thing. And if you push me even further, then I'll flip the table over and really cause a scene.

The streams of Dao Realm divine sense faded away. Meng Hao's first day in the Nine Seas God World was a day in which his name spread throughout the entire sect. All disciples heard about what happened, leaving them with a profound impression.

Fan Dong'er looked deeply at Meng Hao for a moment, but didn't say anything. Her expression from earlier, in which she was rejoicing in his misfortune, was completely gone. Now, her fear of him was even more deeply rooted.

The Demonic cultivators' hatred was still there, but Meng Hao had established his position in the sect. He still wasn't sure why they hated him so much, but it didn't matter; he had already secured his position. There wasn't a single Demonic cultivator in the entire sect who would dare to make a move against him.

No one in the Immortal Realm was his match. He had castigated the Ancient Realm, and even the Dao Realm was intimidated by him. The glorious scene in which he revealed his terrifying background caused the Demonic cultivators to not only fear him, but to also be jealous of him, and to curse his arrogant and despotic display.

Ling Yunzi left with Meng Hao in tow. The rest of the cultivators gradually dispersed. When Meng Hao's vision cleared, he was in a mountain range deep in the Nine Seas God World.

His current location was a mountain, the top half of which was covered with snow; the frigid cold was evidence of the strength of the energy of Heaven and Earth here. Despite the Nine Seas God World being at the bottom of the sea, the entire land mass was surrounded by a huge invisible shield which kept the seawater out. However, the massive pressure exerted by the Ninth Sea was still there.

At the top of the mountain was a temple, which was where Ling Yunzi was taking Meng Hao. As soon as he entered, he saw that there were two other people sitting there cross-legged.

One of them was the old woman from earlier. She wore a long gray robe, and her face was a mass of wrinkles. Her hair was long and white, and her expression archaic, as if she had existed for many, many years. Her eyes sparkled with a wisdom that seemed to indicate that she could see through the hearts of men.

Of course, Dao Realm experts were all eccentrics with vast experience and unique personalities. They could tell that Meng Hao's previous threats had been nothing more than explanations about his background. However, he had intentionally spoken them out and then let them hang in the air suspensefully. In the end, it didn't really matter if the Dao Realm experts fully believed him or not, the important thing was to plant seeds of doubt and fear in their minds.

Next to the old woman was an old man with an expressionless face, wearing a green robe. As he sat there cross-legged, his gaze swept over Meng Hao, seemingly sizing him up.

His eyes seemed to contain a sharpness, an ability to thoroughly probe every aspect of Meng Hao. His eyes lingered for a moment on Meng Hao's forehead, and his eyes sparkled.

Under the old man's gaze, Meng Hao felt his cultivation base involuntarily rotating, and all of a sudden, his forehead flickered as the Echelon mark appeared.

When the old man saw the mark, he nodded and looked away.

"Meng Hao," said the old woman, smiling, "you can call me Granny Nine." Her expression was kind as she spoke to Meng Hao.

“As for the Guru sitting next to me, you should refer to him as Godmaster.”

“Meng Hao offers greetings to Matriarch Granny Nine and Guru Godmaster.” Meng Hao immediately reined in all of his domineering and arrogant manner from before, and put on a very meek and charming demeanor. He even looked a bit bashful as he clasped hands and offered formal greetings.

When they saw Meng Hao’s bashful expression, Granny Nine apparently found it very amusing. She looked at Meng Hao, her gaze kind and gentle.

Next to her, Ling Yunzi’s expression was one of approval. Years ago during the Three Great Daoist Societies’ trial by fire, he had long since come to have a good impression of Meng Hao, especially his willingness to sacrifice so much for the Nine Seas God World. It had definitely left him with a deep impression.

“This is for you,” Granny Nine said with a laugh, “consider it your welcoming gift for joining the sect.” She made a grasping motion, causing a bag of holding to appear, which she sent floating over to Meng Hao.

He blinked, then accepted it and scanned it with divine sense. Immediately, his heart began to pound with excitement. The bag of holding was filled with masses of pill formulas and jade slips. There was also a huge collection of medicinal plants, many of which were extremely rare in the outside world. The value of the contents of this bag was astronomical.

Ling Yunzi chuckled and said, “We know you’re fond of alchemy, so the three of us old-timers prepared this special gift to give you upon our first meeting. Many of the items in that bag were things that we recently took a trip to acquire just for you.”

Although his words seemed straightforward, the medicinal plants were clearly a reminder to Meng Hao of how much the three of them valued him.

Meng Hao immediately bowed again, and said: “Patriarchs, I offer profound thanks for this expression of utmost generosity and kindness.”

With no hesitation whatsoever, he quickly put the bag of holding into his robe, and as he did, he saw the three old-timers shaking their heads and smiling. Even Godmaster, whose face had been expressionless, was now smiling.

“First of all,” said Granny Nine, “allow us to apologize for what happened when you first arrived in the Ninth Sea. That was a bit beyond what we had anticipated. Originally, we would have come out immediately to resolve the situation, but because of some certain unforeseen circumstances, we were unable to. We hope that you can understand.”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He was not a newcomer to the world of cultivation, and had in fact practiced cultivation for many years. He had experienced many situations of mutual deception, and knew that there were just some matters that couldn’t be pursued too seriously.

He might be able to believe that she was unaware of the reaction his arrival would provoke among the Demonic Cultivator Horde, but he was also sure that the resulting conflict had caused Granny Nine and the faction she represented to suddenly have other motives.

After all, they were the primary faction in the Nine Seas God World, and clearly, they wanted to use the opportunity to put the Demonic Cultivator Horde in place. Meng Hao couldn’t really say anything about that.

It was much the same as it had been in the Fang Clan. He had been used in a similar way back then... which was fine. However, being used in such a way should come with compensation. Therefore, after receiving the bag of holding, he quickly put any feelings of ill-will to rest.

Meng Hao was sure that if events hadn’t played out the way they had, there would still have been a gift presented. However, it would most likely have contained about half of the valuable medicinal plants that it did.

Seeing Meng Hao’s obedient and charming attitude, as well as his quick wit and lack of any prying into the details of what had happened, caused the praise in Granny Nine’s eyes to grow even stronger.

“Now that you’re here in the Nine Seas God World, I’ll give you a simple rundown of the origin of the Three Great Daoist Societies,” the woman began slowly. As soon as she started talking, Meng Hao’s ears perked up. “These are things that we can tell you, but they must not be spread beyond this room.

“The Three Great Daoist Societies have existed eternally from the beginning of the Nine Mountains and Seas down to this day.

“As to how they were started, well, they were founded by none other than the three supreme Paragons!”

“The true names of those three Paragons have long since been forgotten. However, everyone referred to them as Paragon Immortal Ancient, Paragon Nine Seals, and Paragon Sea Dream!

“Paragon Immortal Ancient founded the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite. Paragon Sea Dream founded the Nine Seas God World and the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto.

“That is the origin of the Three Great Daoist Societies. You have met Paragon Sea Dream; she is the one who placed you into the Echelon. She is also the only surviving Paragon....” Granny Nine’s voice floated out as if from ancient times, slowly lifting up the veil that covered the truth of the history of the Three Great Daoist Societies.

Meng Hao was silent for a moment. Some of these things were matters he had already guessed the truth of. However, to hear them personally out of the mouth of the Granny Nine left him quite shaken. Finally, he asked, “The Three Great Daoist Societies aren’t specific to the Ninth Mountain and Sea, are they? And what about Paragon Nine Seals? What did he create?”

“Excellent questions,” replied the woman, nodding. Her eyes shone with praise. “Each and every one of the Nine Mountains and Seas has Three Great Daoist Societies!”

Her words caused Meng Hao’s mind to spin.

“They are all called the Nine Seas God World, the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite and the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto.

“There are nine Nine Seas God Worlds, and when they are combined... that is the TRUE Nine Seas God World!” Granny Nine’s voice was calm as she spoke.

“As for Paragon Nine Seals, nobody knows exactly what he founded. However, throughout the years, various clues have been discovered, which have led to sundry speculations and rumors....” At this point, Granny Nine stopped talking, almost as if she were still in shock and disbelief over the words she was about to speak.

The person to complete the thought was not the Granny Nine, but the expressionless old man who was called guru Godmaster. “According to the rumors,” he said, “Paragon Nine Seals created... the entire Mountain and Sea Realm!”

When Meng Hao heard this, his mind filled with crashing rumbling. The information contained in what he had heard was something completely unheard of, leaving him shaken and panting.

“Paragon Nine Seals created the Mountain and Sea Realm?” he exclaimed.

“It’s merely speculation,” Godmaster said, his archaic voice echoing out through the temple hall. “There’s no way to determine whether it’s true or not. However, Paragon Nine Seals was the leader of the three great Paragons, so perhaps... during the era of the great war, he was the only one who could accomplish such a feat, to reverse the fate of the cosmos, and to leave behind a tiny strand of incense burning as a memorial for the Immortal Realm.” His voice reverberated throughout the temple.

“It is this speculation that leads us to believe that Paragon Nine Seals’ Daoist magic was none other than the Mountain and Sea Scripture!

“Whoever can acquire the full Mountain and Sea Scripture, will be the Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm! That person will lead us into battle against the 33 Heavens, and restore the Immortal Realm to its former glory!

“The world we live in is the Immortal Realm, the Paragon Immortal Realm which once ruled over all the 3,000 Lower Realms!” Godmaster closed his eyes to conceal the grief contained therein.

Meng Hao was breathing heavily. He had learned from his Sousearch of Yi Fazi that the Mountain and Sea Realm was what remained of the Paragon Immortal Realm. However, to hear the story directly from the mouth of guru Godmaster was a different matter. All of a sudden, images he had gained from the Sousearch floated up in his mind.

“It’s enough that you know just this much,” Granny Nine said softly. “It’s better that you remain unaware of some of the more complicated details....

“The mission of the Three Great Daoist Societies is to help the Echelon grow. The Echelon was begun by Paragon Sea Dream. All of the nine Mountains and Seas have cultivators who are part of the Echelon. As for the Ninth Mountain and Sea... we have the fewest members. The first was your ancestor, and the second is you.

“Your path is not limited to the Ninth Mountain and Sea, but rather, the entire Mountain and Sea Realm. Your competitors, are no longer the fellow members of your generation, but rather... members of the Echelon from throughout the Mountain and Sea Realm!

“The Echelon battles are brutal, and on many occasions, are not just between two opponents. Sometimes, the power of entire sects will back two opponents, even leading to huge inter-mountain wars!

“We are not asking you to be the most powerful member of the Echelon. Rather, we just hope... that you can maintain your spot! If you simply continue on down your path, then whatever price must be paid by the Three Great Daoist Societies of the Ninth Mountain and Sea... will be worth it!” Granny Nine looked deep into Meng Hao’s eyes, her expression one of anticipation.

Meng Hao found it hard to remain calm. Although he had already guessed the truth about many of these things, his heart was still filled with incomparable waves of shock.

Chapter 1042: Trial by Fire of the Windswept Realm

There wasn’t even a slight breeze within the temple hall, but as of this moment, Meng Hao felt like there was a gale force wind buffeting his heart, giving rise to waves of shock. Rumbling sounds filled his mind, causing him to feel somewhat dazed.

“No one can say for certain what Paragon Sea Dream’s plan is for the Echelon...” Granny Nine said. Her voice floated like the wind throughout the temple hall.

“However, there is no harm in speculating. Over the years, the Three Great Daoist Societies of the Mountain and Sea Realm have pieced together what we feel is the answer. It is a simple explanation that we think comes close to the truth.

“The Echelon... is a list of Paragons!

“The only people who can join the Echelon are people who qualify to eventually become a Paragon.

“The Echelon was put in place to develop Paragons for the Mountain and Sea Realm!” Granny Nine’s eyes shone with flickering light, and her voice was filled with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron.

“After the great catastrophe, no new Paragons appeared within the Mountain and Sea Realm. Even Ksitigarbha, who everyone acknowledges as the most powerful cultivator in the Realm, is not considered a Paragon.

“That might seem normal,” Granny Nine said softly. “After all, to become a Paragon is a very, very difficult thing. However, the truth of the matter is... it defies logic. As for the reasons why such a situation has come to be, perhaps only Paragon Sea Dream knows.”

Meng Hao’s mind trembled.

“That is the origin of the Three Great Daoist Societies and the Echelon.” As she finished talking, she looked at Meng Hao. Godmaster sat next to her, eyes closed, unspeaking.

Ling Yunzi also sat there quietly, sighing inwardly.

Granny Nine then gave Meng Hao a deep look and continued, “As the Nine Seas God World of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, what we can do for you is exert all our power to assist you in entering the Ancient Realm!

“Therefore, we give you authority within all areas of the sect. We will open wide the doors to all of our Daoist magics and all of our resources, and to our utmost ability, make them available to you. However, those things are secondary. The most important thing....

“Is that we will open the Windswept Realm for you!”

As soon as Granny Nine mentioned the Windswept Realm, Ling Yunzi slowly looked up, and Godmaster opened his eyes.

