

The Heavens 1051

Chapter 1051: Top 10!

Meanwhile, back in Meng Hao's Immortal's cave, rumbling sounds could be heard coming from within two of the stone chambers in his residence. It didn't take long for the two chambers to completely collapse.

Two Ghost Eyes suddenly emerged from within the cloud of dust. When they saw each other, sparks of hostility could be seen, but instead of fighting each other, they flew out of the residence, apparently intent on making their escape.

However, as soon as they emerged, they found themselves facing the parrot, who was in the middle of coaching the Demonic cultivators in their singing. The parrot stared in shock, and then immediately looked displeased.

"They look so familiar, but I can't quite place them. Anyway, why is their fur so sparse?"

"You fool, they don't have fur, those are tentacles!" Off to the side, the meat jelly jumped at the chance to correct the parrot. All of a sudden it felt as if it knew about everything in the world, which also caused it to feel superior to and wiser than the parrot.

"Well it doesn't matter if its fur or tentacles," the parrot responded angrily, "they just don't have enough! Come, come, you two, time to practice some singing with Lord Fifth!" It flew toward the two Ghost Eyes without any hesitation.

The two Ghost Eyes emanated mysterious glows, and without hesitation charged the parrot in attack. Shockingly, the two imps inside of the eyes opened their mouths wide, as if to possess the parrot.

They all slammed into each other, and surprisingly, the parrot wasn't hurt at all. In contrast, the two imps let out miserable shrieks. They had sensed some sort of terrifying aura within the parrot, and began to flee. The Ghost Eyes faded away, revealing the imps, which transformed into black pods as they shot backward.

The parrot looked very proud of itself, and was just about to start speaking, when the two black pods suddenly shrieked: “Dagger!”

It was a shrill sound, tinged with madness. Next, two black daggers shot toward the parrot.

The parrot gaped in shock.

“Black pods that become daggers? Pod daggers? They seem so familiar...”

Meanwhile, back in the ninth golden gate stone stele, the black pod in dagger-form stabbed into a crimson-robed body cultivator, causing him to instantly vanish. Unexpectedly, he was completely absorbed... consumed by the dagger.

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed, and he kept fighting. Not much more time passed before he was able to wipe out the remaining two hundred or so enemies. Then, the void up ahead rippled once again. 512 body cultivators appeared.

A new round of slaughter had begun. Considering how many people he was fighting now, it was impossible for Meng Hao to maintain his previous momentum. He began to edge backward, and yet, his expression was calm. Despite being forced backward, he occasionally looked over at the blackpod imp, who was battling with increasing courage. As it continued to absorb the body cultivators, it was beginning to emanate a sensation of qi and blood.

That caused Meng Hao’s awe of the imp to increase.

Outside, the more than 10,000 disciples stared in shock as Meng Hao’s name rose from 101st place to 97th, 85th, 78th, 63rd, 54th....

Finally, Meng Hao’s name appeared in the 46th position!

The golden light which shone from the name made it clear to everyone. Furthermore, in terms of time... Meng Hao reached that position only two hours after beginning the stone stele trial by fire!

Everyone was completely shaken by this. Furthermore, the glittering golden light which rose up attracted the attention of disciples in other areas of the Nine Seas God World. They came over and began to ask about what was happening, and were shocked when they found out.

The Demonic cultivators were more affected than the ordinary cultivators. They stood there with grim faces and swirling killing intent.

As for Fan Dong'er, her face was extremely unsightly, and her hands were balled into fists.

“Considering the power of his fleshly body, he shouldn’t have any problems making it into the top 30,” she thought, gritting her teeth. “But... why is he going so fast?!?!” Meng Hao had long since passed up her own name on the list, which was not unexpected. However, according to her calculations, Meng Hao should have taken a whole day to get to his current position. Instead... he used only two hours.

By now, many of the Ancient Realm experts had sensed what was happening in the ninth golden gate stone stele, and were sending divine sense over to investigate.

Inside the stone stele, Meng Hao looked around at the hundreds of crimson-robed cultivators who surrounded him, and sighed. Even with the assistance of the blackpod imp, it was not an easy thing to go up against the combined qi and blood might of these body cultivators.

“I wonder how high up I am on the list,” he thought. “Definitely not 1st. How did all those the other people from the Nine Seas God World get so high in the rankings? How did they cultivate fleshly bodies more powerful than mine?!” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“Perhaps it has something to do with body cultivation itself, or perhaps... the Nine Seas God World has true body cultivators!” He hadn’t been in the Nine Seas God World for very long, but even in that short time, he had made incredible gains. Not only had his fleshly body grown stronger, but he now had some clues about the path of body cultivation.

Were it not for that, he would have long since already reached his limit. Now, however, he felt that his power was just a bit lacking.

“Although I haven’t reached the point of needing to use THAT item, still... my fleshly body power just isn’t sufficient.” He took a step back, eyes glittering.

“In that case,” he said, taking a deep breath, “let’s see what types of body cultivators are here in this fleshly body trial by fire!” Although his Immortal meridians were sealed, and he couldn’t unleash

magical techniques, he had sensed earlier that the secret magic of his Immortal meridians was still accessible.

His fleshly body was modeled after a single one of his 123 Immortal meridians. Therefore, he should be able to... transform all of his 123 Immortal meridians into fleshly body power.

He truly wanted to know exactly how powerful he would become if he transformed his fleshly body that way using the secret magic.

He closed his eyes, and the crimson-robed body cultivators closed in on him. When they were almost upon in, his eyes snapped open, and rumbling sounds filled his body. It was like a giant beating on a drum, intense booms that shook the entire world.

Inside his body, 123 Immortal meridians, despite being sealed and incapable of unleashing magical techniques, were not prevented from transforming into fleshly body power. Rumbling sounds could be heard as Meng Hao's power exploded upward. Qi and blood power surged, and massive energy rose up.

RUUUUUUMMMMMBLLLLLL....

The incoming crimson-robed body cultivators were instantly smashed to bits by the surging energy. They became nothing more than ash that swirled around Meng Hao.

The blackpod imp let out a shriek and immediately evaded, looking back at Meng Hao with intense fear in its eyes.

All of the red-robed body cultivators were instantly destroyed.

Meng Hao clenched his fists and looked up, and his eyes shone with a bright light. Outside, his name instantly shot up from the 40's into the 19th position!!

From ancient times until now, only eighteen people had ever performed better than Meng Hao, and they were all Ancient Realm cultivators with at least five extinguished soul lamps.

Furthermore, their fleshly bodies were not necessarily more powerful than Meng Hao's. After all, he had cleared the entire stage in only a few breaths of time, whereas many of the others had been forced to slowly kill all of their opponents.

The result was the same, but the process was vastly different.

The outside world was in an unprecedented level of uproar. The disciples of the Nine Seas God World couldn't believe their eyes when they saw his name leap from the 40's all the way to the top 20.

Meng Hao!

Fan Dong'er's eyes were wide, and she was panting with disbelief and shock. She even gasped.

"The top 20!!"

"Meng Hao got into the top 20! Only four hours to reach the top 20!"

"It's hard to say whether or not... he might actually get into the top 10!"

Boundless golden light rose up from the stone stele, catching even more attention. More disciples were arriving in beams of brilliant light.

Meanwhile, back in the world of the stone stele, Meng Hao hovered there, looking every bit like a celestial warrior. His energy was impossible to describe.

He was a celestial warrior, the Immortal Realm Paragon. And now, his fleshly body had also reached the level... of the Immortal Realm Paragon.

The blackpod imp was trembling as the void distorted up ahead. Soon, rumbling sounds could be heard as distortions could be seen, from within which emerged a black-robed man.

It was only a single person, wearing a black robe and a mask. However, when he appeared, his explosive qi and blood power caused cracks to appear everywhere!

A terrifying energy rose up from him, which was the power of the peak of the Immortal Realm, a level of power equivalent to Meng Hao's before he had used the Immortal meridian secret technique. However, compared to Meng Hao's present state... this man's energy was far too weak.

Meng Hao advanced, extending his hand. He didn't use a fist, but rather, just waved his arm, causing fleshly body power to shake the natural law in the area. A huge concave depression appeared, which immediately overwhelmed the black-robed man.

"Break," he said softly.

A boom could be heard as the black-robed man shattered. Next, 2 men appeared. Then 4, 8... all the way until 512 black-robed figures could be seen. Each and every one of them were crushed by Meng Hao.

His face was one of determination, and he attacked with lightning speed. The power of his fleshly body had already reached the pinnacle of the current generation, and even exceeded that of Ancient Realm experts. However, Meng Hao knew that this was not his most powerful state.

An even more powerful state would be one in which he could successfully absorb the four Nirvana Fruits. At that time, before he entered the Ancient Realm, he would have the most powerful fleshly body state to ever exist in the Immortal Realm from ancient times until now.

That would be... something that might even exceed the Immortal Emperor Realm!