An intense pressure weighed down on the temple as she spoke the name. Apparently, the words themselves contained some shocking power.

Granny Nine lowered her voice and said: “The Windswept Realm is a trial by fire location unique to the Nine Seas God Worlds of the Mountain and Sea Realm.

“All of the Three Great Daoist Societies has their own unique worlds within the Mountain and Sea Realm!

“Each and every one of the various Nine Seas God Worlds, including ours, are qualified to make an appeal to open the Windswept Realm. Over all the years, we have only proposed to do so once, for your Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch!

“Now, after so many years have passed, we are prepared to open it a second time... for you!”

“Windswept Realm?” Meng Hao said, somewhat taken aback. He could tell that these three Dao Realm experts took the matter very seriously. However, he had never heard of this Windswept Realm before. It was completely foreign to him.

“Before the great catastrophe,” Granny Nine explained wistfully, “there were 3,000 Lower Realms beneath the Paragon Immortal Realm. During the catastrophe, many of those 3,000 Lower Realms rebelled. War broke out... and in the end, almost all of them were destroyed.

“Only 33 Realms remained complete....”

“The Windswept Realm was once one of the 3,000 Lower Realms. It was one of the rebel Realms that was mostly destroyed in the great war. The bit that remained was taken away by Paragon Sea Dream. All who live there now are the descendants of those felon citizens!

“Over the years, after having been continuously groomed and trained for many years, they returned to upholding many of their former traditions. They came to hold the Immortal Realm in reverence and awe, and became the location of the Nine Seas God World’s trial by fire!

“There, you can experience... how utterly supreme the Immortal Realm was in its heyday!”

At this point, a strange gleam appeared in Godmaster’s eyes. Even Ling Yunzi was panting as he contemplated his desire for the glories of the past.

“The reason why the Windswept Realm became a location for a trial by fire, and in fact, the first such location for the Nine Seas God World, is because when the Windswept Realm was shattered, its Essence was thrown into chaos.

“Because of that chaotic state, the area is much easier to analyze. Therefore, to cultivators... it is the perfect location to experience the sensation of Essence.” Granny Nine’s voice seemed to contain a bizarre power as it bored into Meng Hao’s ears, causing his heart to tremble ceaselessly.

“Essence is the door to the Dao Realm,” she continued slowly. “Furthermore, traversing the Ancient Realm... is the process of continually making contact with Essence.

“That is especially true in the Windswept Realm. The World Essence can be absorbed, leading to incredible enlightenment regarding the Essence power!

“As for you personally, you will be able to directly form your Dao Fruit, and use the Essence of that world to directly enter the Ancient Realm!”

When Meng Hao heard all of this, his mind reeled. He had learned about some of the matters of the past from Yi Fazi’s memories. But now that he heard Granny Nine’s explanation, he understood about the Windswept Realm.

It was... one of the worlds of the past!!

Although only half of it remained, it was still a different world!

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his eyes shone with a strange light. His path to the Ancient Realm had to do with Nirvana Fruits. Now that he knew he could use the Essence of that world to form Dao Fruits, he was also certain that it would be of extreme usefulness in absorbing his Nirvana Fruits.

“The Windswept Realm will be opened for your trial by fire by us here in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. However... the Windswept Realm belongs to all of the Nine Seas God Worlds of the Mountain and Sea Realm. Therefore... when you go in, other Nine Seas God Worlds will also dispatch disciples to enter.

“Obviously, since they are qualified to open the Windswept Realm, they will also have arranged for qualified disciples to enter who... are also in the Echelon!

“As such, when you enter the Windswept Realm for your trial by fire, you will likely encounter... other members of the Echelon from the Mountain and Sea Realm.” As she said these things, her eyes glowed with a brilliant light.

“If you can, kill the other members of the Echelon from the Mountain and Sea Realm. However, if you aren’t able to kill them, don’t forget that protecting your own life is your main priority!”

Meng Hao looked at Granny Nine silently for a moment and then nodded. He understood that the Echelon... was like a brood of magical venomous insects which grew strong by preying on each other. Once you were in the Echelon, only by passing through numerous deadly situations alive, could one become truly powerful.

Currently, the Mountain and Sea Realm needed some extreme power. It needed... a true Paragon!

“Perhaps, what it needs is not just a Paragon,” he thought. “After all, the three great Paragons of yesteryear were only able to preserve a small memorial to the Immortal Realm and thus prevent its complete destruction.

“Perhaps... in order to resolve all of the problems that exist, what is needed... is something that exceeds a Paragon!” Meng Hao took a deep breath, and suddenly, an image appeared in his mind. He saw nine suns dragging an enormous statue. There were also nine butterflies pulling a gigantic coffin.

“Although we have already begun preparations to open the Windswept Realm,” Granny Nine said calmly, “we still need three months to be completely ready.

“During those three months, stay in the sect and prepare fully for the battles you will face...

“The pressure exerted by the Ninth Sea will put a heavy burden on you in terms of cultivation. You need to acclimate yourself to it as quickly as possible. Not only will it help you in the years to come, more importantly... the fact that the Windswept Realm is half destroyed and its Essence is in chaos means that you will find similar pressure there.

“Only by getting used to the pressure of the Ninth Sea will you be able to function normally in the Windswept Realm. If you don’t, every step you take there will be an arduous one.

“In addition, don’t forget about our sect’s golden gate stone steles. Each one of them represents a trial by fire. I hope that you... can participate in every one of them! You must do everything possible to make yourself stronger during these coming three months!

“I hope to see your name on each one of those steles. You are in the Echelon, the second of your kind throughout all the history of the Ninth Mountain and Sea!” Granny Nine waved her hand, sending a bag of holding flying out to hover in front of Meng Hao.

“Inside that bag of holding, you will find the first place prize for our Daoist Societies’ disciple recruitment event!

“There were many rewards, all of which are inside. Of course, the most valuable of all... would be, secondarily, the ancient Immortal artifact, and most of all... Paragon blood!

“Before entering the Windswept Realm, you can use it to... experience what intense power is truly like!

“How far your path stretches out ahead of you depends on your good fortune.” Granny Nine gave Meng Hao a deep look that was clearly filled with hope and anticipation.

Meng Hao took a deep breath as he looked silently at the bag of holding. Finally, his eyes began to shine with a bright light, and he reached out and took the bag. Then he clasped hands and bowed deeply to Granny Nine, to Godmaster, and to Ling Yunzi.

He did not make any promises or utter expressions of thanks. At the moment, anything he said would be meaningless. Only by clasping hands and bowing could he express his sincerity and determination.

Granny Nine’s eyes glowed with praise, and Godmaster nodded. Ling Yunzi already thought well of Meng Hao, and a slight smile could be seen on his face.

“Go,” Granny Nine said, smiling. “That bag of holding also contains a jade slip key to an Immortal’s cave. It is there that you may practice cultivation in the coming three months. There is also an identity command medallion, which you can use to go anywhere in the sect.”

Meng Hao nodded. It was at this point that Godmaster suddenly spoke.

“When the Demonic Cultivator Horde asked for you to return their disciples that you captured, all you had to do was give them back, and the problem would have been resolved. Why be so uncompromising?” The old man’s face was expressionless, but his eyes shone with a profound look.

“If the result of me returning them was a reduction in the hostility shown toward me by the Demonic cultivators, then of course I would have,” explained Meng Hao. “However, that clearly would not have happened. Therefore, why should I return them?!”

“I can sell all of those seafood dishes for spirit stones and Immortal jade, or use them as threats.” He smiled.

Godmaster was also smiling as he replied, “You will be safe inside the sect. However, if you go out... you must be extremely cautious. If anything untoward happens, do not hesitate to crush your command medallion. As long as you are within 1,000,000 nautical miles of the sect, I can be there within three breaths of time to provide aid!”

Then he closed his eyes and said no more. Now that he was certain about Meng Hao’s personality, he firmly approved of him.

Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed. He was just about to leave when all of a sudden, he stopped in place and turned back to look at the three old timers.

“Junior wishes to ask a question. What exactly is the reason that the sea beasts attacked me when I entered the Ninth Sea. Furthermore, why did I cause such an uproar among the Demonic cultivators when I arrived at the Nine Seas God World? Why do they hate me so much?”

“It almost seemed like the level of their cultivation base didn’t matter; they instantly hated me so much that they couldn’t live under the same sky as me. I really don’t understand. Seniors, can you clear up this matter?” Meng Hao looked at the three old timers expectantly. He truly wished to know the answer to this question!

He just didn’t believe that they didn’t know the answer. Considering their status in the sect, even if they had known nothing at first, a brief inquiry would have made everything clear to them.

Chapter 1043: The Answer!

As soon as Meng Hao asked the question, both Granny Nine and Ling Yunzi smiled. As for Godmaster, he simply sat there silently with his eyes closed.

“And here I thought you were going to leave without asking,” the woman said with a smile.

The person to respond to the question, however, was not Granny Nine, but rather, Ling Yunzi.

“At first,” he said, “even we weren’t aware of what caused the situation. After some checking, we came to find out that it was your aura which caused everything.”

“My aura?” asked Meng Hao, his eyes widening. He instantly discarded more than half of his previous speculations.

Ling Yunzi didn’t immediately provide an explanation, but instead, began to describe Demonic cultivators: “Demonic cultivators are a unique type of life form. They are not cultivators, and yet, they are also not Demons. They originally evolved because of the unique environment of the Ninth Sea; they are transmogrified life forms.

“They seem like cultivators, but are not. They also seem like Demons, but are not. Because of that, they call themselves... Demonic cultivators!

“Demonic cultivators like this can only be found in the seas of the Mountain and Sea Realm. As for the sea beasts you encountered out in the Ninth Sea, they simply have not completely transmogrified, and are not quite sentient. However, give them enough time, and they all have the potential to become Demonic cultivators.

“The Demonic cultivators call themselves a horde, and are extremely xenophobic. Although they are physically different from the sea beasts, they consider themselves to be all part of the same horde. Even the other sea beasts which have not yet awakened to sentience are still viewed as family.

“If you harm one of their family members, even a single one, then they will be able to sense that from your aura.

“In fact, many of them have bloodline connections to other sea beasts. Because of this, it’s not hard to imagine why, in reality, the rulers of the Ninth Sea are not cultivators, but them.”

As Meng Hao listened, his jaw slowly dropped and his eyes went wide. He had considered virtually all possibilities, and yet nothing he had thought of... had anything remotely to do with this.

The truth of the matter was far, far less complicated than anything he had come up with. It wasn't about the League of Demon Sealers, or the black-colored spirit-immortal stones, or some long-standing enmity with the Fang Clan, or some situation in which he threatened someone's power.

Meng Hao smiled wryly as he realized the truth of the matter.

“Once they become Demonic cultivators,” continued Ling Yunzi, “They are actually not very different from cultivators. In fact, in many aspects, they are more powerful than us. In their cultivation, they can achieve Immortal Ascension, can enter the Ancient Realm, and can step into the Dao Realm.

“Throughout the years, many Demonic cultivators have left this area and gone out to other locations in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, even to other planets. There, they reproduced, giving birth to countless successive generations of their kind. Unfortunately, though, it is only in the Ninth Sea that the beasts can gain sentience and then become Demonic cultivators. In other locations, such a thing is impossible.

“Regardless of that, however, the sea beasts in the oceans of the other planets are all descended from the Ninth Sea. As such, they are all fellow horde members, and many of them are even related by blood.” When Ling Yunzi saw Meng Hao's wry smile, a strange expression appeared on his face. He and the other two old-timers hadn't expected a reaction like this.

“I understand,” said Meng Hao, sighing.

“All seafood under heaven is one big family....” he said, musing about how unfair the whole situation was for him. He was now certain that all of the countless sea beasts he had killed back in the Milky Way Sea on Planet South Heaven were definitely fellow horde members of the Demonic cultivators here. But how could he possibly have known back then that this would be the result?

Although the sea beasts were separated by a huge distance, and even multiple generations, and were obviously much weaker than the Demonic cultivators here, it was impossible for them to change their blood. If he had, like the average cultivator, only killed a few in the occasional random encounter, it most likely wouldn't have caused any stir in the Ninth Sea or the Nine Seas God World.

Demonic cultivators were like ordinary cultivators. They wouldn't start a blood feud because of a handful of non-sentient fellow horde members. But Meng Hao... had not just killed a few random sea creatures. He had killed almost all of the sea beasts in the Milky Way Sea. To the Demonic cultivators, that was almost like a genocide of an entire branch of one of their bloodlines.

Even he wasn't sure how many Demon hearts he had acquired back then.

It wasn't even possible to count how many sea beasts had died because of him. However many, it was enough to completely and utterly contaminate him with an indescribable aura. It was easy to imagine the reaction of the Demonic cultivators to anyone who showed up in the Ninth Sea with an aura like that.

Meng Hao was now feeling somewhat depressed. Were it some other reason, he could probably figure out a way to change things. After all, this was the Ninth Sea, and he had no desire to have blood enmity with the Demonic cultivators.