512 black-robed men were smashed, causing Meng Hao's name to jump from 19th place on the stone stele to 5th!!

Outside, the crowd went wild.

"5th! Meng Hao got 5th place! The only people ahead of him are the legendary Four Celestial Warriors!"

"From ancient times until now, from the beginning of the Ninth Sea and the Nine Seas God World, the top 4 of the ninth golden gate stone stele have never been surpassed. Those four names have always been there!"

“Those four people aren’t like Chosen from our era! They have been in that same spot for ages! Their record has never been broken by anyone!”

Chapter 1052: Passing on Body Cultivation Techniques

Fan Dong’er staggered back, her face ashen.

“He’s cheating! He must be cheating!” she thought, her eyes completely bloodshot. In this particular instance, however, her accusation was completely unfounded. While it was true that Meng Hao tended to cheat and was even prepared to do so, at the moment he really wasn’t.

His continuous fighting led to continuous advancement. As a result, his current fleshly body state was becoming increasingly powerful.

He hovered in the world of the golden gate stone stele, looking at the figures in front of him as they faded away.

Then, the void up ahead distorted, and a white-robed old man materialized.

The old man wore no mask, and he was alone. He seemed almost like the center of the entire world, and yet, no qi and blood power radiated off of him. It was almost as if he were a mortal.

However, he gave Meng Hao an incredibly enigmatic feeling. Deep down, Meng Hao also sensed an indescribable feeling of crisis that left him utterly shaken.

The old man looked at Meng Hao for a moment, and then suddenly spoke, his voice ancient and archaic.

“I am the final stage of this trial by fire,” he said coolly. “Throughout history, there have only been four people under the Dao Realm who have been able to handle my first fist strike. Of those, two were able to withstand a second. Only one could handle three strikes!

“Anyone who can defeat me will find their reward from the golden gate stone stele increased tenfold! Unfortunately... no one under the Dao Realm has ever done that.” As he spoke, he began to shine with a brilliant, golden light, as if his whole body had turned metallic.

Meng Hao's pupils constricted. He wasn't even able to gauge how profoundly powerful this old man was, but a sensation of danger flooded through him nonetheless. It was almost as if the person standing in front of him was not a cultivator, but some primordial wild beast!

Without even thinking about it, Meng Hao reached down toward his bag of holding.

The man looked deeply at Meng Hao and then said, "Do not attempt any other methods to achieve victory. Body cultivators grow more powerful by engaging in more battle, and making the heart invincible. If one resorts to trickery, the heart will be unstable. It might seem harmless at first, but in the end, your path will become more and more narrow, until you are unable to achieve true success in body cultivating."

A tremor ran through Meng Hao, and he was silent for a moment, as if having experienced a moment of enlightenment. The hand he had been moving toward his bag of holding slowly stopped in place. Finally, he looked at the old man, took a deep breath, and then clasped hands and bowed. When he looked up, his eyes shone with the desire to do battle. At the same time, his body surged with a bit more energy than before.

His energy even seemed a bit purer, as if some new willpower had awoken within him.

The old man nodded, his eyes shining with approval.

"First fist, Life-Extermination Fist!" the old man said coolly. Then, he slowly lifted his hand up and clenching it tight. It seemed like an ordinary fist, except that he placed his thumb between his middle and ring fingers. It poked out just a little bit, creating a small point of invulnerability!

As he punched, it was clear that there was no magical technique involved. However, a massive wind blasted out, so icy cold that it seemed to be a wind of total annihilation. As soon as the wind began to blow, the entire world turned gray, as if the fist could extinguish all life in the entire world.

Meng Hao even felt the flame of his life force flickering on the point of extinguishing thanks to the profundity of the fist. His heart trembled, and he suddenly had the feeling that if a planet were struck by this fist, all living things on it would die!

An extermination of life!

This was the Life-Extermination Fist!

Meng Hao felt like he was suffocating in a cave of ice, and yet, his desire to do battle erupted. He formed his right hand into a fist, filling it with the power of his cultivation base, his willpower, and fleshly body power. His blood thrummed as he unleashed the fist of the Immortal Realm Paragon.

BOOOOMMMMMM!

They met in midair, and when their fists slammed into each other, Meng Hao's entire body shook violently. He coughed up a massive mouthful of blood, and was sent staggering backward 300 meters. There, he coughed up another mouthful of blood, which was pitch black.

Furthermore, as soon as the blood sprayed out of his mouth, it immediately froze solid.

Cracking sounds could be heard as a layer of ice instantly spread out to cover Meng Hao.

A moment later, Meng Hao shook, and the ice shattered. He was pale and ashen as he looked over at the old man, shaken. The destructive power of that one punch was shocking to the extreme.

Furthermore, he could even sense that the old man hadn't used the full power of the fist.

"Extermination..." he murmured.

"The Life-Extermination Fist can exterminate all living things," the old man said coolly. "It can destroy any creature or being. This fist strike was created for the Dao of death. By attacking with a will of death, the body cultivator can murder Gods!"

Meng Hao's mind quivered as if struck by lightning. He took a deep breath, then closed his eyes and contemplated the meaning of the old man's fist strike. When the old man saw this, he looked surprised, and gazed more deeply at Meng Hao. Finally, a look of praise appeared on his face.

Meanwhile, outside of the stone stele, the fact that Meng Hao withstood the first fist strike resulted in his name moving up again. Now, he was in 4th place!

Although it was only an increase of a single position, the fact that it was the top 10, or really, the top 5, ensured that the disciples of the Nine Seas God World were completely shocked.

Fan Dong'er's face was pale white. She knew she had lost, and yet wasn't willing to accept that. She still believed that the only way Meng Hao could reach his current ranking was if he had cheated.

Time passed. This time, four full hours passed before Meng Hao finally opened his eyes. Looking at the old man, he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

"Understand?" the old man asked.

"Kind of," Meng Hao responded truthfully. "Well... mostly not."

The old man laughed heartily.

"Well, it doesn't matter. Why don't you try out my second fist strike, the Self-Immolation Fist, also known as the Bedevilment Fist!" As soon as he finished speaking, he took a step forward and raised his right hand into a fist. His thumb's position was normal, without the special finger positioning from the Life-Extermination Fist. It looked completely like a normal fist as he punched out.

However, as the punch rocketed forth, an energy rose up from the old man that caused wild colors to flash in the sky. A massive wind kicked up that could shake heavenly bodies. The energy itself caused blood to ooze out of the corners of Meng Hao's mouth, and he was shoved backward relentlessly, denying him any opportunity to counterattack.

That energy was the result of the old man's willpower, a madness and obsession that was capable of paying any price to fuel the destructive power of his fist. It was a level of obsession so high that it could turn one into a Devil. Rather than an act of self-immolation, it was like a bedevilment!

The fist strike shattered the void, crushed Heaven and Earth, and... could not be reined in without shedding blood.

Blood sprayed out of Meng Hao's mouth, and he staggered backward. He didn't even dare to consider a counterattack; he had the intense premonition that if he did... he would be destroyed in body and spirit.

There was something fatal about the power of that fist, and yet, even as Meng Hao fell into retreat, the old man roared, “Use what you learned of the Life-Extermination Fist, otherwise... you’re dead!”

Meng Hao looked up, his eyes shot with blood, and took a deep breath. Then he clenched his fist, placing his thumb between the middle and ring fingers. Using what he had just learned about the Life-Extermination Fist, he punched out.

Beneath the power of the Bedevilment Fist, Meng Hao’s life force was flickering out. A feeling of death filled him, and yet, he used that will of death to launch the punch. It was as if something in his mind snapped, and he achieved a higher level of enlightenment. His body trembled as... he understood the true, deeper meaning of the Life-Extermination Fist!

Everything was much clearer than before.

“I understand!” His fist, which was already flying through the air, trembled slightly. Then, it surged with a mad energy that hadn’t been there before.

A huge wind sprang up, which, under the influence of his fist strike, transformed into a wind of slaughter. Everything around him iced over, and the power of extermination rose up, slamming into the Bedevilment Fist.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOMMMM!

Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he spun backward as violently as a kite with its string suddenly cut. Great mouthfuls of blood were vomited out, and yet his hoarse, excited voice could be heard: “Life-Extermination Fist! I understand! Life-Extermination Fist!!”

The old man smiled, returning his fist to his side as he watched Meng Hao fall and cough up more blood. However, Meng Hao’s eyes gleamed with intense focus and determination as he looked back at the old man and bowed deeply.

“Please accept my undying thanks for passing on this technique to me!” he said.

“You are not a body cultivator, and have not experienced baptism in the blood of a God,” replied the old man. “Therefore, you cannot withstand my third fist strike. Go. Wait until you have become stronger, and then come find me again. Remember, we cultivators didn’t originally practice body cultivation. The purpose of body cultivation... is to slay Gods!

“If you have an opportunity in the future to slay a God, then you can be baptised in its blood. At that time, you can acquire your own battle body!” The old man waved his hand, causing the world around Meng Hao to collapse into pieces. Meng Hao felt himself spinning, and everything turned into a blur.

At the same time, an unprecedentedly brilliant light shone from the ninth golden gate stone stele. Massive rumbling echoed out to fill the entire Nine Seas God World. All disciples of the Nine Seas God World could sense it, and especially the Dao Realm Patriarchs. All of them looked over as Meng Hao’s name rose from the 4th position... all the way to the 2nd position!

Clearly, the old man felt that Meng Hao was more qualified than the person who had previously reached 2nd place by withstanding the second fist strike!

The God World was in an uproar. All cultivators were shaking, and gasps of astonishment rang out in all directions.

“2nd place! Meng Hao reached the 2nd position on the list!!”

“Of the four celestial warriors who have eternally maintained the top positions, three were pushed aside by him!”

“He definitely deserves his positions of Chosen, Crown Prince of the Fang Clan, and joint Conclave disciple of the Three Great Daoist Societies!” As the crowds raved, Fan Dong’er’s face grew paler than ever.

Golden light shone up from the stele, and Meng Hao’s figure gradually appeared in front of all the crowds.

As soon as he materialized, he didn’t glance at anyone, not even Fan Dong’er. Instead, he turned and looked at the name which occupied the 1st position on the list. He very much wanted to know who it was that could withstand the old man’s third fist strike.

“Zong Wuya!” he murmured.

He might be someone from ancient times, and might not even exist in the Nine Seas God World anymore. However, Meng Hao still wanted to know his name.

Anyone who had never experienced the power of that old man’s fist strike would be eternally incapable of understanding how terrifying the Life-Extermination Fist and the Bedevilment Fist were to experts who practiced cultivation of the fleshly body.

As of this moment, Zong Wuya’s name was deeply imprinted in Meng Hao’s mind.

Chapter 1053: Demonic Provocation!

At the same time that Meng Hao appeared, the disciples in the area were thrown into an uproar. Even the disciples who hated Meng Hao couldn’t help but acknowledge that he was incredibly powerful. The position of his name on the ranking list on the ninth golden gate stone stele left a deep impression on their hearts.

2nd place!

From ancient times until now, the top 4 spots on that name list had never changed. On this day, however, Meng Hao had risen from the very bottom of the list all the way to the 2nd position!

Many people speculated that there must be a vast gap separating the 1st and 2nd positions on that list. However, only Meng Hao knew how vast that gap was. Perhaps after he completely refined the Paragon’s blood, and then used it to fully fuse with a Nirvana Fruit, then...

He would be qualified to once again challenge the ninth golden gate stone stele, and feel... the power of the fist that came after the Life-Extermination Fist and the Self-Immolation Fist... the third fist strike!

That third fist would surely be spectacular to the extreme, capable of destroying Heaven and Earth. It was likely the pinnacle of body cultivation!

Refining more Paragon’s blood required more Immortal jade and spirit stones. Now that he had reached 2nd place on the ninth golden gate stone stele, he would receive a hefty reward!

Meng Hao looked over at the stone stele, and the description of the rewards. After making some calculations, his eyes shone with anticipation.

A moment later, as the golden light slowly faded away, Meng Hao turned, flashing through the crowd like lighting toward the pale-faced Fan Dong'er.

“Cheater!” she said, glaring at him. Gritting her teeth, she pulled a bag of holding out and threw it over to Meng Hao.

She might have lost, but she was no sore loser!

At the same time, though, her revulsion toward Meng Hao grew even stronger. Expression extremely grim, she turned to leave. She was worried that if she didn't leave quickly, she would lose control and attack Meng Hao, leading to a big battle. Considering how terrifyingly powerful he was now, she knew that she had no chance of winning.

Meng Hao caught the bag of holding. After scanning it with divine sense, he smiled. In his opinion, although Fan Dong'er had many weaknesses, she also had her strengths, and was something that he greatly admired. That was... she didn't refuse to accept losing.

Meng Hao cleared his throat. He was not the type to secretly spare people. If he had an enemy and their differences could not be resolved easily, then in his opinion there was no need to even try. And in fact... he might as well pile on a bit more discomfort.

Meng Hao had always been that way. Therefore, he smiled and said, “Junior Sister Dong'er, there are still eight more stone steles. I feel bad for winning so easily. Why don't we make another bet? What do you say?”

Fan Dong'er gritted her teeth. Not bothering to even turn around and look at him, she transformed into a colorful beam of light that sped off into the distance.

Meng Hao felt a bit bad. His words were actually just idle banter. He wasn't very confident about the other golden gate stone stele trials by fire. If Fan Dong'er had agreed to continue betting, he would have been forced to delay the matter.

Looking around at all the surrounding disciples of the Nine Seas God World, he sighed.

“Without a believable accomplice, it’s hard to get things done. If I had someone to help, I might have been able to charge people to watch. Yet another lost opportunity for profit.” Meng Hao’s heart hurt at the thought of the spirit stones, which, although they didn’t actually belong to him, represented a missed opportunity all the same.

“What a headache. Everyone else worries about cultivation, but I’m always worried about having to make money.” Feeling quite bitter, he shook his head and flew quickly over toward one of the other golden gate stone steles.

If he was going to challenge them, then he would need to study them individually. That would give him the best chance to maximize their profitability.

When Meng Hao left, most of the other disciples followed along with him. Soon, the entire group arrived at the eighth golden gate stone stele.

Shockingly, almost in the same moment that they arrived, nine beams of colorful light appeared up above, screaming through the air toward the same location. Shocking rumbling like that of thunder clouds could be heard, accompanied by the ripples of the Ancient Realm.

In the blink of an eye, the beams of light closed in on the stone stele to reveal nine Demonic cultivators!

Of those nine, seven were men and two were women. All were exceedingly attractive, and looked almost exactly like cultivators, with the exception of the fish scale mark they all had on their foreheads. Another shocking thing about them was that each and every one appeared to have three or four extinguished Soul Lamps.

These were obviously not ordinary early Ancient Realm cultivators. These were Chosen who were close to the mid Ancient Realm.

“It’s them! The nine Sea Realm Demons!! They’re actually making a public appearance! How rare!”

“Of the twenty most famous disciples in the Nine Seas God World, the weakest is the Divine Daughter, Fan Dong’er, although she has one of the highest ranks. In addition to her, there are the nine Divine Offspring. They have profound cultivation bases, and although they were once Chosen,

they've now entered the early Ancient Realm! The Demonic Cultivator Horde is similar. They have a Sea Daughter, who is analogous to the Divine Daughter. In addition, they have the nine Sea Realm Demons, who are similar to the Divine Offspring!"

Immediately, all of the Demonic cultivators in the area started getting very excited.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered when he caught sight of the nine Demonic cultivators. They looked back at him, their eyes flickering with sinister light. Each and every one of them could exert threatening pressure on Meng Hao; after all, they were all in the Ancient Realm!

There were two who Meng Hao found the most threatening. Both were men, one of whom had a triangular scale on his forehead, and whose pupils were also triangular, making him look very bizarre.

The other appeared to be the youngest among the group of nine. He was incredibly attractive, and wore beautiful clothing. His forehead had no scale on it, but rather, a mark in the shape of a Sea Dragon. He emanated the air of a ruler or king, that spread out in all directions.

He was... the number one Demon among the nine Sea Realm Demons!

Meng Hao looked away from them and proceeded to head toward the eighth golden gate stone stele. A moment after he stepped inside, the nine Sea Realm Demons did the same.

Countless eyes were fixed on the developing situation. The Demonic cultivators hated Meng Hao, a fact that had already spread throughout the entire sect. For the nine Sea Realm Demons to show up here led everyone to the same conclusion; the Demonic Cultivator Horde was making a move on Meng Hao!

It was not a direct attack but, rather, an attack on the prestige that he was gaining, to use the trials by fire to keep his growing popularity in check.

They were going to use this as a chance to create a clear comparison!

"I wonder what ranking Meng Hao will achieve this time!?" The surrounding cultivators were buzzing with excitement, yet some of them were still skeptical of Meng Hao. Although Meng Hao had proved how powerful his fleshly body was in the ninth golden gate, it was entirely possible that he wouldn't perform well in the others.

The truth of the matter was that was exactly how it was. After enough time for an incense stick to pass, Meng Hao's name appeared on the golden gate stone stele, flickering with shining light. His name showed up somewhere in the 100s before he appeared outside.

Almost in the same moment that Meng Hao appeared outside, shockingly, nine names that were already in the top 20 positions on the list, moved up. Highest among all the newly risen was the name Long Tianhai. Earlier, that name had been in the 7th position, but it was now in the 4th!

“Long Tianhai! He's the number one Demon among the nine Sea Realm Demons. I can't believe he just got into the 4th position!”