This was a matter of aura... and the ability of the fellow horde members to sense each other. In their view, Meng Hao's hands were soaked in blood, and it was something he couldn't do anything about.

"Can the aura be covered over?" he asked.

"Unfortunately, this type of aura cannot be concealed," replied Ling Yunzi, sighing.

"The only thing you can do is be extra careful. Try not to leave the sect. Unfortunately, it is something we could never have predicted. How could we ever have imagined that you would be infected with an aura as strong as this?" Ling Yunzi was also feeling a bit down.

"The true masters of the Ninth Sea are the Demonic cultivators," Granny Nine said slowly. "Although the Nine Seas God World holds sway here, if you trace things back to the beginning, we essentially forced our way in.

"However, legend has it that the whole reason the Demonic cultivators could achieve sentience to begin with has to do with Paragon Sea Dream. Because of that, we have coexisted throughout the years and have come to accept each other. Furthermore, the Demonic Cultivator Horde is a faction of the Nine Seas God World, both here in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and in the other Nine Seas God Worlds in the other Mountains and Seas.

"Don't let yourself worry about it too much. The Demonic Cultivator Horde is a part of the Nine Seas God World, and as such, must adhere to the rules of the sect. Everything... is done for the Echelon.

“Therefore, you can simply view this matter as another trial by fire.”

Meng Hao sighed. All he could do now was nod his head, clasp hands, and bow. Then he turned and left the temple hall. As he walked out and stood there atop the mountain, a cold wind sprang up. He looked off into the distance and, from this elevation, could see most of the Nine Seas God World.

“Well, might as well not worry about it. I can’t resolve the problem, so it’s not worth stewing over.” He pulled out the jade slip key from his bag of holding and scanned it with divine sense. Immediately a map of the Ninth Sea God World appeared.

After perusing the map, he found the Immortal’s cave the three old timers had arranged for him. It was near the central district, between two mountain ranges.

He put the jade slip away, took a step forward, and then transformed into a brilliant beam of light that shot rumbling through the air toward his Immortal’s cave. As he sped through the air, he encountered various disciples of the Nine Seas God World.

If they were cultivators, they would raise an eyebrow, clearly having recognized who he was. If they were Demonic cultivators, then as soon as they saw him, they visibly restrained themselves, their eyes shining with intense hatred and killing intent.

Meng Hao simply kept his gaze fixed straight ahead as he sped along. He went faster and faster, and after about an hour, arrived in the region of his Immortal’s cave. When he looked around, the first things that stood out were two mountain ranges that looked like dragons, stretching out far and wide.

In the middle of the mountains was a huge cliff that seemed to have been formed by a seismic upheaval. Water flowed over the edge of the cliff, transforming into a towering waterfall.

Rumbling rose up from the base of the waterfall, along with massive quantities of water vapor that spread out in all directions, causing a curtain of mist to obscure the area. The water at the bottom formed a crystalline, blue pool. The energy of Heaven and Earth was very strong in the area.

Next to the pool of water was a two-story residence.

The entire area was filled with the fragrance of flowers and the singing of birds. It was like a celestial garden, filled with exotic plants and flowers, whose fragrance filled the canyon-like area surrounding the pool of water.

Cliffs rose up on all sides like impassable obstacles. Even though his place was almost in the center of the Nine Seas God World, it was secluded and peaceful.

Furthermore, considering that the residence was built into the cliff face, it was easy to imagine that it was far larger than its outward appearance. In fact, deep inside the cliff there would definitely be chambers carved into the stone.

As soon as Meng Hao laid eyes on it, he was thoroughly pleased.

His body flashed as he flew down past the waterfall and landed next to the pool of water. Numerous animals in the area were startled, and scattered in all directions. The grass and plants swayed gently at the disturbance, causing a fragrant aroma to fill the air. The sound of the falling waterfall instantly lifted Meng Hao's spirits.

"This place is great!" he thought, looking around contentedly. He walked over to the residence and looked around with increasing satisfaction, then let out a light, "Eee?" He raised his right hand and performed an incantation gesture, then pointed out. His gesture caused a wind to spring up toward a stone stele located in front of the residence.

When the wind touched the stele, it shuddered. Next, a glowing shield sprang up to cover the entire area. The sky up above was sealed off, and the waterfall was interrupted.

No more water fell down, and water began to build up on the shield. Soon, it looked like a second pool of water, floating in the air up above.

The sides of this new pool were formed by the cliff faces, and its bottom was the shield. When he saw it, Meng Hao's eyes shone brightly as he realized that this was the ultimate location for secluded meditation.

It was completely cut off from the world, and also, totally safe.

In the same moment that Meng Hao was looking around contentedly at his Immortal's cave in the Nine Seas God World, far far away, something happened in the starry sky. That place... was not

located in the Mountain and Sea Realm. Furthermore, it was a location outside of the 33 Heavens. It was located... in a different starry sky.

Visible was a projection of an ancient land mass. It was so enormous that it was impossible to describe, and it hung there in the void, emanating constant and endless pressure.

Within this projected world was... a huge coffin, as well as nine beautiful, colorful butterflies.

Surrounding the coffin was an endless sea of people, all prostrating themselves in worship.

In front of the crowds of people were three young women who were indescribably beautiful. Their eyes were filled with both hope and reminiscence as they looked at the coffin, and then down at the land beneath their feet.

In front of the three young women was an old man wearing a black robe. At his back was the illusory image of an ancient tree. Currently, his two hands were held aloft, and he was shouting loudly up into the air. It sounded like some sort of curse, although it was impossible to hear exactly what he was saying.

It didn't take long, however, for a mass of black mist to appear in front of him. It roiled and seethed, emanating a strong aura of death.

"I found it... almost. If it is used just one more time, I'll be able to locate it!" After a long moment, the old man coughed up a mouthful of blood, and his body seemed to wither. The tree behind him also withered, as if he had just spent a huge amount of life force to speak those words.

It wasn't just him who paid the price to speak the words. Everyone in the sea of people around him also spit up mouthfuls of blood. The nine butterflies trembled, and of the four wings they each possessed, two fell off.

In another location within the same void in which that world projection existed, was yet another boundlessly majestic projection of a world.

Within that world existed a huge statue of a man!

In that world, there were nine suns!!

At the foot of the statue was a young man wearing a white robe. If you looked closely, you would see... that he looked exactly like the statue!!

He shook his head and smiled.

“Mother was right. Those who are reborn are always more eager than those who have already returned.”

Chapter 1044: Initial Absorption of Paragon Blood!

The people of the Mountain and Sea Realm had no way of knowing what was happening outside of their Realm.

Back in the Nine Seas God World, in the valley between the two mountain ranges, the pool of water continued to build up above the shield. At the same time, a figure stepped out noiselessly from within the residence.

Meng Hao had sensed this person earlier, and as such, his expression did not change when the young boy walked out. He looked to be about seven or eight years old, wore a red robe, and had a completely expressionless face. As soon as he stepped out, he clasped hands and bowed to Meng Hao.

“What an incredible puppet,” Meng Hao murmured, walking up to the boy and looking him over. The boy looked almost as if he had been carved out of a lustrous piece of rare jade.

Meng Hao reached his hand out and pressed it down onto the puppet. Immediately, an additional puppet-controlling mnemonic appeared in his mind.

“This Immortal’s cave must be one of the best within the Nine Seas God World,” the thought. “Only a place like this could be deserving such a puppet. Whenever I have to deal with acquiring cultivation resources, I can just sent him out to handle things.

“Furthermore, it looks like he has battle prowess equivalent to a stage 7 Immortal.”

Meng Hao was very pleased. This Immortal's cave far exceeded any other Immortal's cave he had ever lived in. Regardless of whether or not the pool of water was being fed by the waterfall, it was as blue and crystalline as ever. Furthermore, the pond itself was actually made, not from freshwater, but seawater.

"How considerate of them," he said. Then he waved his hand, instantly causing the 33 Demonic cultivators to fly out of his bag of holding and splash into the pool.

Before they could even react, he performed an incantation gesture and then waved his finger. Popping sounds rang out as all of the 33 Demonic cultivators were sealed. All of them reverted to their original forms, whereupon they spun and began to howl at Meng Hao in rage.

"Shut up!" he growled. His voice echoed out like thunder, instantly causing all of the Demonic cultivators to tremble. Moments later, everything was quiet. The Demonic cultivators now looked like sea beasts, but they were still glaring angrily at Meng Hao.

That was especially true of the gigantic shell, which had now cracked open to reveal a pair of venomous eyes staring out at him.

There was also a huge sea turtle, who looked especially fierce.

In addition to those two, there was a big shrimp, a crab, a seahorse, and others. Meng Hao looked them over, and then a grotesque idea suddenly popped up in his head.

"This pool of water almost looks like a giant pot. If I heated the water up..." He swallowed, then quickly shoved the wicked idea away. However, it was in that moment that the Demonic cultivators, who had just quieted down moments ago, suddenly lost control and began to roar again. A few of them even tried to charge at Meng Hao in attack.

With a cold harrumph, Meng Hao pointed his hand downward, causing all of them to tremble, as if great pressure were weighing down on them. It was impossible for them to escape from within the pool of water, so once again, the sound of vehement curses rose up into the air.

Ignoring them, Meng Hao waved his right finger, causing a strand of the Essence of Divine Flame to fly out from his Immortal meridians. It landed in the water, and in the blink of an eye, the water began to bubble.

Meng Hao cleared his throat and then somewhat embarrassedly said, “If you don’t keep your voices down, there are no guarantees that I won’t boil you up and have a taste!”

His words, combined with the fact that the water in the pool was rapidly getting hotter, caused the Demonic cultivators to tremble. They looked at Meng Hao, not with hatred, but rather... terror and shock.

They had never imagined that Meng Hao would actually boil them into a stew!

Seeing that the Demonic cultivators had quieted down, Meng Hao waved a hand, retracting the strand of the Essence of Divine Flame. The water temperature in the pool instantly began to return to normal.

“That’s better. Now!” he said earnestly. “Remember to be good and do as you’re told. You people owe me money and can’t pay it back. That was why you handed yourselves over to me. Now, I’m going to provide you with a master to help you learn how to achieve your goal, which is... to sell yourselves!” With that, he slapped his bag of holding, causing the parrot to shoot out in a beam of black light.

The tinkling sound of a bell could be heard, along with a torrent of squawks.

“Lord Fifth is out! Lord Fifth swears to never go back into that bag of holding! Lord Fifth is free! Lord Fifth is going to... Eee?!” Even in midst of its tirade, Lord Fifth suddenly looked down at all the Demonic cultivators in the pool of water.

The bell-form meat jelly was also in the midst of howling in rage, when suddenly it realized the parrot had grown silent. It, too, looked down at the Demonic cultivators.

After staring for a moment, the meat jelly got excited and said, “Are we taking a bath together?” as if it wanted to join in.

The parrot flew around in a circle, looking closely at the situation and then roared: “Moron! Idiot! Can’t you see he’s making some seafood stew? They’re not taking a bath! Dammit! How come none of this seafood has fur!?!?”

Meng Hao cleared his throat and then addressed the meat jelly: “These are all bullies. You can count if you want, there are three. Three bullies. I caught them just for you and brought them here for you to practice your divine ability of converting people!”

The meat jelly quivered with excitement as it counted. When it was done, it looked over at Meng Hao as if he were the best person in the whole world. In the meat jelly’s opinion, it had never met a master who treated it as well as Meng Hao did.

Meng Hao smiled slightly, as if the two of them were best friends. Then he glanced over at the parrot and glared threateningly.

“We can sell every one of these seafood dishes that you can get to behave for a handsome profit. For each one, I’ll find one extremely furry creature for you.

“If you can train them all, then later, I’ll give you a thirty percent split!”

When the parrot heard the words ‘extremely furry’ it instantly got very excited. It suddenly began to visualize all sorts of extremely furry creatures, and that only increased its enthusiasm. It immediately agreed to Meng Hao’s proposal.

Meng Hao promptly ignored the parrot and meat jelly as they began to torment the Demonic cultivators. He was sure that, considering how “strong” they were, getting the Demonic cultivator seafood dishes in line wasn’t an impossibility for them.

“Then there’s that wench Su Yan,” he thought. “I’ll wait a few more days and then hand her over to the parrot and meat jelly for re-education. I just can’t believe that she’ll continue to hold out after that.” Having made up his mind, he entered the residence.

The residence itself wasn’t very large. However, there was a stone door on the second floor. Behind the stone door were three chambers, each of which were relatively large.

After examining them, Meng Hao muttered to himself for a moment. Then, eyes glittering, he slapped his bag of holding, causing 30 black beetles to fly out, ten for each chamber.

Glancing thoughtfully at the Ghost Eyes on their backs, he thought, “I heard Su Yan call these things Ghost Eye Beetles....”