“The Demonic Cultivator Horde is favored by the Ninth Sea. In terms of cultivation and enlightenment, they have it so easy!”

“Besides, they were actually born in the pressure of the Ninth Sea. Once they leave it, their cultivation bases will rocket up like mad!”

The spectators were in an uproar as nine figures emerged from the stone stele. It was none other than the nine Sea Realm Demons, who all looked over at Meng Hao with sneers that they made no attempt to cover up.

“So, the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan turns out to be pretty lame. You would think that with his cultivation base, he would at least make it into the top 100.”

“That's the joint disciples of all of the Three Great Daoist Societies? He's too weak to withstand a single blow from one of us! He can't even make it into the top 100, and yet still has the face to stick around in the Nine Seas God World!?”

“You can't say that. Maybe he just doesn't care about the trials by fire. He just has an overinflated reputation that he can't live up to. If you had to blame anything, you should probably blame his arrogance and conceit!” The nine Demonic cultivators didn't hold anything back as they uttered various derisive and mocking words.

The disciples of the Nine Seas God World were shocked, and many of them felt that Meng Hao must be extremely weak.

“Fan Dong’er accused him of cheating in the ninth golden gate stone stele. From the look of things, he really was! Otherwise, how could there be such a huge gap now!?”

The results were clear. The nine Demonic cultivators went into the stone stele at the same time as Meng Hao, and had all placed in the top 20. The best of their group had even taken 4th place. In contrast, Meng Hao was in the 100s.

Normally speaking, if you didn’t compare him to others, placing the way he did on his first try would be exceptional. After all, he didn’t go all out, he merely went in to observe a bit.

However, because of the contrast in performances, the surrounding disciples of the Nine Seas God World were all startled to find that Meng Hao actually seemed really weak in comparison!

Meng Hao looked coldly over at the nine Demonic cultivators, who stared back at him with expressions of blatant provocation and mockery. As for Long Tianhai, his expression was extremely calm. However, it was calm in an arrogant way, as if Meng Hao were an ant that he didn’t even need to think about, and could crush underfoot with a mere thought.

He maintained his silence, and didn’t say anything in response. He turned and headed toward the seventh golden gate stone stele, followed by the nine Sea Realm Demons. They all arrived shortly thereafter at the seventh stone stele, after which Meng Hao entered. The nine Demonic cultivators followed suit, clearly hoping to humiliate Meng Hao.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao appeared. This time, he performed a bit better than before, ending up in the 90s. However, moments later, glowing light shone up from the names of the nine Sea Realm Demons. Although they didn’t make incredible progress, there were some in the top 20. Long Tianhai didn’t make it to 5th place, but rather 7th. Another of the nine Demonic cultivators made it into the 9th position.

It was another clear contrast!

Next was the sixth golden gate stone stele, followed by the fifth, the fourth, the third, and the second....

The nine Demonic cultivators stuck as close to Meng Hao as vengeful ghosts. Every trial by fire he entered, they entered too. The result was that they completely exceeded him... and it was obvious as a slap to the face.

After every single trial by fire, they would utter some derisive words, the acidity of which only continued to grow. Their words were clever, and they made no effort to conceal the fact that they were taunting him.

Meng Hao's face grew icier. He didn't try very hard in any of the trials by fire, and as such, didn't allow their words to rile him. He knew that, for the moment, his level of power wasn't sufficient to exceed them.

All he wanted to do was observe the trials by fire and get used to them. It didn't matter if he only got into the top 100 or so. At the moment, he wasn't ready to truly challenge them.

Soon, he had passed through the rest of the stone steles. The final trial by fire tested one's ability to stand up to crushing pressure. After looking the stele over, Meng Hao decided not to challenge it, and turned to leave.

At this point, the nine Demonic cultivators started laughing coldly. Some of the other disciples of the Nine Seas God World were able to tell what was going on, and yet, the buzz that had built up because of his amazing performance in the ninth golden gate stone stele was now dying out. In fact, there were even people who were now almost convinced that... he was a cheater!

Although Meng Hao looked like he wanted to leave, but it didn't seem that the nine Demonic cultivators were going to let him.

"Meng Hao, what do you say to a bet? Do you dare?" one of the nine Demonic cultivators taunted, the ridicule in his tone clear as his voice echoed about.

Chapter 1054: Little Haowie Needs To Be a Good Boy

Meng Hao was just about to leave when he heard the words and stopped in place, his heart thumping.

He slowly turned to look back at the nine Sea Realm Demons who had repeatedly done everything they could to provoke him. Although he was truly convinced that his own excessive killing had caused this irreconcilable conflict, the regret he felt was mostly gone thanks to the actions of these Demonic cultivators.

Sometimes, it doesn't matter who is right or wrong. Sometimes the only thing that matters... is who has the power to back up their words!

Only the powerful could back up what they said!

As soon as Meng Hao heard the Sea Realm Demon mention the word 'bet,' he thought for a moment and then smiled. It was a bashful smile, and a bit apologetic.

"I don't think that's a good idea," he said hesitantly.

"Cut the crap!" said the Demonic cultivator. "Do you have the guts to make the bet, or not!?" Immediately, the other Sea Realm Demons started laughing. As for Long Tianhai, he looked over with cool indifference.

They didn't know Meng Hao, so they had no idea that concealed beneath that bashful smile was a temper so violent that even words like convulsion or paroxysm couldn't describe it.

"No bets for me!" Meng Hao took a deep breath and decided to take the high road for once. He once again turned to leave.

"So it turns out that the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan doesn't dare to make real bets," said the seventh of the nine Demonic cultivators. "The only thing he can do is bully Fan Dong'er!" His words were venomous and cold, and instantly put Meng Hao in a bad position with the other disciples of the Nine Seas God World.

"Crown Prince?! Pshhh, weak. Seems like the Fang Clan... is nothing special after all!"

"Don't even mention the thing about being a joint disciple of the Three Great Daoist Societies. This guy is as cowardly as a mouse!" The Demonic cultivators continued to spew increasingly vitriolic words. Their taunts were reaching the point of being direct verbal attacks.

Meng Hao once again stopped in place and slowly turned around. His face was bright red, as if he was barely capable of containing his rage as he stared at the nine cultivators, panting.

"What a bore! This guy can't do anything other than cheat! Useless! Even when making bets, the only thing he can do is bully girls! Screw him!"

“Alright, what do you want to bet!?” growled Meng Hao through gritted teeth. He glared at the Demonic cultivators and took a few steps backward, as if he were bracing himself to do something he didn’t want to do, but had no choice but to do.

The Nine Demons of the Sea Realm looked at him with cold smiles. The person to reply was the third Demon, a woman.

“Well,” she said, “obviously we’ll bet to see if you can get into the top ten of one of the other golden gate stone steles! Without cheating like you did in the ninth stele, of course.

“As for the stakes, let’s say 100,000 Immortal jades, as well as 5,000,000 spirit stones!

“If you can’t get into the top ten, you don’t have to pay any spirit stones, you just have to get the hell out of the Ninth Sea! And if you ever step half a foot back inside, you’ll be killed in body and spirit!”

Meng Hao’s face twitched slightly, and after taking a deep breath, he started laughing loudly.

“What piddly stakes! You want to bet with me like that? Fan Dong’er and I have a long-standing friendship that you don’t even know about. Our bet from before was just for fun! If you really want to make a wager, then you have to put up 10,000,000 Immortal jades!!

“Do you have the guts to make the bet, or not!?” Meng Hao spoke the words especially loudly. After pausing for the space of a few breaths without hearing a response, he started to laugh coldly.

“If you don’t have the guts, then forget about it,” he said, quickly backing up as if he wanted to take advantage of the silence to leave.

“You’re on!” Long Tianhai said coolly, his first time speaking. “However, if you lose, you’ll have to leave behind your four limbs for us as a souvenir.” His words instantly caused the other eight Demonic cultivators to look very excited.

“You....” said Meng Hao, appearing to be very shocked. His face was extremely grim as he stared back at Long Tianhai. Finally, he took a deep breath, gritted his teeth hard and said in a cautionary

tone, “What I said was 10,000,000 immortal jades PER golden gate stone stele. With eight steles, that means that if I can get into the top ten of all of them, you’ll owe me 80,000,000!”

Gasps could be heard in the crowd, from both ordinary cultivators and Demonic cultivators alike. This was an incredible, shocking wager, the types of which were rarely seen in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“80,000,000 Immortal jades.... Heavens! How many spirit stones would that be worth?”

“Enough to equal the life savings of an entire mid-sized clan of cultivators!”

“These people are crazy....”

Even as the crowd went into an uproar, the nine Sea Realm Demons were internally shaken by Meng Hao’s words. Even Long Tianhai’s face fell.

10,000,000 pieces of Immortal jade was a sum they could just barely scrape together. As for 80,000,000... that far exceeded their limit. Even for the Demonic Cultivator Horde as a whole, it was no small amount.