“They like eating spirit-immortal stones. Well then, I might as well let them eat their fill... and see what kind of Ghost Eye appears in the end!” He had come up with this idea some time ago, so, clenching his teeth, he didn’t hesitate any further. He hated losing spirit-immortal stones, but he also knew that on the path of cultivation, you had to lose some to win some.

He waved his hand, causing thirty spirit-immortal stones to fly out into the three chambers. Instantly, the Ghost Eye Beetles went mad, clawing their way forward to grab the stones.

He threw out one stone per beetle in order to prevent them from fighting too much. After all, he only had 500 Ghost Eye Beetles, and wanted to avoid a situation in which they killed each other.

It didn’t take long for the Ghost Eye Beetles to consume the spirit-immortal stones, after which they sat there, motionless. However, their auras grew wildly stronger and their bodies grew tougher, as if they were in the process of absorbing energy from the stones they had swallowed.

After a moment of consideration, he decided that since the Ghost Eye Beetles were taking some time to absorb the energy, he would make use of the puppet boy. Summoning him over, he handed some spirit-immortal stones over and then left some divine will instructions that the puppet continue to feed the stones to the beetles as necessary. Then he left the stone chambers and sat down cross-legged on the second floor of the residence.

He took a deep breath, and determination gleamed in his eyes as he extended his right hand. Immediately a bag of holding appeared, which he scanned with divine sense. He saw quite a collection of spirit stones and Immortal jade, as well as an incense burner.

The incense burner had an ancient feel to it, as though its aura was filled with years of time.

“This thing must be the Immortal artifact that Patriarch Granny Nine mentioned,” he thought. Ignoring it for the moment, he excitedly searched through the bag of holding to find the most precious item it contained.

A jade vial!

The vial was only the size of a pinky finger, and it contained... a drop of red fluid. It was none other than... Paragon’s blood!!

He carefully retrieved the vial from the bag of holding, then placed it onto his palm. Panting, he thought back to the Three Great Daoist Societies' trial by fire, and how he had taken first place. For some reason it seemed like a very, very long time ago.

"I finally got my prize! But I wonder... which Paragon did this blood come from? Was it the white-robed Sea Dream, or was it Immortal Ancient? Or could it be from... Paragon Nine Seals?" He took a deep breath, and without any further hesitation, opened the jade vial. Instead of pouring the Paragon's blood out, he slowly sent his divine sense into the vial.

Almost as soon as his divine sense made contact with the Paragon's blood, a bloody mist rose up. In the blink of an eye, it swept back through his divine sense toward him. He was shocked, but after a moment of hesitation, he gritted his teeth and sat in place without moving.

That strand of blood mist bored into his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. In the same moment, he closed the jade vial, ensuring that the Paragon's blood remained inside. Apparently, that drop was only a thirty percent sample.

However, even that thirty percent created a massive power that surged madly through his body.

Blue veins popped out on his face, and his whole body shook. The blood mist transformed into millions of strands which bored into his Immortal meridians. Gradually, the vague power of a Dao Fruit began to form.

Moments later, it collapsed, battering around the inside of Meng Hao's body.

Shaken, he quickly produced a Nirvana Fruit and pushed it into his forehead. In that moment, the tens of millions of strands inside of him all seemed to have found their exit.

His body shook, and his aura exploded upward. All of his Immortal qi was unleashed. His energy surged as the Nirvana Fruit apparently began to fuse into his blood vessels and qi passageways.

If he absorbed it completely, that would indicate that he had fused successfully with the Nirvana Fruit. That would also mean... that he would rise up in his position in the Immortal Realm, and would be be incredibly close to being able to remain in the Immortal Emperor Realm... eternally!

Chapter 1045: ROCKED!

Time passed one breath at a time. He had long since passed the usual time limit for the Nirvana Fruit. However, after enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, he still sat there, Nirvana Fruit fully absorbed. He opened his eyes, grabbed the jade vial, and was about to open it, but then hesitated.

The hundreds of thousands of strands inside of him were growing dimmer, and would rapidly vanish. Unfortunately, the Nirvana Fruit still wasn't completely fused with him, not even by half. In terms of percentages, then as of this moment, the Nirvana Fruit seemed to be about one percent fused.

“Even if I completely absorbed this entire sample of Paragon’s blood,” he thought, “then at most, I could achieve a four percent absorption....”

“It’s not that the Paragon’s blood isn’t strong, nor that it’s fake. Rather... this drop of blood is simply too diluted. Who knows how many dilutions it’s gone through.” He sighed inwardly. He knew that even if the Three Great Daoist Societies did have complete specimens of Paragon’s blood, they would still be incredibly scarce.

There was no way they would give him a complete drop. It was true that he was in the Echelon. However, taking a broad view, it was impossible to say whether or not another Echelon member might come along in the future. Although the Three Great Daoist Societies valued him, they couldn’t possibly give him undiluted Paragon’s blood.

Even a highly diluted drop could still be considered a precious treasure! From the very beginning, all they had agreed to give him was some Paragon’s blood. They had never said that it would be complete.

“If I could get a complete, full drop, then I’m certain that after absorbing it, I would then be able to completely fuse with the Nirvana Fruit, and I would truly be an Immortal Emperor!” Desire gleamed in Meng Hao’s eyes as he thought about the possibility of being able to eternally retain a cultivation base that exceeded the Immortal Realm Paragon.

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his eyes shone brightly.

“Not complete.... Well then, I’ll just have to create my own complete drop of Paragon’s blood!” Gritting his teeth, he slowly pulled the copper mirror out of his bag of holding. He was of course concerned about how much it might cost him. In fact, he wasn’t even sure if the copper mirror was powerful enough to duplicate the Paragon’s blood.

However, determination filled his face as he looked at the copper mirror for a moment, then placed the vial of Paragon's blood on its surface. Immediately, the vial began to sink down into the mirror.

Then, the mirror suddenly went berserk in a way it never had before. It shook wildly, flying out of Meng Hao's hands and up into the air. Brilliant beams of light shot out in all directions, along with a shocking aura.

In the blink of an eye, the entire residence was inundated by a terrifying aura, which began to spread further out. If nothing was done about the spreading of this aura, it would go on to fill the entire Nine Seas God World, and the entire Ninth Sea. From there it would spread out to fill all of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and eventually... the entirety of the Mountain and Sea Realm!

Outside the residence, the parrot was flying proudly through the air, looking extremely excited at the prospect of how happy its life would be after it exchanged all of the seafood for furry beasts.

Having reached this point in its train of thought, it immediately turned to all of the Demonic cultivators and roared: "Now listen well to Lord Fifth! All of you--"

However, before it could even finish speaking, a tremor suddenly ran through its body, as if some incredible power had suddenly sucked it dry. It withered rapidly, causing it to gape in shock. It suddenly turned to look toward Meng Hao and the residence, clearly astonished. Then it let out the most shrill, anxious squawk that it had ever uttered since it had begun to follow Meng Hao.

It was usually quite calm and collected. It had never reacted this strongly to anything, not even when it ran into the most luxuriantly furred or feathered creatures. It seemed so nervous that it might collapse at any moment, as if the sky were about to fall or the entire world was about to explode.

"He's still alive!!" the parrot shrieked. Then it shot toward the residence at top speed, looking completely flustered. It went so fast that numerous feathers were stripped off of it, falling to the ground. Its body shivered with unprecedented terror.

Inside the residence, Meng Hao's eyes widened at the intensity of the aura, an aura that seemed to either ignore or trample upon all natural laws. It was vastly domineering, as if the Heavens and the starry sky both might be crushed by its terrifying energy.

Suddenly, he could hear a pulsating voice murmuring from within the mirror. It was archaic, seemingly stretching out from ancient times, causing his mind to reel. All of a sudden, countless images flickered in his eyes.

Of all those various images, there were only three that he could see clearly. The rest were flickering blurs. However, the three images he could see caused his scalp to go numb, and his expression to fill with a look of disbelief and utter astonishment.

The first image was that of the Heavens and a starless sky. It was a picture of chaos. There were no heavenly bodies, only emptiness. Then, a beam of light appeared, shooting along at top speed. Within the flickering light, shockingly... was the copper mirror!!

As it flew along, the surface of the mirror flickered. Immediately a heavenly body appeared off to the side. It proceeded along, one after another heavenly body appeared without pause.

In the end its flickering... caused the starry sky to appear, as if it were creating whole worlds!!

It continued on without stop, as if there were no end to its movement. Eventually, however, it vanished, having created innumerable stretches of starry sky that formed countless worlds!

Meng Hao's mind reeled with shock.

The second image he saw was of the uncountable entities which inhabited the various heavenly bodies and worlds that had been created. They were not cultivators, but rather, a vast multitude of indescribable living things.

Some looked like beasts, others were liquid. Some were made of gas, and others were made of metal or stone. There seemed to be an infinite variety, and they were all currently engaged in a chaotic battle!

All of these entities were far, far more powerful than Meng Hao. They were in the Dao Realm!

Meng Hao could scarcely even comprehend how there could be so many Dao Realm entities. There were simply too many, and they were all fighting each other, fighting to acquire one object....

That object was none other than... a copper mirror!

Their battling gave rise to countless indescribable ripples. All of a sudden, the copper mirror trembled, and two pearls shot out from it, one black, one white. Each pearl then sped off in a different direction.

Meng Hao could now see that actually, those two pearls had previously been inlaid on opposite sides of the mirror. The pearls were not the primary components, but rather... just subordinate objects belonging to the copper mirror!

Even still, they emanated an aura that left Meng Hao feeling completely suffocated, as though the two pearls contained an indescribable, paramount power!

And yet... despite that incredible power, they were still... subordinates to the mirror!

They were mere secondary objects!

In the third image, Meng Hao saw another world. It was a world filled with corpses, corpses that had lain in place for innumerable years. The whole world felt like a graveyard.

A beam of light flew along, within which was the copper mirror. The mirror was just passing by, and yet, as soon as it appeared, something happened which caused Meng Hao's scalp to tingle. He saw the corpses... rising up one by one. Flesh grew anew, and the blink of an eye, they were resurrected. Their eyes were filled with madness, and even more so, hope. It was as if they had been waiting for ages for this very moment.

Suddenly, a hand shot up, a hand that was mostly white bone, upon which flesh and blood was rapidly forming. The instant it appeared, blood sprayed out of Meng Hao's mouth, and his mind trembled. The feeling he got from that hand was a feeling he had only ever gotten from one other cultivator.

And that person was... the white-robed Paragon Sea Dream!

Except, from what Meng Hao could sense, the power of that hand exceeded that of Paragon Sea Dream!

It stretched out toward the copper mirror and made a grasping motion. That grasping motion caused the starry sky to be crushed, as if the hand could shrink down the stars and the Heavens until they were tiny items that rested in its palm.

At that point, the vision ended. Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and the images faded away.

“This copper mirror... where does it come from...?” he thought. He felt as if his whole world had been turned upside down. He looked down at the copper mirror, and the vial of Paragon’s blood, which was still sinking down into the mirror.

Most shocking of all to Meng Hao was that once again, he could see that the surface of the copper mirror... was not complete!!

It was shattered, and only had one piece in place. How could he possibly forget how he had helped the mirror to acquire that piece in the Ancient Demon Immortal Sect!?

Everything that happened takes some time to describe, but actually happened in a flash. It was at this point that the parrot suddenly appeared, and then sped into the mirror itself. The copper mirror trembled, and the light shining out grew even more intense. At this point, the vial of Paragon’s blood finally vanished inside.

The terrifying aura ceased to spread out, and instead remained only inside of the residence. After about ten breaths of time passed, it faded away completely, returning to the copper mirror, after which it could not be detected.

After the aura faded away, the parrot emerged. It was emaciated, as if it had just undergone an indescribably desperate ordeal. It smiled wryly as it looked at Meng Hao, then flopped noisily to the ground. After a moment, it struggled to rise up and fly, but could only lay there, panting.

Seeing the parrot in this condition caused Meng Hao to think of the images he had just seen, and he couldn’t help but ask: “If I hadn’t placed that Paragon’s blood onto the mirror...?”

The parrot gaped for a moment. Sounding astonished, it replied, “What’s it got to do with you? I was just careless and didn’t notice that someone was using some magic on this mirror. If the copper mirror wasn’t used, then it wouldn’t matter. But once it was used, no matter what you duplicate, it will... Huh?”

About half way through speaking, the parrot suddenly seemed to come to its senses. It rolled its eyes shiftily and squawked: “That’s right. Dammit! It’s you! It’s all because of you! You owe me now!”

At the same time that the parrot was berating Meng Hao, something was happening outside of the Mountain and Sea Realm, outside of the 33 Heavens. Far out in the void of the starry sky, in the middle of the world projection with the huge coffin, an archaic voice filled with excitement and determination suddenly echoed out to fill the entire world.

“I’ve found it! It’s there... right there!!

“After all these years, hope has finally appeared. Clan of Gods, prepare to send orders down!!

“It is time to wage war! In order to awaken our clan’s Underworld God, we will once again... go to war with the Paragon Immortal Realm!!” As the ancient voice echoed out, the world projection began to shake.