The other eight Demonic cultivators hesitated. Their plan to make a bet with Meng Hao had been come up with on the fly, and had quickly reached the point that they didn’t dare make any decisions unilaterally. All of them turned to look at Long Tianhai.

An unsightly expression could be seen on his face as he stared at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao seemingly sighed inwardly, and was just about to speak up as if he were going to give the Demonic cultivators a way out of the bet, when Long Tianhai’s eyes glittered.

“You’re on,” he said. “However, we’re going to change things a bit. If you don’t get into the top ten of all of the golden gate stone steles, then not only do you have to forfeit your four limbs, you also have to give me... your place in the Echelon!” After the words left Long Tianhai’s mouth, utter silence reigned.

Most people had no idea what the Echelon was. However, from the way the Three Great Daoist Societies treated Meng Hao, people could speculate. The matter of the Echelon was not something

that could be kept secret forever, which Meng Hao knew. That was why he had taken the initiative to bring up the matter publicly earlier.

Sometimes a matter being public rather than secret can lead to certain unexpected advantages.

Deep in Meng Hao's eyes was a flickering coldness that no one could detect as he looked at Long Tianhai. They stared at each other for a moment, and within Long Tianhai's eyes, Meng Hao saw no trace of the coolness and disregard from earlier. Instead, he saw schemes and deceit.

"He was putting on an act earlier!" he thought, eyes glittering.

Finally, he smiled coldly and said, "Well in that case, I don't need 80,000,000. I want 300,000,000 Immortal jades! Add in one Dao weapon, and Meng Hao will take this bet with your Demonic Cultivator Horde!" Meng Hao's words were met with a chorus of gasps from the audience.

300,000,000 Immortal jades was an astronomical sum. It was terrifying even to think about. Even for the Four Great Clans it would be a deleterious blow to be forced to hand over so much money. As for the Nine Seas God World, their reserves might be deep, but the Demonic Cultivator Horde only had access to thirty percent of the clan's resources. If they lost, it would be a severe blow to their foundation.

As for a Dao weapon, that was a magical item that only a Dao Realm expert could wield. Such things were rare in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and in fact, only three existed, one of which was in the possession of the Demonic Cultivator Horde.

If they lost the bet, and the weapon, it couldn't quite measure up to the value of a place in the Echelon. However, if they won... it would all be worth it!

The crowd was in an uproar, and the noise only continued to get louder. An incredible wager like this was enough to cause cultivators of all Realms to be filled with excitement.

The nine Sea Realm Demons all sucked in deep breaths.

Long Tianhai remained silent for a moment before a bizarre gleam appeared in his eyes. Considering that Meng Hao had mentioned the Demonic Cultivator Horde, he knew that Meng Hao had already pieced together some clues as to what was really going on.

However, he didn't care. What he wanted... was Meng Hao's place in the Echelon. Before Meng Hao had arrived in the Ninth Sea, he had put various plans in place. He had never imagined that one of the first things Meng Hao would do after arriving would be to immediately reveal publicly that he was in the Echelon. Now that many people knew about the matter, most of his plans were rendered unusable.

However, the stakes Meng Hao had mentioned just now were vast, and were somewhat imbalanced when compared to a place in the Echelon. It was a decision he couldn't make on his own, so he stood there silently for a moment, apparently conferring with someone. Finally, he gritted his teeth and looked over at Meng Hao, a gleam of determination in his eyes.

"The Dao weapon is off the table. But the 300,000,000 pieces of Immortal jade... we can do!"

As soon as the words left his mouth, Meng Hao sighed with relief. He had brought up the Dao weapon as a way to test out how determined the Demonic Cultivator Horde was. If they were even willing to put a Dao weapon on the table as stakes, then... he would have immediately declined the wager. No matter how much face he lost, he would never have agreed.

The fact that the Demonic Cultivator Horde refused to put the Dao weapon up as stakes revealed that there was a possibility that the result of the bet would be upheld. This matter most likely involved the machinations of a Dao Realm expert. However, Meng Hao knew that in all matters, risks had to be taken!

His eyes shone with a strange light as he looked over at Long Tianhai.

"This is a big matter. I'll give you my answer in a month!" Having said that, he turned and shot off into the distance. Waiting for a month gave him the option of both going on the offensive, or remaining on the defensive. Furthermore, it negated the previous comparisons that had been made between him and the nine Sea Realm Demons. Everyone was now completely focused on the matter of the wager.

Long Tianhai also realized this. He watched coldly as Meng Hao left, his eyes flickering with a gleam of killing intent.

Meng Hao transformed into a beam of light that shot back toward his Immortal's cave. After passing down through the water and the shield, the first thing he saw was the parrot, surrounded by the two trembling blackpod imps.

The parrot started singing, after which the Demonic cultivators chimed in.

“I was a bad kid when I was young, I’m a little seafood dish, lalalalala, little seafood dish, dobedobedoooo, little seafood dish...”

Meng Hao stood there silently for a moment, staring at them, after which they switched to a different song.

“Come, come,” the parrot shouted excitedly. “Last night Lord Fifth had a dream about another song. Once we get it down, Lord Fifth is going to host a big singing contest for the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea! Alright, sing with me!” Off to the side, the meat jelly started to beat a drum enthusiastically.

“We’re all seafood, our whole family is seafood! Righteous Lord Fifth, mighty Lord Third, lalalalala, we have to make the seafood be good! Dobedobedoooo, we have to make the seafood be good....”

When Meng Hao heard this, his mind spun, and all of a sudden the world seemed like a worse place. He felt bad for the Demonic cultivators, as well as Su Yan. At the moment, Su Yan seemed to be deeply shaken. She was staring at the parrot with gaping jaw, as if... the parrot had completely turned her world upside down.

Meng Hao cleared his throat and waved his hand toward the blackpod imps that seemed to be acting like backup singers next to the parrot. Instead of resisting him, they gladly flew toward him as if he were rescuing them from a disaster. Immediately, they transformed into black pods that came to rest on his palm, after which he stowed them away in his bag of holding.

The parrot didn’t look happy. Glaring at Meng Hao, it said, “Come, come. Lord Fifth just thought of a new song. Let’s all sing it together.

“Little Haowie needs to be a good boy....”

A brutal gleam appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes as he stared at the parrot for a moment. Then he ignored it, turning and walking back into his residence. The wave of a hand caused a sealing shield to appear that blocked out all of the racket from outside.

Moments later, the puppet boy flew out to go collect his reward from the ninth golden gate stone stele, and the smaller rewards for making it into the top 100 of the other eight stone steles.

Meng Hao sat down cross-legged, took a deep breath, and then gazed at the copper mirror with a look of anticipation.

“This time, I’m pretty sure I got enough Immortal jade to complete my work with the Paragon’s blood!”

Chapter 1055: Which Paragon Did This Blood Come From!?

Not too much time passed before the puppet boy returned. Just as Ling Yunzi had said, a greater reward than usual was doled out to him and placed in a bag of holding.

He hefted the bag of holding, scanning it with divine sense for a moment before beginning to pant. He quickly retracted his divine sense, unable to bear looking at the contents. What was inevitably about to happen caused his heart such grief that it felt as if it were being cut in half with a knife. Therefore, he chose not to think about it.

This was a precious skill that Meng Hao had picked up recently. He sighed, gritted his teeth, and took out a vial of Paragon’s blood to begin duplicating.

Time passed. Meng Hao’s eyes were shot with blood and his hair was disheveled crazily as he fed Immortal jade and spirit stones into the copper mirror. Grimacing, he produced one duplicate after another.

Eventually, seven days passed. Meng Hao had now been in the Nine Seas God World for the greater part of a month. Finally, his bag of holding was completely devoid of all Immortal jade and spirit stones. And there in front of him was a collection of one hundred vials of Paragon’s blood!

As he looked at the blood, he began to pant. He kept telling himself not to think about how much he had spent to get this much, and yet he couldn’t stop himself. As soon as the slightest thought of it crossed his mind, his heart twisted into a knot.

“When I was young, I always wanted to be rich. After I started practicing cultivation, there were often times when I felt like a rich person. However, it always takes the mere blink of an eye for all of that to go away, and I’m destitute again.” He wanted to cry, but no tears would come. He wasn’t sure if his lifelong dream would ever actually come true.

After taking some deep breaths, his eyes filled with determination, and he produced a vast collection of medicinal pills. He put them in his mouth, and refrained from chewing them. He merely allowed them to begin to slowly dissolve.

Finally, he waved his hand and caused ten vials of Paragon's blood to fly out. Cracking sounds could be heard as the bottles shattered, and the blood itself swirled out into the air.

Ripples began to spread out as he raised both and began to mold the Paragon's blood together into one glob.

After it did, a terrifying aura began to spread out.

"Parrot! Meat jelly! Get over here and help stop this aura from spreading out!" His words echoed out at the same time that the parrot was encouraging the Demonic cultivators to sing. After it heard what he said, it muttered a few sentences to itself, then flapped its wings and flew over with the meat jelly to help suppress the aura of the Paragon's blood.

Meng Hao took a deep breath as he waved his right hand, causing ten more vials of Paragon's blood to fly out and shatter. The blood then merged into a larger sphere in front of him. The terrifying aura exploded out violently, spreading out in all directions, causing the residence around him to shake so violently it seemed it might collapse.

Meng Hao's eyes shone brightly, and without any hesitation, he waved his hand again. Ten more vials' worth of Paragon's blood collapsed and then reformed. The terrifying aura increased in intensity, and cracks spread out through the entire residence. It was at this point that the parrot arrived. It no longer looked calm and collected, but rather, let out a loud howl as it went all out to suppress the aura.

The meat jelly didn't seem very willing to cooperate, but it transformed into an enormous canopy nonetheless, which covered over the entire residence, completely preventing the aura from escaping into the outside world.

Because of Meng Hao's proximity to the combination of thirty vials of Paragon's blood, the intense pressure caused him to shake violently. However, his eyes shone brightly with determination.

“Thirty percent!” he breathed. The pressure of the blood caused him to shake, and cracking sounds could be heard. His mind was spinning violently.

He gritted his teeth and waved his hand again. Rumbling sounds could be heard as ten more vials of blood shattered. The blood flew out to join the huge sphere; now it was roughly the size of an infant’s hand.

It was bright red, and shockingly, strands of gold could be seen swirling around inside, making it resplendently beautiful to the point where it tugged at the soul.

At the same time, increasingly intense pressure was cast out by the terrifying aura. The explosive power battered against Meng Hao, causing blood to ooze out of his mouth, and fissures to spread out across his skin. There was also a powerful expulsion force that threatened to cause him to explode.

His eyes shone brightly with obsession as he rotated his cultivation base, drawing on all the power of his Immortal meridians, using his secret magic to make them all Eternal. Their power surged in his body as he waved his hand again, causing ten more vials to fly out and shatter. When the blood merged into the sphere, terrifying aura erupted with further intensity.

The pressure was now so incredible that it caused Meng Hao’s entire residence to collapse into pieces. The entire structure transformed into nothing more than ash!

Blood sprayed out of Meng Hao’s mouth, and his hands almost shattered. His Eternal stratum surged at full power, continuously healing him, allowing him to fight back against the intense power.

The meat jelly roared and the parrot squawked shrilly as they suppressed the aura with all of their might as well.

Meng Hao was shaking, and his eyes gleamed with madness.

“Fifty percent!” He waved his hand, causing another ten vials of Paragon’s blood to fly out. When they merged into the sphere, he sent out another ten, all the way until a total of eighty vials had been added together. It was now as large as an infant’s head, and the pressure caused colors to flash, and the sky to grow dim.

Meng Hao felt like he was the subject of an intensely powerful attack. He was shoved backward, and blood spewed out of his mouth. His Eternal stratum worked like mad, but was incapable of keeping pace with the level of destruction, not even with all of his 123 Immortal meridians combined.

At this critical juncture, he didn't hesitate for even a moment to chomp down on half of the medicinal pills he had in his mouth. Immediately, they melted, flowing into his body with restorative energy. His Immortal power was once again restored, and he managed to bear the brunt of another aggressive blast.

The sphere of blood radiated resplendent light, as if the will of a Paragon were now awakening!

If it wasn't for the meat jelly and the parrot blocking the spread of the aura, the entire Nine Seas God World would be going completely crazy. The Ninth Sea would be aboil, and the entire Ninth Mountain would be shaking.

However, even though the aura still wasn't leaking out, the natural law in the area around Meng Hao was being affected. The air filled with distortions, as if another world were forming.

All of that... was because of the Paragon's blood!

It was not merely a single portion, but eighty portions that had been merged together. It hadn't even been refined yet, and was only an amalgamation, yet it was still a sample of Paragon's blood that was only a sliver away from being complete!

"I can do it!" Meng Hao roared, waving his hand. Rumbling could be heard as the final twenty vials of blood flew out. Half of them shattered, and the blood in them fused with the sphere. Meng Hao's hands were mangled masses of flesh, and he suddenly coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. However, a moment ago, he had crushed more of the medicinal pills in his mouth, causing their power to flow through his body and stimulate his Eternal stratum into frenzied action. The mouthful of blood he had just coughed up didn't do anything to affect the fusion of the Paragon's blood.

The meat jelly roared with increased intensity as the canopy it had formed fought to control the aura. The parrot was in midair, squawking as it caused numerous streams of magical symbols to swirl down and seal the entire area.

“Dammit! This isn’t the Demongranny’s blood! She might be a Paragon, but this drop of blood was definitely not produced by her. How could an unrefined drop of blood contain such shocking power!?!?”

“The last ten vials!” Meng Hao chomped down on all of the remaining medicinal pills, then waved his hand to cause the final ten vials to shatter. Blood flew out into the sphere, which was now the size of an adult human head!

The sphere of blood contained innumerable golden threads that interlocked with each other, forming vague magical symbols that seemed to contain the origin of the starry sky, the Essence of the world, the basis of all life!

The meat jelly was shaking violently, and fissures snaked out across its body. It looked like it was about to collapse, and it was shrieking in pain. The parrot was getting very nervous, almost like he had during the unforeseen flare-up of the copper mirror.

“It’s not the Demongranny’s blood, and it’s not old man Immortal Ancient’s either!” the parrot shrieked, staring in shock and disbelief. “Could it be... could it be that this... no way. Impossible! Didn’t he die? As soon as he died, all of his blood should have vanished from within Heaven and Earth! How could there be some left behind!?!?”

“Dammit! No wonder the mirror was acting so crazy! I thought that it was because someone was casting magic on it, but that was only one part of it! The other reason was because of this blood!!”

Blood sprayed out of Meng Hao’s mouth, and he trembled violently. Despite the preparations he had made with the medicinal pills, his Eternal stratum was reaching the point where it couldn’t sustain him. All of his flesh was covered with cracks and fissures, which were widening, as if he might explode at any moment.

His body was slick with blood, but his eyes were completely focused. His hands trembled as he held the sphere of blood between them and then shoved down hard.

“Refine!!” he cried. The sphere of blood gradually began to shrink and refine. As it did, more and more golden threads became visible, until, in the end, the entire mass of blood... was golden!

Meng Hao was shaking, and more cracks spread out across his skin. He felt the flame of his life force growing dim, all because of the vast pressure cast by the aura of the Paragon’s blood. It was only a drop of blood, and yet Meng Hao was still no match for it. He was on the verge of collapsing.

Even though the blood wasn't actually fighting him... it was still powerful enough to utterly exterminate him.

It wasn't just Meng Hao. Someone in the Ancient Realm, or perhaps even someone in the Dao Realm... would be slaughtered by this drop of blood!

Rumbling sounds echoed out, but Meng Hao endured. His body hovered on the brink of exploding as the mass of blood rapidly shrank. Soon, it was only the size of an infant's hand.

His body was covered in cracks and tears. His two hands were nothing but bloody flesh, disfigured and misshapen. And yet, his eyes still shone with laser focus.

"Refine!!!" he roared. It was a roar like the final roar before death, and as soon as it left his mouth, the sphere of blood shrank down to the size of a fingernail!

As of now, it was thoroughly and completely golden!

The incomparable aura of a Paragon instantly erupted from inside the blood.

This was... true, authentic Paragon's blood!

It was complete, utterly rare, Paragon's blood!

You could even say that... it actually shouldn't exist. A drop of blood from the exact Paragon to whom the parrot had referred.

The meat jelly was screaming, and the parrot was bellowing in disbelief. Meng Hao was just barely managing to hold back from exploding when... an aura appeared which was not the aura of cultivation. It was... the aura of the League of Demon Sealers!

As soon as the aura appeared, the drop of blood began to tremble!!

A resonance was forming, almost like that of a bloodline!

“What....” Meng Hao thought, his mind trembling. Then he thought back to what Granny Nine and Godmaster had said to him. Paragon Sea Dream founded the Nine Seas God World and the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. The Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite was founded by Paragon Immortal Ancient. As for the third Paragon, the most powerful Paragon, Paragon Nine Seals... nobody knew what he founded.

“He... founded... the League of Demon Sealers!” Meng Hao felt as if his mind were being struck by lightning.

Chapter 1056: The Mountains and Seas are Rocked!

This was... the blood of Paragon Nine Seals, chief among the three supreme Paragons!

Not even a single drop should even exist in the world. And yet, because of the even more mysterious and unfathomable copper mirror, this Paragon’s blood had now appeared in the Mountain and Sea Realm!