At the same time, the three women who stood near the coffin exchanged glances, then nodded to each other silently.

In that instant, the entire world projection began to grow blurry. In the blink of an eye, it vanished from within the void of the Heavens.

“Unleash the power of the world. Employ the maximum possible speed of our God Realm’s true form to travel there, in order to let our true world descend!” The voices of the three women echoed out into the void, filled with a decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron.

Chapter 1046: An Iron Chicken That Can Also Pluck Feathers!

Almost in the same moment that the world projection vanished, the three women decided that war should begin. Thus, they caused their own world to approach from its distant location, something that would take time.

In another location in the Heavens was another world, the world with the nine suns and the enormous statue. It was not real, but rather, a projection, in much the same way that the world the three women were in was a projection.

The true worlds were actually in a location far, far away....

In that projected world of nine suns, a decisive, sinister voice was also speaking, the voice of a woman.

“It will take hundreds of years for the other side to arrive. It’s the same for us.... This time, spare no cost! We must succeed!”

The woman’s voice was venomous, and seemed to be filled with a coldness and disregard for all living beings other than those that currently surrounded her. As it echoed out, the world of nine suns gradually began to distort, and then vanish.

Meanwhile, back in the Mountain and Sea Realm, in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, Meng Hao was completely oblivious to all of these things. He was currently frowning at the parrot. Finally, he gave a cold harrumph. Although he had felt a bit guilty before about what happened, seeing the parrot now caused him to glare angrily.

Before he could say anything, however, the parrot blinked, cleared its throat, and then flapped its wings as it flew up into the air. The copper mirror seemed to have lost any ability to float or fly, and clanked to the ground.

The parrot flew out of the residence, seemingly without a care in the world. However, deep in its heart was a mass of anxiety.

“Calamity... is coming. Ai, I screwed up. I never would have thought the other two powers would be so persistent!

“Screw it, I don’t care anymore. In any case, Meng Hao is the master of the mirror this time, so it has nothing to do with Lord Fifth. Worst case scenario, I’ll flee and sleep for a while again.” Finally the parrot cleared its thoughts, pushing away all these vexatious worries. Its eyes then began to shine brightly as it looked at the Demonic cultivators in the pool of water. Once again it began to envision swapping them for numerous furry concubines, and the blissful days that would ensue.

“Hahaha! Lord Fifth is back! Now, all of you listen up and behave! Lord Fifth is going to teach you a song!” The parrot whistled through the air toward the group of Demonic cultivators.

“Come, come, let’s sing together. The name of this little tune is ‘I’m a good little seafood dish!’ If you sing well, Lord Fifth has a reward waiting for you!”

Back in the residence, Meng Hao was frowning. Although the parrot had made light of what had happened, Meng Hao had practiced cultivation for many years, and was adept at analyzing matters. Everything he had seen regarding the copper mirror, plus the parrot’s expression, filled him with a sense of foreboding.

“I’m afraid... something really bad is going to happen,” he murmured. He looked at the copper mirror and thought back to the three images he had seen. Finally, he took a deep breath. More than ever, he felt that the origin of the copper mirror was shrouded in some incredibly profound mystery.

“Just where did it come from?”

“Other than duplicating things, it’s definitely has other magical divine abilities that I don’t know of!”

“It seems everyone wants it, even the most powerful experts. They’ll do anything to win it....”

“Well, then... what exactly is it?!?! Perhaps ‘Mountain and Sea Mirror’ isn’t its real name!”

“If the copper mirror is so mysterious and so powerful, then why did it end up broken?”

“Also... who broke it!? And why?!” One question after another popped up in Meng Hao’s mind, seemingly without any train of logic connecting them. After a long moment of thought, his eyes flickered with bright light.

“Regardless of what mysteries lie within the copper mirror, or where it came from, I have it now. Therefore, I will inevitably be involved in whatever quarrels erupt over it.

“Based on my current cultivation base, if something like that happens, I’ll most likely be killed. I wouldn’t be able to lift a hand against the people who want it. Therefore... the most important thing for me now ... is still cultivation!”

“Only by becoming stronger and more powerful can I have a chance of surviving through whatever struggles are coming in the future! That’s the only way that I can ensure that my own Dao will continue on!” He closed his eyes and calmed his mind and heart. When he opened them again, he

made a grasping motion, causing the copper mirror to fly into his hand. He looked at it for a moment, then, without any further hesitation, pulled out some spirit stones and Immortal jade and began to feed them into the mirror.

He did not give up on his original idea, which was... to duplicate the Paragon's blood!!

“With enough Paragon's blood, I can get a full, complete drop. Something like that is incredibly rare, and will help me... to successfully absorb that first Nirvana Fruit!”

He took a deep breath, and his eyes gleamed with passion. The path to the Ancient Realm lay before him, and the only way to be qualified to open the door to that path, was to absorb and fuse all four of the Nirvana Fruits he possessed. Then he could strike the Ancient bell and light his Soul Lamps. He would use the flame of his life force like the wind of the world, to extinguish each of his Soul Lamps in turn!

Thus he would achieve a Realm in which the lamps were snuffed out, yet he still lived!

One spirit stone after another sank into the copper mirror. It was like a black hole that could gobble up spirit stones indefinitely. However, flickering light could be seen with each spirit stone it ate up.

As the rate of flickering increased, Meng Hao appeared calm on the outside, but his heart was twisted in knots. Although he was used to how the copper mirror devoured spirit stones, and also used to how he would often acquire a huge sum of spirit stones only to obediently feed them into the copper mirror...

Even so... he was still torn. His heart hurt, and gradually, he simply couldn't remain calm any more. All of the spirit stones he had acquired from the Three Great Daoist Societies' trial by fire disappeared into the copper mirror, leaving his face completely ashen.

His eyes were bright red, and yet, like a gambling addict, he continued to throw in spirit stones. The copper mirror glowed with increasingly intense light until finally... a second identical vial of Paragon's blood's appeared!

He let out a long breath. He was shaken, but shook off the urge to mourn his spirit stones and looked the two vials over closely, then began to laugh uproariously.

If Granny Nine and the others could see these two vials, they would be shocked beyond belief. In fact, they might even go mad and unleash an unprecedented catastrophe.

They were identical. Both the vial itself and the blood inside were completely identical!

This was almost like creating something from nothing, a mystical scene of something appearing from thin air that filled Meng Hao's heart with incredible excitement. Also, he was now able to tell for certain that after acquiring that fragment of the mirror's face from the Ancient Demon Immortal Sect, the duplicating powers of the mirror had actually become stronger.

Things that previously could not be duplicated, were now possible to duplicate!

Meng Hao could even sense that one day, if the all the fragments of the mirror were brought together and the mirror was whole, then he could even duplicate the Heavens, or an entire world Realm! He could duplicate anything.

His heart pounded rapidly, and a brilliant gleam appeared in his eyes. However, at the same time, his heart remained vigilant. He knew that if anyone found out that he had this mirror, it would mean a huge catastrophe for him!

Actually, that was something he had long since been very well aware of. From the moment he had acquired the copper mirror and discovered its function, when he had first started down the path of cultivation, he had always borne that in mind.

After packing away the duplicate vial of Paragon's blood, he used the original to continue duplicating. Time passed by slowly. During the three days that passed, Meng Hao acted as if he were bedeviled, constantly feeding spirit stones and Immortal jade into the copper mirror.

Outside of the residence, the sound of singing echoed up into the air. The voices sounded disgruntled, and not very willing to sing, but Meng Hao didn't even notice it. He was completely focused on the copper mirror and the Paragon's blood.

When he ran out of spirit stones completely, he used Immortal jade. Eventually, he ended up duplicating seven portions of Paragon's blood. Finally, he ran out of Immortal jade. By that point, his eyes were crimson. He waved his hand, sending his identity command medallion flying out into the hands of the puppet boy, who by now had gone outside to wait for further orders. In compliance Meng Hao's divine will, he immediately flew away as if he were sentient. He passed through the

shield and the pool it had formed to act as Meng Hao's representative in procuring cultivation resources from the Nine Seas God World.

The three old timers had promised Meng Hao that all of the resources in the Nine Seas God World were open to him. Although they hadn't agreed to literally give him anything he wanted, it was still an unprecedented guarantee when it came to cultivation.

Not too much time passed before the puppet boy returned with a bag of holding. Immediately, Meng Hao resumed duplicating the Paragon's blood. He would do anything in his power to fulfill his desire of fully absorbing the Nirvana Fruits.

One day. Two days. Three days.

Time passed, and Meng Hao barely ever set foot outside. All he did was work on duplicating the Paragon's blood. Soon, he didn't have seven portions, but rather, fifty. That much Paragon's blood was something that even the Nine Seas God World would have a hard time coming up with.

Furthermore, Meng Hao had laid his hands on a virtual sea of spirit stones and Immortal jade. He didn't even calculate how much it was in total. Mostly because he didn't dare to. If he did, the pain in his heart would surely cause him to cough up a mouthful of blood.

"Still not enough!" he thought, his eyes completely bloodshot. He waved his hand, sending the puppet boy out once again to get some cultivation resources. This time, the puppet boy didn't come back as quickly as he had before. Meng Hao waited for a while, and when he still didn't return, had no choice but to rise to his feet. Just when he was about to walk out of the residence, his face flickered as he looked toward the leftmost stone chamber of secluded meditation.

Almost in the moment that he looked over, rumbling sounds echoed out from within the stone chamber. Next, the stone door shook, and a huge crack appeared in its surface, as if some incredibly powerful force were smashing against it from inside.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he used the power of the Life Death Hex to peer into the stone chamber. What he saw was that, where before there had been ten Ghost Eye Beetles, now there were none!

Shockingly, an enormous eye had appeared inside the chamber in their stead!!

The eye was surrounded by ten tentacles, which whipped around rapidly. There was also a black glow that radiated out from it, which repeatedly slammed into the stone door.

Upon closer examination, it was possible to see that inside of the Ghost Eye was a tiny pitch-black imp, sitting there cross-legged. The imp had no eyes, a huge mouth, and strangest of all, it had a black carapace on its back!

Apparently, the bizarre Ghost Eye was actually created by the black-shelled imp.

Meng Hao's eye widened as he also realized that, all of a sudden, his Life Death Hex was losing its grip!

Almost in the same moment that the Life Death Hex was weakening, a huge boom could be heard as the stone door collapsed. The Ghost Eye burst out, emitting a piercing, deafening shriek that echoed out in all directions. The Ghost Eye then proceeded to charge directly toward Meng Hao, as if to consume him!

Chapter 1047: Magic Pod Soldiers!

The stone door collapsed further, transforming into a haze of fragments that blasted toward Meng Hao. Amidst the flying rubble was the Ghost Eye, screaming as it charged in attack. Apparently it wanted to consume or possess him.

There was also a blast of cold air from within the stone chamber. In his peripheral vision, Meng Hao could see that frost had built up inside, as if it were the dead of winter. Even more shocking was that the frost was green!

"It's poisonous!" Meng Hao was a bit shocked by the weakening of the Life Death Hex. However, in the blink of an eye, he had recovered his composure. Eyes flickering, he did nothing to evade, but instead, waved his hand out in front of him.

Instantly, his Immortal meridians surged, and Immortal power erupted. Rumbling sounds could be heard as the stone door shattered completely, transforming into nothing more than ash. However, before it could dissipate, it began to spin around, becoming a whirlwind of ash with the Ghost Eye at its center.

The wind screamed around the Ghost Eye, seemingly on the verge of completely destroying it. After all, the wind was filled with Meng Hao's Immortal power, which could even shake the peak of the Immortal Realm.

It happened so fast that it was already over before it could even be described with words. In the blink of an eye, the windstorm surrounded the Ghost Eye. In turn, mysterious light began to emanate out of it, not a beam, but a halo that spread out in all directions.

When the light met the windstorm, the windstorm was rapidly dissolved. A moment later, the Ghost Eye charged out, screaming as it closed in on Meng Hao.

"Interesting," he thought. He could sense that the Life Death Hex was continuing to weaken, but actually, wasn't really paying attention to that. Rather than try to reinforce the power of the hex, he wanted to see exactly how strong the Ghost Eye was.

Before the Ghost Eye could get very close, Meng Hao took a step forward and raised his hand. A huge wind sprang up as he clenched his hand and punched out. It seemed like a simple punch, but it actually possessed the condensed strength of all of Meng Hao's true Immortal fleshly body, as well as his 123 Immortal meridians. That one punch was enough to completely eradicate anyone in the Immortal Realm.

As the punch rumbled out, the Ghost Eye screamed. It wanted to dodge, but was incapable of even moving. The only thing it could do was whip its tentacles up in an attempt to create a defensive barrier in front of it. At the same time, the Ghost Eye, which had remained open this entire time, now closed.

Shocking rumbling sounds could be heard as the tentacles were destroyed as easily as shriveled weeds. The Ghost Eye trembled and was sent tumbling backward. Its energy immediately plummeted, and it began to grow weak and dark. As for the black imp inside, it actually grew clearer.