In the instant that the blood appeared, it wasn’t just Meng Hao who was shaken. The entire Mountain and Sea Realm began to tremble. It didn’t matter that the parrot and meat jelly were covering up the aura with all their might. The aura still managed to spread out invisibly. Although nobody in the Nine Seas God World could sense it specifically, there were other beings in the Mountain and Sea Realm who did, and were completely shocked.

Nine great Mountains and Seas made up the Mountain and Sea Realm, outside of which was a sun and a moon that orbited eternally around it. It was because of those two heavenly bodies that the Mountain and Sea Realm had day and night!

At the moment, both of them were trembling, something that caused everyone, even the mortals, to stare up in shock to look.

As of this moment, people were trembling in shock in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, the Eighth Mountain and Sea, the Seventh Mountain and Sea... even the First Mountain and Sea. In all the Mountain and Sea Realm, people were shaking in astonishment.

“The sun... is trembling!!”

“The moon is shaking....”

“What’s happening!?! What’s causing this!?!” Within the Mountain and Sea Realm, countless living beings were flabbergasted. Even the animals were prostrating themselves on the ground as if in worship. The mortals were astonished and began bowing down with looks of pious reverence on their faces.

As for the cultivators, their scalps tingled as they observed something they had never before seen; the sun and moon shaking. It left them completely astonished.

Countless experts flew out, including all of the Dao Realm cultivators of the Mountain and Sea Realm, and the shock on their faces was clear.

Numerous beings saw the sun and the moon shaking visibly; instead of continuing on in their orbit, they were fixed in place, seemingly immovable. It was as if some unknown aura had caught their attention, causing their will to suddenly awaken.

At the same time that the heavenly bodies ceased moving, the Seas in the Mountain and Sea Realm all began to seethe and roar; the Mountains also began to shake, and were apparently roaring.

If you looked very carefully at the sun, you would just barely be able to tell that inside of that heavenly body, shockingly, was a sword!

It was a shining sword, shocking to the extreme. It was a sword that, in the past, had shaken the hearts of countless crowds of people, and had killed innumerable enemies.

That was... the sword of a Paragon! In the past, it had caused the entire Immortal World to tremble, and during the great catastrophe, it had rocked the 3,000 Lower Realms. The other two major powers in the war shook any time they heard the name...

Nine Seals Sword!

When Paragon Nine Seals perished, his sword went missing. Now, though, it suddenly appeared in the middle of the sun. Or perhaps... it wasn’t just appearing there. Perhaps...

The sun of the Mountain and Sea Realm was the manifestation of the Nine Seals Sword of the past!!

Anyone who knew anything about the history of the Mountain and Sea Realm suddenly felt their minds reeling.

“The Nine Seals Sword! Heavens! The sun is actually the materialization of the Nine Seals Sword... how could this be possible!?!?”

“Impossible! This goes contrary to everything we know about history! How could this be happening!?!?”

At the same time, a massive aura was awakening inside of the moon. Just barely, an object was becoming visible inside of it!

It was not a sword, it was... a suit of armor!

A suit of armor formed from moonbeams!!

The armor shone with glorious light that was both soft and austere. It was as if the armor had been splashed with infinite amounts of blood, as if it had seen countless battles. In the past, the name of this suit of armor had rocked the world...

Nine Seals Armor!!

Paragon Nine Seals' two great Paragon artifacts!

All of the Nine Mountains and Seas were completely shaken!

“I just remembered a legend I heard about once....” Similar words were echoing in the minds of many of the Dao Realm experts of the Nine Mountains and Seas. It was a story that all of them had taken to be completely wild and absurd.

“According to the legend, each Mountain and Sea in the Realm will have a Mountain and Sea Lord to unify that area! But... the truth of the matter is that there is a position of power higher than that of the Lords of the Nine Mountains and Seas! A more powerful being... the Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm!

“The Lord of the entire Mountain and Sea Realm can exterminate a Mountain and Sea with a single thought, then create another one just as easily. That person will lead the Mountain and Sea Realm back to the former glory of the Paragon Immortal Realm!

“The legend says that when the Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm finally appears, the sun and the moon will stop moving! Light will fill the entire Mountain and Sea Realm! According to the legend... the nine Xuanwu turtles will kowtow and let out a massive roar!” Many of the Dao Realm experts of the Mountain and Sea Realm were murmuring things like this. In the Fourth Mountain and Sea, Kṣitigarbha’s eyes were shining with a strange light as he looked up into the Heavens and the starry sky.

It was in that moment that, all of a sudden, a massive Xuanwu turtle rose up from within the celestial pond atop the First Mountain, just like the Xuanwu turtle had done in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Apparently, all of the Mountains had a Xuanwu turtle like this as their nucleus.

The Xuanwu turtle opened its eyes, and it began to tremble, then let out a massive roar that filled the entire First Mountain and Sea.

That roar filled the hearts and minds of all cultivators who had been born in the First Mountain and Sea.

At almost exactly the same time, a similar roar could be heard coming from the Xuanwu turtle who sat atop the Second Mountain in the Second Mountain and Sea. Next, the same thing happened in the Third Mountain and Sea, the Fourth Mountain and Sea, and the Fifth Mountain and Sea....

Finally, the Xuanwu turtle from the Ninth Mountain and Sea joined in, and the roars combined into a unified sound that shook the entire Mountain and Sea Realm.

Countless individuals were shaken physically and mentally as the supreme Xuanwu turtles, which represented all of the Nine Mountains and Seas, suddenly rose up into the starry sky, whereupon their roars reached a fever pitch.

In the end, all of them... did something completely shocking. They turned in the same direction and bowed, as if they were offering respectful greetings to their Lord!!

The direction in which they faced, shockingly... was the Ninth Mountain and Sea!!

The entire world was shaken, and the whole Mountain and Sea Realm was filled with rumbling sounds!

As of this moment, countless Dao Realm experts were thoroughly shaken. All of them turned to look in the direction of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. As for the Dao Realm experts in the Ninth Mountain and Sea itself, they were dumbfounded.

The strangest thing of all was that no one could tell exactly which area within the Ninth Mountain and Sea the Xuanwu turtles were facing!

The roars of the nine Xuanwu turtles echoed out for a long time. The sound was archaic and icy cold, as if it was completely devoid of any emotion. It was almost as if... it were mechanical!

“The Realm Lord cometh... the Lord of all the Mountain and Sea Realm! The Nine Hexes shall be inscribed... in the moment of His return to power!”

The words spread out throughout all of the Nine Mountains and Seas, echoing into countless minds, giving rise to waves of intense shock. It was as if the entire world had been overturned. All cultivators of the Nine Mountains and Seas felt as if their minds were being struck by hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts.

“Realm Lord? The Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm?”

“What exactly is going on? What’s happening?!”

“Return? Could it be that when the Realm Lord returns, the fate of all the Nine Mountains and Seas can be controlled by just a single one of his thoughts?”

“The nine Xuanwu turtles are all facing the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Could it be... could it be that the so-called Realm Lord is in the Ninth Mountain and Sea?!?!”

Countless minds were sent spinning. On the four planets of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, in the Four Great Clans, the Five Great Holy Lands, and the Three Churches and Six Sects, all of the Chosen were astonished, and were shaking in anticipation.

All of the Dao Realm experts could see that the Xuanwu turtle in their Mountain and Sea... was looking at their own Ninth Mountain and Sea!

It was the same in the Three Great Daoist Societies!

In the Nine Seas God World, Fan Dong'er, the Demonic cultivators, the three Patriarchs, and all of the other Dao Realm cultivators, were all shocked. Of course, none of them had any idea that all of these shocking events were being caused by someone within the Nine Seas God World itself.

Also astonished were the current Mountain and Sea Lords of the Nine Mountains and Seas. All of them felt their energy surging, filling their respective Mountains and Seas with solemnity and a domineering air.

Lord Ji also appeared in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and massive pressure radiated out from that enormous eye.

These Lords... would not be willing to easily accept someone who was placed higher than them, a Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm!

Meanwhile, in the Ruins of Immortality in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, the white-robed Paragon Sea Dream sat cross-legged in meditation. Li Ling'er sat next to her in exactly the same posture.

Suddenly, Paragon Sea Dream opened her phoenix-like eyes, and her expression flickered. A shocked expression appeared on her face, and she rose to her feet and stepped forward. When her foot landed, she was outside of the Ruins of Immortality, hovering in the starry sky, looking toward the Ninth Sea!

“Big brother Nine Seals' Paragon blood....” she murmured. A tremor ran through her, and a look of utter disbelief could be seen on her face. After a long moment, she recovered her composure, and a strange gleam appeared in her eyes.

“The League of Demon Sealers. It's him....”

As of this moment, countless figures throughout the Mountain and Sea Realm were making various speculations as to who it was... that would bring such momentous changes in the future, the Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm!

Some people were prepared to respectfully welcome such a person. Others prepared to kill and supplant him. Various thoughts rose up in various minds. In addition, many people left their respective Mountains and Seas to fly toward the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Everything was thrown into chaos in a single moment. An unprecedented commotion gripped all of the Nine Mountains and Seas!