A moment later, the Ghost Eye collapsed completely. However, the black-shelled imp wasn't hurt at all. It let out a piercing shriek and opened its mouth to reveal a collection of sharp teeth as it pounced toward Meng Hao.

"Eee?" said Meng Hao. His expression was one of excitement as he realized that the Ghost Eye, after having consumed so many spirit-immortal stones, and then transmogrifying, had a divine ability like this. It was actually able to resist the power of one of his punches.

As the black-shelled imp approached, Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He did nothing to evade, but rather allowed it to close in on him. Then, when it reached him, the imp actually passed into his body, merging into him as if it were illusory.

At the same time, a powerful force of possession exploded out within him.

"Ah, so that's what's going on," he thought, his eyes flashing coldly. He could clearly sense how the black-shelled imp inside of him was trying to destroy his soul and then take over his body, possessing him completely.

The power was overbearing, seemingly impossible to stop. However, a slight smile could be seen on Meng Hao's face. Now that he knew what the black-shelled imp did, he had no desire for further testing. He snorted coldly, and a magical symbol appeared on his forehead, which was the weakened Life Death Hex. Suddenly, it stabilized; how could a mere black-shelled imp permanently weaken the Hexing magic of the Life Death Hexing?!

As soon as the Life Death Hex solidified, a miserable shriek rang out. The black-shelled imp trembled as it was wrenched out from inside of Meng Hao to appear in front of him. It shook, and its miserable cries intensified until, after enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, it knelt in front of him, a pleading look on its face.

"As I suspected, it actually developed sentience!" he murmured. He waved his hand toward the black-shelled imp. Not daring to resist, it transformed into a black beam of light that shot toward Meng Hao's palm, where it then turned into a black bean-like pod.

It almost looked like a medicinal pill, and yet, had no medicinal aroma. Furthermore, there appeared to be undulations of life force inside of it. Meng Hao squeezed it hard between his fingers, but no damage was done. Apparently, it was extremely resilient.

It wasn't until he exerted seventy percent of his power that the black pod began to tremble. As cracks spread across its surface, a terrified stream of divine will suddenly shot out of it, begging for mercy.

After a moment of thought, he loosened his grip, then put the black pod into his bag of holding. Finally, eyes gleaming, he looked at the other two caves with keen anticipation.

“Similar to the peak of the Immortal Realm, huh.... And also sentient. That means that there’s a high likelihood that they can continue to grow!

“Just a single black-shelled imp is far, far more powerful than ten black-shelled Ghost Eye Beetles. And the entire reason for the transmogrification was those spirit-immortal stones!

“If I could get more of these blackpod imps, perhaps a few dozen....” Meng Hao’s eyes shone brightly as he imagined a scene in which he waved his sleeve, causing massive quantities of black pods to fly out. After turning into black-shelled imps, they would possess his enemies, which would then assist him in battle.

“Magic pod soldiers!”

Meng Hao could sense that it wouldn’t be very long before two more blackpod imps would be emerging from the stone chambers.

Muttering to himself, he summoned five more black beetles, which he placed into the chamber with the broken door, then fed some more spirit-immortal stones. Then he waved his hand, causing a glittering shield to appear that replaced the shattered door.

It was about this time that the puppet boy flew down through the water and the shield, and then entered the residence. He clasped hands to Meng Hao, and then handed over a bag of holding.

Meng Hao immediately looked very excited, and instantly put the matter of the Ghost Eye Beetles aside. He grabbed the bag of holding, scanned it, and then his brow furrowed. There were obviously far fewer spirit stones and Immortal jade inside than had been in the bag before.

Of course, it was better than nothing. It was still a hefty sum, even if it was less than before. Meng Hao waved his hand to send the puppet boy away, then sat down cross-legged and once again began to use the copper mirror to duplicate the Paragon’s blood.

Time passed, and Meng Hao’s life of sitting there duplicating with the copper mirror began once again. His eyes were bloodshot, and he continuously uttered vile curses. The copper mirror’s ability to consume spirit stones, and the pain that came along with it, was something that he thought he had grown numb to. However, as it turned out, he was anything but numb.

Thankfully, his supply of Paragon's blood was growing larger. About a week later, he now had eighty portions!

During that time, he had sent the puppet boy out over ten times. Each time, he came back with fewer and fewer spirit stones and Immortal jade. Right now, Meng Hao was just looking up and taking a deep breath as the puppet boy returned again.

Unfortunately, this time the puppet boy had no bag of holding, only a jade slip.

When Meng Hao saw that it was a jade slip, he smiled bitterly. He'd already had a bad feeling about what had been happening, so he wasn't surprised when he picked up the slip, scanned it with divine sense, and heard the enraged voice of Ling Yunzi.

"No more! What do you do with all the spirit stones, boy, eat them?! Or do you just crush them into bits for fun!?!? It's only been half a month! Do you have any idea how many spirit stones and Immortal jade you've taken away!?!?"

"The Nine Seas God World has been saving up Immortal jade and spirit stones for countless years, and you've already sucked away ten percent!!

"Dammit! I know I said all the resources of the sect were available to you, but... but the way you're clearing us out is intolerable! No more! Until we open the Windswept Realm, we have no more! Do you hear me!?"

Meng Hao felt a bit awkward. Although the jade slip only contained divine sense, and Ling Yunzi hadn't come personally, Meng Hao could imagine how enraged he, as well as Granny Nine and Godmaster, must look.

"I don't want to waste so many spirit stones either," he grumbled. "It hurts me too!" He was also shocked at the wastage of spirit stones and Immortal jade, and it truly did pain him inwardly. He felt a bit wronged, actually. He hadn't actually calculated how much he had spent, not because he couldn't, but because he was worried that if he knew for sure, he might pass out from the pain of it all.

"Besides, it was a measly ten percent, that's all! The Nine Seas God World is so mighty, and yet so stingy!" Clearing his throat, he continued to use divine sense to examine the message Ling Yunzi had sent.

"I bet you're not convinced, are you, kid? You think that ten percent isn't very much. Well let me tell you, you little whippersnapper, our faction only has access to forty percent of the total cultivation resources of the Nine Seas God World. The Demonic Cultivator Horde controls thirty percent, and the other two factions control fifteen percent each.

"If you want more cultivation resources, well, we can't give them to you. Go challenge the golden door stone stele trials by fire. Win some rewards there. Because you're in the Echelon, the rewards you can get will be double or more. When you win those rewards, the cost is divided out among all the factions!

"If you're skilled enough, then in the following two and a half months you can clear out all the resources of the Nine Seas God World, but at least then the other factions will lose out as well, not just ours!!" Ling Yunzi's last words were uttered through clenched teeth. Clearly, the last half month had been one long headache for him, Granny Nine, and Godmaster.

If Meng Hao weren't in the Echelon, they would most likely have long since descended upon him and slaughtered him and put an end to this no-good, spirit-stone devouring black hole of a glutton.

Meng Hao frowned as he retracted his divine sense from the jade slip. He looked over at the copper mirror, and then at his 80 vials of Paragon's blood.

"I still need twenty vials!" His eyes then began to shine with a frightening light, and a glimmer of obsession. For the sake of completing the Paragon's blood, and for the sake of fully absorbing his Nirvana Fruits, Meng Hao was even beginning to think about resorting to robbery and theft.

"I guess I should go check out the trials by fire!" With that, he clenched his jaw, rose to his feet, and walked out of the residence.

As soon as he stepped outside, he heard the sound of organized, choral singing coming from the pool of water.

"Come, come, sing with Lord Fifth. No singing out of key, now! Here we go! I was a bad kid when I was young, I'm a little seafood dish! Lalalalala! Seafood dish. Dobedobedoooo.... seafood dish."

Chapter 1048: A Wager!

As soon as Meng Hao heard the singing, he gaped. Looking over at the pool of water, he took a deep breath. His expression was one of shock as he saw 33 Demonic cultivators, haggard and gaunt, singing at the top of their lungs.

Their expressions were unexpectedly... that of extreme passion that even bordered on worship. As they stared up at the multicolored parrot, they almost looked like cultists. As for the parrot, it was belting out the song at the top of its lungs.

Most intolerable of all was that the meat jelly had transformed into a set of barrel-shaped drums, which were constantly being beaten to go along with the singing.

Meng Hao simply couldn't imagine what the Demonic cultivators had experienced to cause them to have such devoted gleams in their eyes. As for the singing, other than the little tune that Patriarch Reliance usually hummed, Meng Hao had never heard a more jarring melody.

He was also shocked to find that when he walked out of the residence and headed toward the pool of water, the Demonic cultivators, including the huge shell that hated him down to its guts, all completely ignored him, and focused wholeheartedly on their song.

Meng Hao felt as if the entire world were in chaos. He took a deep breath and looked at the hollering parrot, and suddenly realized that he had underestimated it.

Rolling his eyes, he cleared his throat and then produced Su Yan from within his bag of holding. As soon as she opened her eyes, she chuckled coldly, and was just about to deride Meng Hao when, all of a sudden, the singing caught her attention, and she gaped in shock.

"Parrot!" said Meng Hao decisively. "I'm handing this wench over to you for training. Get her to be as obedient as all these seafood dishes! Oh right, she's worth... one hundred furred or feathered beasts!" Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, the parrot began to tremble in midair. It even stopped singing, and all of the few colorful feathers it had left stood on end. Its eyes shone with brilliant light.

"A hundred? Did you say one hundred?!?!?" It apparently wanted to make very sure that it had heard correctly.

Meng Hao nodded somberly. "One hundred! Each and every one with luxuriant coats of fur or feathers!"

In order to get his hands on that Daoist magic, he was willing to throw caution to the wind.

Su Yan gaped in astonishment. She wasn't quite sure exactly what Meng Hao and the colorful bird were talking about. However, she quickly began to chuckle coldly, and her expression was one of extreme derision.

The parrot, however, was very excited, and instantly threw its head back and roared.

"Don't worry, Lord Fifth will get this wench in line!" It looked excitedly toward Su Yan, eyes shining. Off to the side, the meat jelly didn't seem to be very pleased at having been left out.

"Can you sing? Well? Can you?" it asked angrily. "Can you count?!"

"Morons!" Su Yan said with a laugh, closing her eyes and ignoring them.

Meng Hao gave Su Yan a pitying look, then cleared his throat. Not bothering to consider how the parrot would be training Su Yan, he turned and flew up into the air.

In the blink of an eye, he shot through the shield and the pool of water, appearing suddenly in midair. Almost as soon as he emerged, he saw two beams of light flying through the air in his general direction. Within those beams of light, two cold gazes could be seen.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he watched two Demonic cultivators flying by.

They snorted coldly, doing nothing to disguise their contempt for him as they flew past and then headed off into the distance.

Meng Hao didn't mind. The main reason he was emerging from his Immortal's cave was for Immortal jade and spirit stones. Without further hesitation, he flew into the air toward the golden gate stone steles.

He did not intend to blindly challenge the steles. Instead, he would go learn something about them, then decide later which one to challenge first.

“I need to find the one most suited to me. That way, I’ll be able to get the rewards I need in the shortest time possible!” As for his work with the Paragon’s blood, he was determined to succeed.

On the way to the golden gate stone steles, he passed various disciples. The regular cultivators looked at him curiously. Some even smiled and clasped hands. After all, Meng Hao was famous even outside the sect, and earlier, he had talked down a Dao Realm expert. That news had caused quite a sensation in the Nine Seas God World.

However, the Demonic cultivators he encountered all bristled with killing intent. The hatred in their eyes was clear, and when they saw Meng Hao, it only continued to grow deeper.

Eventually, he came to stand in front of a towering golden gate stone stele. It shone with boundless golden light, and was carved with so many names that they seemed impossible to count. Quite a few cultivators and Demonic cultivators were gathered in the area. Any time someone touched the gate, they would disappear.

People would disappear and people would reappear. It was quite a lively scene.

A middle-aged man sat cross-legged at the base of the stone gate. His eyes were closed, as if he didn’t care about what was happening in the world outside at all. However, if anyone attempted to start a fight in the area, or if people attempting the trial by fire tried to cheat in any way, he would instantly know, and punishment would be meted out without hesitation.

Meng Hao stood off to the side, watching the scene for a while. He was just about to leave when, all of a sudden, a glittering bright red light began to spread out from one of the stone steles. The light rapidly transformed to the image of an illusory world up in midair. Within that world, a young woman could be seen, who was the source of the light!

She was beautiful, but shockingly, a white-robed female corpse could be seen floating behind her, making her even more astonishing.

Cries of envy and shock could instantly be heard from all directions.

“The name list changed!”

“Elder Sister Fan Dong’er got into the top 30!!”

“The top 100 are all Ancient Realm cultivators, although you can only make it into the rankings if you have five or less extinguished soul lamps. But Elder Sister Fan Dong’er got into the top 30 while only in the Immortal Realm! She’s definitely a true Chosen!”

Cries of shock rang out among the cultivators in the area, including the Demonic cultivators. Many people looked envious, whereas others had dark looks, or even seemed unwilling to accept what had happened.

At the same time, Fan Dong’er’s name appeared as the thirtieth name on the list.

The red light shone for a bit longer, then faded away. As it disappeared, Fan Dong’er strode out from the stone stele. Her face was a bit pale, but she looked excited. As soon as she appeared, the surrounding disciples began to clasp hands and call out in congratulations.

Fan Dong’er smiled and clasped hands in return. She was just about to leave, when suddenly, her phoenix-like eyes flashed as she caught sight of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao smiled and nodded, then turned to leave. He now knew that this stone stele trial by fire was about divine sense. Although Meng Hao was confident regarding his own divine sense, it wasn’t his strongest area. Furthermore, in previous encounters with Fan Dong’er, he could tell that the reason why her divine abilities and Daoist magics were so powerful was not because of her cultivation base, but rather, her divine sense.

“Perhaps it has something to do with the techniques of the Nine Seas God World. I really should take some time to go to their Scripture Pavilion.” After another moment of thought, he prepared to make his way off when all of a sudden, he heard the sound of air being shattered behind him. He turned to find Fan Dong’er chasing him down.

As for Fan Dong’er, she was muttering inwardly to herself that if it wasn’t for the fact that her master had instructed her to help Meng Hao familiarize himself with the golden gate stone steles, she wouldn’t have even approached him. Thinking about her battle with him after he reached Immortal Ascension caused her heart to fill with hatred. Back when he had first arrived and gotten into conflict with the Demonic cultivators, she had felt quite pleased, and had looked forward to the scene of the Demonic cultivators tearing him to pieces.

“Congratulations on reaching the top 30, Junior Sister,” Meng Hao said with a laugh.

“That’s Elder Sister to you!” she replied. Every time she looked at Meng Hao, she felt uncontrollable fury rising up within her. It was almost as if the mere sight of his face would put her emotions completely out of control.

“There’s only one Elder Sister in my life,” Meng Hao responded coolly.

When Fan Dong’er heard this, she gaped in surprise. Instead of pressing the issue, she took a deep breath, calmed herself, and then began to speak again, her face expressionless.

“The golden gate stone steles of the Nine Seas God World number nine in total. The first is the most important, which is a test regarding the pressure of the Ninth Sea. It is one of the most important trials by fire in the Nine Seas God World.

“The other eight gates test different aspects of cultivation. For example, the ninth stone stele is a fleshly body trial by fire. This, the seventh, has to do with divine sense.

“Then there’s the fifth stone stele, which is a trial by fire of slaughter. By experiencing a true battlefield, one can achieve the Dao of slaughtering.

“The third stone stele probably won’t suit you. It is regarding the Dao of transformation.

“Each person who enters into the top 100 on a golden gate stone stele receives a reward based on what rank they achieve. Greater rewards come as you go from the top 100, to the top 50, and the top 30!” Fan Dong’er rushed through the information, as if she was planning to leave right afterwards. She was worried that if she talked to Meng Hao for too long, she wouldn’t be able to control herself and would begin another all-out battle with him.

“What about the top 10?” he asked.

“Top 10? I suggest you don’t think that far ahead,” she replied, doing nothing to hide the derision in her tone.

“Don’t even dream of getting that high. Up to now in the Nine Seas God World, no one with an Immortal Realm cultivation base has ever gotten into the top 10.

“At the very least, you need to be in the Ancient Realm with two extinguished Soul Lamps to even compete over the top 10!

“As for you, you would be lucky to get into the top 20. You might be the Immortal Realm Paragon, but there are a lot of cultivators in the Nine Seas God World that you couldn’t lift a finger to.”

As Meng Hao looked at Fan Dong’er, his expression turned somewhat bashful, as if he felt a bit embarrassed about what he was going to say.

“You hit the nail on the head,” he said. “My goal is the top 10. Do you dare to make a bet with me about it?!”

Almost as soon as Fan Dong’er saw the bashful expression on his face, she felt like her scalp was about to explode. She instantly backed up, rotating her cultivation base and going on full guard, eyeing Meng Hao with extreme vigilance.

That expression was one which caused her heart to prickle, and it wasn’t the first time she had seen it. She knew that whenever such an expression appeared, Meng Hao would be at his most wicked. Not for the first time, Fan Dong’er dearly wished she could bash his face in so hard that she never had to see it again.

“Well, do you dare?” he repeated, looking at her and blinking.

“There’s no reason to try to convince me,” she replied with a cold harrumph. “It doesn’t matter what tricks you use, I simply can’t believe that you could get into the top 10 of any of the golden gate stone steles!

“Furthermore, if you think there’s any way I’ll be making a wager with you, you can keep on dreaming!” Giving him one final derisive and scornful look, she turned to leave.

“If you win, I’ll take Inky back,” he said casually.

Those words caused Fan Dong’er to instantly stop in place. She shuddered, then turned back, her face a mass of murderous rage. She glared at Meng Hao, panting, chest heaving. She was fundamentally beautiful, but when she had a look like this in her eyes, she was even more attractive.

That corpse was something Fan Dong'er had gotten used to. She had viewed it as a way to temper her Dao heart. However, deep down, she would do anything in the hopes of getting rid of it. Not even her master could dispel the corpse, and so, her tempering had been because she had no other choice.

Therefore, how could she possibly keep her calm when Meng Hao said something like he just had? Furthermore, how could she be sure he could even do what he said?

Well-aware of what Fan Dong'er must be thinking, Meng Hao smiled and said, "I can, because I was the one who stuck you with her."

"YOU!!" Fan Dong'er gritted her teeth. "Fine, let's gamble!"

Chapter 1049: The Ninth Golden Door!

As soon as the words left Fan Dong'er's mouth, Meng Hao cleared his throat. For some reason, it didn't feel right to con her in this way. But then he thought about the situation with the Paragon's blood, and the vast amount of spirit stones and Immortal jade he needed, and he realized that he couldn't let even the smallest juicy prey escape his grasp.

"How many spirit stones do you wanna bet?" he asked her.

Fan Dong'er snorted coldly. How could she not tell that Meng Hao was confident in his abilities? Otherwise, he would never have mentioned the possibility of a bet. However, she was equally confident in being able to win, and in fact, was certain that she would. Meng Hao had never been to the Nine Seas God World, let alone entered the golden gate stone steles. However, she was very familiar with them, far more so than Meng Hao.

"Alright, Meng Hao, let's see who cons who this time!" she thought. Her expression cold, she pretended as if she were throwing all caution to the wind. However, inwardly she was actually feeling quite complacent. This time, it wasn't Meng Hao who had lured her into a bet, it was she who was pulling the strings.

At the same time that Meng Hao was scheming about her, she was scheming about him!

"In the interests of time, I'm only willing to bet on the first time you enter one of the golden gate stone stele trials by fire," she said. "If you tried them all, who knows how long it would take for you to finish."

“So, only your first try counts. You can select any one of the steles, and if you can get into the top 10, then I’ll give you 100,000 Immortal jades and 5,000,000 spirit stones. Those are the stakes!

“Furthermore, you must make your first attempt at the trial by fire today! I don’t have time to sit around waiting for you.

“If you get into the top 10, you can take everything immediately. If you can’t, then you must swear an oath upon the Dao that not only will you take this corpse away, you’ll also cancel my promissory note! Plus, every time you meet me, you have to get on your knees and kowtow in greeting!” The way Fan Dong’er gritted her teeth and glared at Meng Hao made it seem like the reason she had added more stipulations was because she regretted her sudden impulsiveness, and was hoping Meng Hao would back out.

Meng Hao blinked and looked suspiciously at Fan Dong’er. Then, he slowly nodded his head.

“Alright, fine,” he said. “We’re old friends, so even though the bet is a bit unfair to me, I’ll accept it, all because of our relationship. Let’s do it!”

Fan Dong’er couldn’t conceal the bright glow in her eyes as she immediately responded, “The agreement is reached...”

“...and the Dao bears witness!” replied Meng Hao, without hesitation.

Quite a few surrounding disciples overheard what was going on, and were watching closely. That was especially true of some of the male cultivators, who looked at Meng Hao with open hostility. Apparently, they felt that any enemy of Fan Dong’er was their enemy too.

When Fan Dong’er heard Meng Hao’s response, she immediately smiled. Now, she no longer made any attempts to cover up her scheming, or the fact that she had been baiting Meng Hao. She was eighty percent certain that Meng Hao was going to lose!

When Meng Hao saw Fan Dong’er’s expression, he smiled. Considering his years of experience as a con artist, how could he possibly have failed to notice that Fan Dong’er was leading him along?

He didn't immediately select a stone stele to begin a trial by fire. Instead, he transformed into a beam of light that shot back and forth between the other eight golden gate stone steles as he examined them.

Fan Dong'er followed along, as did other disciples of the Nine Seas God World, including quite a few Demonic cultivators. Many of those people sent messages to friends, and soon, word spread about the bet between Meng Hao and Fan Dong'er.

Fan Dong'er was the Divine Daughter of this generation of the Nine Seas God World, and was even famous in the outside world. There wasn't anybody in the Nine Seas God World who didn't know who she was. Couple that with the fact that she was spectacularly beautiful, and it would be impossible to say conclusively how many of her fellow disciples completely adored her. Naturally, the fact that she had a wager going with someone quickly drew a lot of attention.

Of course, Meng Hao was also famous in the outside world. In fact, his name was far more illustrious than Fan Dong'er's. Be it in terms of his identity or his accomplishments, he was the center of much attention. Furthermore, only half a month ago, he had stood up to and even berated a Dao Realm expert. Word of that had spread throughout the entire Nine Seas God World, which made the matter of his wager with Fan Dong'er that much more intriguing.

Demonic cultivators came. Ordinary cultivators came. It didn't take long before there were fully 10,000 cultivators following Meng Hao around and discussing what was happening. Most of them looked at him with curiosity. However, as would be expected, most of them were inclined to support Fan Dong'er.

Around noontime, Meng Hao finished his inspection of the nine golden gate stone steles, whereupon he hovered in midair, muttering to himself.

"What's wrong, can't decide which one to pick?" asked Fan Dong'er, sneering coldly. "Don't try to delay things, Meng Hao. We already made the bet. You can only do the trial by fire today!"

Meng Hao turned to look at her, then smiled. His eyes flickered with a cold gleam as, without another word, he shot away like lightning. Rumbling filled the air as he headed directly toward... the ninth golden gate stone stele!

The first stone stele was a test regarding the pressure of the Ninth Sea, something he wasn't ready for. After a bit of examination of the other trials by fire, he didn't feel extremely confident in his ability to win the bet in any of them. However, the ninth stone stele was a trial by fire of the fleshly body. In that, he had faith!

Fan Dong'er's eyes flickered, and inwardly, she was laughing coldly. The ninth stone stele was actually one of three that she had speculated he would select. Therefore, it was no surprise to her at all that he chose that one.

"You're definitely going to lose!" she thought, setting her jaw arrogantly.

The surrounding disciples immediately began to discuss the matter.

"The ninth stone stele! This Meng Hao has a true Immortal fleshly body, so selecting this stone stele is actually a pretty conservative choice."

"However, he's also being a bit rash, wouldn't you say? The ninth stone stele... is very hard!!"

"Him losing would be a good thing. Deflate him a bit! After all, this is the Nine Seas God World!" Apparently, none of the disciples believed that Meng Hao would succeed.

Heaven and Earth rumbled as Meng Hao shot toward the ninth golden gate stone stele, a beam of prismatic light that split the air. As he neared, it was evident that there were already a large number of disciples gathered there, clearly aware of the wager between Fan Dong'er and Meng Hao. Their eyes glittered as they watched Meng Hao unhesitatingly speed directly toward the huge stone stele.

As soon as he touched it, he vanished inside.

Subsequently, the more than 10,000 disciples outside of the stone stele all fixed their eyes on the list of names as they waited for any change. Fan Dong'er chuckled coldly. She was very calm, and completely confident that Meng Hao would be defeated.

Inside of the golden gate stone stele was an entire world which stretched out in all directions. However, there was no sky or land, just blankness. Meng Hao frowned as he realized that his Immortal meridians were apparently sealed. He could not rotate them in the slightest, making it impossible to utilize any divine abilities or magical techniques.

"My magic has been sealed off?" he thought. He sent some divine sense into his bag of holding, and found that even it was affected; nearly all of the items inside were impossible to use. Apparently the natural laws in this place restricted anything related to magic.

There were a few Heaven-defying items within his bag of holding that were still available for use. Most shocking of all was that the black pod was still emanating ripples; apparently it was unaffected by the sealing, and could still be used.

Even as shock washed through Meng Hao, popping sounds suddenly rang out from up ahead. Next, a tall figure strode out from the within the void.

It was a man wearing a mask, with a long head of flowing white hair, and a navy blue robe. Not a single cultivation base ripple emanated off of him as he approached, causing Meng Hao's eyes to widen.

He could sense that the man had a boundless power of qi and blood within him. Although he had absolutely no cultivation base fluctuations, his qi and blood power was towering.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered as he realized what type of cultivation this man practiced.

“A body cultivator!”

Back when he was doing research in the Fang Clan's ancient records, he saw information about a common type of cultivation from ancient times. Those cultivators did not cultivate special types of magic, but rather, focused on their fleshly bodies.

People like that were referred to as body cultivators!

The most unique thing about them was that their bodies did not contain the least bit of spiritual energy. However, their qi and blood could influence the workings of the world around them.

The man in front of him hadn't reached that level yet. However, his qi and blood were still extremely vigorous, shocking to the extreme.

As soon as he appeared, he didn't hesitate for even a moment. He strode forward, and before he was even close, his boundless qi and blood surged, transforming into an incredible pressure that crushed down on Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered, and he couldn't help but smile.

“So I can't use any magical techniques. I can only rely on my fleshly body. Well in that case, it's time to see... exactly how far my true Immortal fleshly body can take me!” He took a deep breath, and without any further hesitation, began to stride toward the man.

As they closed in on each other, both of them clenched their hands into fists and punched out!

A boom rattled out. Meng Hao went all out with his fleshly body, giving rise to a gale force wind. When his blow landed on his opponent, a massive shockwave spread out in all directions. Meng Hao's hair was thrown into disarray, and yet, he didn't retreat even half a pace. The initial punch actually got him excited; it felt quite relaxing to be able to unleash such power.

As for his opponent, the man trembled, and fell back a few paces.

“Time to die!” Meng Hao roared, stepping forward and punching again.

The punch landed on nothing, but it caused the void to collapse, kicking up a huge wind that slammed into his opponent. The man's body shook, and in the blink of an eye, he was completely shattered into bits by the force of the strike.

However, in that same moment, two more men appeared within the void. They looked identical to the first man, with navy blue robes, and masks. Their qi and blood were also incredibly powerful, and they immediately charged toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao threw his head back and laughed. He didn't back up, but instead, went on the offensive. Booms filled the air as the two figures were destroyed. A moment later, four figures appeared, with even stronger qi and blood.

This happened over and over again. Meng Hao attacked repeatedly, and a massive energy built up in his body. It was a domineering air, a courageous madness. Rumbling could be heard as the entire world was shaken.

4 opponents destroyed. Then there were 8. After 8 were destroyed, there were 16. After 16 were destroyed, 32 appeared!

After that there were 64, 128, 256....

Each and every time, their qi and blood were even stronger. Vast crowds surrounded Meng Hao, who only continued to laugh. He almost never came across a chance like this, in which magical techniques weren't important, and he could rely only on his fleshly body. Every time he launched a punch, wild colors flashed about.

Furthermore, his name began to rise on the stone stele's list!

Chapter 1050: Celestial Warrior!

Actually, Meng Hao's name had appeared on the stone stele in the instant he had slaughtered 64 enemies. Prominently displayed on the golden gate stone stele was a list of 1,000 names.

However, while the names of the top 100 shone with brilliant light, the names of those outside of the top 100 were darkened to the point where you couldn't read them clearly without using divine sense.

As for Meng Hao's name, when it appeared, it was in the 997th position!

On any other occasion, few people would have taken note of this. Most people only paid attention to the top 100. The 900 names below that might have their own bit of glory, but not enough to cause any sort of stir.

As of this moment, however, the 10,000 spectators who were staring at the stone stele immediately caught sight of Meng Hao's name and began to cry out.

"There it is!!"

"He's in 997th place!!"

"That was so fast! How long has he been in there?" Immediately, various disciples began to analyze the situation, and soon, they determined that from the time Meng Hao disappeared into the golden gate stone stele until the time his name appeared, less time had passed than it would take an incense stick to burn!

In fact, in the brief time in which they discussed the matter, his name leapt from the 997th spot to the 831st! And it didn't stop there. It leapt again, from the 831st spot to the 498th!

A huge commotion rose up, and everyone was clearly shocked. Everyone was staring at the stone stele, astonished at the progress Meng Hao was making. Based on his reputation, everyone was sure that he would reach the top 100, but what was causing such widespread shock was the speed with which he was moving up in the ranks!

He was rising so quickly that everyone was mentally shaken. When fighting a hundred people, defeating them in a hundred breaths of time was a completely different matter than defeating them in fifty breaths of time. Furthermore, to be able to do so in only ten breaths of time was like the difference between Heaven and Earth!

That was how all of the disciples of the Nine Seas God World currently felt about Meng Hao. Although they could see no images of what was taking place inside the trial by fire, when they calculated how quickly he was moving up, they knew that he was bursting with momentum and energy.

Fan Dong'er's expression flickered, but quickly returned to normal.

"The real difficulty lies in the top 100," she murmured to herself, clenching her jaw. "He might be moving quickly in the early stages, but so what?!"

Back in the golden gate stone stele, Meng Hao was laughing out loud. His qi and blood surged like that of an explosive dragon. He advanced courageously, dispatching the blue-robed figures with constant attacks. They were like dried weeds in front of him.

After dispatching the 256 cultivators with boundless qi and blood power, Meng Hao's eyes glowed with obsession. He was panting a bit, but his heart was filled with the desire to do battle.

"I'm definitely... going to get into the top 10! Even if it technically shouldn't be possible for me, I can still do it!" He looked down at his bag of holding. Located inside was another item, which was the key to his confidence in being able to win the bet with Fan Dong'er.

This might be a trial by fire, and most of the items in his bag of holding were sealed. However, as Meng Hao had expected, the item that he was counting on could not be sealed. As far as the black pod, the fact that it was also unsealed had been completely unexpected.

Even as he stood there, panting slightly, the void up ahead rippled. Meng Hao was given no rest as a massive aura exploded out in front of him. Shockingly, 512 men in navy blue robes stepped out.

Each one was far more powerful than any of the previous enemies he had fought. Their qi and blood power placed them in a position similar to the peak of the Immortal Realm. However, these were not like Chosen with 90 or more meridians, but rather, more like peak Immortals with 70 meridians or so.

Even still, they were incredibly powerful. Meng Hao wasn't sure how members of the Nine Seas God World normally passed challenges such as this; perhaps they had a special body tempering technique. In any case, his eyes glittered as he stepped forward and went on the attack again.

Rumbling shook everything as he launched his punch. Massive vibrations could be sensed as he lost track of time, and even forgot that he was in a trial by fire. He focused completely on using his fleshly body to attack and destroy.

This was the first time he had not relied on any magical techniques or divine abilities, nor on his cultivation base. This was a battle fought only with the fleshly body. His entire body was trembling, not because of muscle fatigue, but rather, because it was finally able to utilize the full potential of its power.

In fact, Meng Hao could sense that, because of the constant fighting within the trial by fire, his fleshly body was now showing signs of a breakthrough, and was becoming even more powerful!

He roared as he shot forward, letting out a powerful punch that instantly exterminated three opponents. By the time he finished with the 512th opponent, blood was oozing out of his mouth and he was breathing heavily. Then he looked up and saw, not 1,024 opponents, but rather... a single person!

He wore a long crimson robe, and as he walked forward, the void around him turned bright red. That red color was not visible to the naked eye... it could only be seen with divine sense.

It was something that came only after reaching a certain level of qi and blood power, something that actually influenced the natural law around it!

As soon as Meng Hao saw this crimson-robed figure, his eyes widened, and he could sense the threatening air exuded by the man.

“So, a true body cultivator has finally appeared!” he thought, eyes shining with the desire to fight.

From the qi and blood power emanating off of the man, Meng Hao was able to tell that he was definitely a match for the peak of the true Immortal Realm.

Meanwhile, everyone in the outside world was in an uproar. The more than 10,000 spectators outside of the ninth golden gate stone stele watched as Meng Hao’s name rose up on the list. It went from the 400’s up into the 300’s, all the way until it reached the 101st position!

As for how much time had passed since Meng Hao had started, it was only... a single hour!

To cultivators, a single hour was like nothing. And yet, that was how much time Meng Hao had used to climb all the way to the 101st position!

“This Meng Hao, just... just how powerful is his fleshly body?!?!?”

“An hour! It’s only been one hour....”

“I suddenly have the feeling that he... might actually make it into the top 10!”

“Not necessarily. Maybe he used some type of secret technique to bolster his fleshly body for a temporary boost in power!” As the conversations went on, Fan Dong’er’s face was extremely unsightly. Although she didn’t want to admit it, she was actually getting quite nervous. For Meng Hao to get to the 101st position in only one hour was something extremely rare in the golden gate stone stele trials by fire.

Back inside, Meng Hao had no idea where his name was on the list, nor did he care. Because of that item inside his bag of holding, he was confident that he wouldn’t lose. Compared to what was at stake depending on whether he won or lost, the gains he was making in terms of his fleshly body were far more important.

Up ahead, the crimson-robed man stepped forward toward Meng Hao. He only took three steps, but each step caused shocking rumbling like thunder to shake everything. Meng Hao’s heart quivered as

though it were being stepped on. He felt stifled, as if, when standing in front of this crimson-robed man, he couldn't help but feel regret.

But then, his eyes flickered with the desire to fight, and his qi and blood surged, instantly rising up to fight back against the feeling. He did not retreat, he advanced, directly toward the crimson-robed man.

The man looked up, and his eyes shone with a glow like that of blood. As Meng Hao closed in on him, he also charged.

The two did not speak, nor did they use magic. They simply... fought!

Booms rang out, shaking Heaven and Earth. Meng Hao launched punch after punch, as did the crimson-robed man. They went back and forth in midair, occasionally throwing sweeping kicks into the brawl. In a brief moment, they had exchanged hundreds of blows.

Meng Hao was laughing loudly. The more he fought, the stronger he seemed to become. It was as if his true Immortal fleshly body was undergoing tempering. It was exploding past his previous level of battle prowess, leading Meng Hao to the conclusion that he had overlooked the fact that his fleshly body could only grow stronger when he used it to fight! That was the key to growing more powerful!

Fight!

Meng Hao's desire to do battle surged. He attacked relentlessly, advanced without pause. The crimson-robed man seethed with qi and blood power, but was forced backward over and over again. It didn't matter that he was a body cultivator who had reached the point of being able to affect natural law; he was simply no match for Meng Hao's true Immortal fleshly body.

About a dozen breaths of time passed. Meng Hao roared, and then let out a punch that completely destroyed the crimson-robed man.

The world went quiet and peaceful, and Meng Hao hovered in midair, his qi and blood surging, growing more powerful. Shockingly, a red glow began to spread out around him!

Apparently... he was able to influence this world's natural law!

As of this moment, Meng Hao looked exactly like a celestial warrior!

“I understand. Body cultivators need repeated bloody battles to progress!” His eyes shone with enlightenment. In any other situation outside, he could rely on magical techniques to kill the crimson-robed opponent as easily as turning over his hand. But he had no such access to magical techniques now, forcing him to temper his fleshly body. He was causing his true Immortal fleshly body... to burst out with the true power that it was capable of.

Almost in the same moment that the crimson-robed opponent vanished, Meng Hao's name once again climbed up on the list. He didn't know that though. What he saw was the void up ahead of him rippling as... two crimson-robed men emerged.

It was like a cycle, with 512 as the limit. Every cycle had different body cultivators, wearing different clothing, from different Realms of body cultivation.

2. 4. 8. 16. 32. 64....

There was no rest in this trial by fire. His fleshly body grew stronger, his insane desire for battle growing ever more frenzied. He coughed up blood, but it made him more powerful. Underneath the constant onslaught, his fleshly body gradually approached the point of perfection!

It was at the point when 256 crimson-robed opponents appeared that Meng Hao finally began to fall back. There were simply too many people, all of them body cultivators who could influence natural law. Meng Hao's fleshly body power was now reaching its limit.

His eyes flickered as they surrounded him, and he gave a cold harrumph. He was not averse to using cheating methods. However, he didn't want to use his final trump card so easily. Therefore, he tossed out the black pod. The imp appeared, screeching as it shot toward the incoming crimson robed opponents.

A group of crimson-robed men immediately split off to deal with the blackpod imp. The imp was ferocious, and didn't attempt to dodge. Instead, it used its carapace to defend itself. Although it wasn't really a match for these crimson-robed men, the more it fought, the more confident it got. When it was injured, the injuries healed. Whenever any of the opponents got near, it would attempt to possess them. However, it quickly became apparent that the crimson-robed men did not actually have the types of bodies that could be possessed. Therefore, the imp simply slashed them to pieces and consumed their flesh and blood!

In the end, the imp was able to take care of a dozen or so crimson-robed opponents, taking a bit of the pressure off of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao was actually shocked at this outcome, and split his attention between fighting the crimson robed men and observing the little blackpod imp. Time went by, and after a few dozen breaths of time, the blackpod imp was struck by one of the crimson-robed body cultivators, and was sent flying. As it flew through midair, it spit out a mouthful of blood and then let out an ear-piercing screech.

“Dagger!!” As soon as it let out the cry, its body distorted, and it transformed into a dagger which shot toward the crimson-robed opponent.