Currently, Meng Hao sat in his mountain valley, experiencing the same shock that everyone outside in the Nine Mountains and Seas was feeling. He could also hear the cry of the nine Xuanwu turtles.

He was trembling, panting, his face covered with an expression of complete disbelief.

“The League of Demon Sealers.... I can’t believe it was actually founded by Paragon Nine Seals!!” Great waves of shock crashed through Meng Hao’s heart. Never would he ever have speculated that the League of Demon Sealers... had originated with such a shocking figure!

Furthermore, he was the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer! Nine was the ultimate number, and he was the final generation of the Demon Sealers!

“I’m the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer, and this drop of blood comes from Paragon Nine Seals. He founded the League of Demon Sealers, which means... he and I are connected by destiny!” Meng Hao panted, and his mind trembled.

“The Nine Hexes shall be inscribed... in the moment of His return to power.... Nine Hexes. That means that when I possess all nine of the Demon Sealing Hexing magics, then in that moment... I will be the Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm!!” Meng Hao felt a bit dizzy. Even now, he found it... hard to believe.

However, he wasn’t struck senseless. In fact, in that moment, he was suddenly filled with a sense of impending danger!

Chapter 1057: Immortal Emperor Meng Hao!

Imagine a situation in which an empire has no emperor for many years. The regional government officials throughout the country have their own military forces, and occupy their positions for countless years.

Each one of those government officials will eventually come to view the area they control as their own kingdom, and themselves as kings!

That was the situation in the Mountain and Sea Realm, with the Lords of the Nine Mountains and Seas being nine kings!

The future Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm was the Emperor!

None of those various kings would want to be ordered around after such a long time. After having a taste of freedom, they would balk at the thought of someone above them telling them what to do, nor would they accept the fate of being perpetually manipulated by another!

When such circumstances arose in an empire, then... the simplest and most effective way to deal with the situation, and also the method that would benefit most of the parties involved... would be to kill the Emperor before he had a chance to return to power!

That would be the best solution for all of those kings!

Meng Hao knew that, and because he understood it... he could tell how much danger he was in, and knew that he had to be completely on guard!

Under no circumstances could he reveal his identity. If he did... then the only thing that would await him would be destruction. And he would no doubt drag the Fang Clan down with him.

It was at this point that the parrot and meat jelly began to holler.

“Dammit, Meng Hao! Hurry up and absorb it! We can’t hold on much longer!!”

Almost in that same moment, Meng Hao unhesitatingly reached out and grabbed the Paragon’s blood. Then he took a deep breath and shoved the drop of blood into the palm of his hand.

Instantly, the drop of blood merged into his hand, fusing into his body. At the same time, massive rumbling filled his mind. He could immediately sense the boundless, mighty power contained within the Paragon’s blood.

Simultaneously, the aura of the League of Demon Sealers erupted wildly. Trembling, Meng Hao quickly pulled out a Nirvana Fruit and then pushed it down onto his forehead.

Rumbling echoed out as the Nirvana Fruit fused into him, and he began to shake. The Paragon's blood and the aura of the League of Demon Sealers merged together, causing its Paragon nature to be hidden away.

It was in this moment that a terrifyingly powerful stream of divine sense spread out from the Ninth Mountain. It covered the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea, reaching out to any and all locations, leaving no stone unturned.

That included the Nine Seas God World. The divine sense swept over it, apparently willing to pay any price in its search, even offending the Three Great Daoist Societies.

However, the Nine Seas God World was uncharacteristically silent, and did nothing to prevent it from happening.

The divine sense covered over everything, swept through all regions. It even passed over Meng Hao, and yet, it did not seem to find the aura it was looking for. Meng Hao sat there cross-legged, all traces of the aura covered up. Of course, it was not his own power that was doing the covering up, but rather, the parrot and meat jelly, as well as the combination of the League of Demon Sealers' aura with the Paragon's blood.

Because of that, Meng Hao was not revealed underneath the powerful divine sense.

After some time passed, the divine sense faded away to search in other areas.

In addition to that powerful divine sense, the Dao Realm experts in other areas of the Ninth Mountain and Sea were also making searches in their respective areas.

Everyone wanted to know... the identity of the future Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm!

It wasn't that nobody considered that it could be Meng Hao. After all, he was in the Echelon, and was the most famous cultivator of his generation. However... the position of Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm was far beyond his current level, so anyone who might suspect him would have only

given it a moment of thought. The true object of most people's suspicion... were the people who were already in the Dao Realm.

The Lords of the other Mountains and Seas especially suspected Lord Ji. From the look of things, a massive storm was brewing!

Meng Hao remained in secluded meditation the entire time. After successfully fusing with the Paragon's blood, he used the power of the blood to absorb the Nirvana Fruit. At the same time, Paragon Nine Seals' blood caused his Demon Sealing magic to grow more exquisite. It was as if he had been the subject of... Righteous Bestowal!

He was the subject of Paragon Nine Seals' Righteous Bestowal!

It was like a form of approval, formally initiating him as the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer!

From this moment on, his Hexing magic would be even more powerful. Because of the amplification of the Paragon's blood, the pressure he could emit would be shockingly greater. Furthermore, his understanding regarding the League of Demon Sealers was now completely different than before.

For example, when it came to the Fifth Demon Sealing Hex, the Inside Outside Hex, he had only been able to open a tiny rift before. Now, however, he could open a rift that was hundreds of times larger!

Everything... was because of Paragon Nine Seals' blood!

Meng Hao was trembling. He could clearly sense that something was different about him. Absorbing the Paragon's blood was like a tempering or a baptism, causing his fleshly body to become more powerful, to exceed the limits of the Immortal Realm. He was now extremely close... to having an Ancient Realm body!

All he needed was the right set of circumstances, the right opportunity, and he would be able to break through. At that point, his fleshly body would break into the Ancient Realm. Furthermore, he knew exactly where that opportunity lay; it was in the ninth golden gate stone stele of the Nine Seas God World!

Meng Hao could almost see what it would be like to withstand that old body cultivator's third fist strike. At that time... he would step into the Ancient Realm of the fleshly body!

"I'm GOING to get more powerful!" he thought, his eyes gleaming. He continued to sit there meditating, his Immortal meridians thrumming as the Paragon's blood seeped out into every corner of his body. Strands of golden thread quickly flew out to merge into his qi passageways.

As for the Nirvana Fruit which he had absorbed into his forehead, it rapidly melted, and when it touched the golden threads of the Paragon's blood, it fused with them, becoming part of Meng Hao.

Suddenly, Meng Hao's cultivation base shot upward. He was already the Immortal Realm Paragon, but it went higher than that, taking him... into the direction of the Immortal Emperor!

Every step forward he took, he made incredible advancements. He would now be permanently in the Immortal Emperor Realm, unlike before, when he could only be there for a short time by temporarily absorbing a Nirvana Fruit.

"Once I finish absorbing the Nirvana Fruit, I will eternally be within the Immortal Emperor Realm!" His eyes shone with determination. He had been waiting for this day for a very long time, and had spent countless amounts of spirit stones and Immortal jade to get here. He couldn't even speak aloud the tally of how much he had spent; anyone who heard the number would be unable to accept it, not even someone in the Dao Realm.

Because of that massive consumption, the path that Meng Hao traveled... was completely different from that of other cultivators!

He was treading the ancient path of the Paragon Immortal Realm. Because of that... his future was limitless!

Time passed. Days. Meng Hao sat there cross-legged the entire time. Eventually, about half of the Nirvana Fruit was absorbed, placing him beyond the level of the Immortal Realm Paragon and closer to that of the Immortal Emperor.

He was getting more and more powerful!

His fleshly body reached new heights of perfection, breaking through barrier after barrier.

Similarly, his powers from the League of Demon Sealers grew stronger.

You could say that the single drop of Paragon's blood led to an explosive growth in all aspects for Meng Hao, making him vastly more powerful!

Another two weeks passed. Meng Hao had now been in the Nine Seas God World for well over a month. Outside in the Mountain and Sea Realm, the fervent search for the future Realm Lord was still underway. There were even powerful experts from the other Mountains and Seas who made appearances.

Thankfully, everyone kept control of themselves, and no major issues arose. However... the sense of an impending storm continued to grow more intense.

During the half month that passed, Meng Hao felt divine sense sweep over his location four times. Fortunately, the meat jelly and parrot knew that Meng Hao was at a critical juncture, and did everything they could to keep him concealed. Also, from the moment that he had absorbed the blood, its aura had dissipated within him. Eventually, people stopped paying attention to him. Although he remained an object of suspicion, in truth there were over a hundred such people under suspect.

Actually, he would have been suspected no matter what the truth was.

Another half a month passed, and Meng Hao still wasn't finished absorbing the Nirvana Fruit. There was still about twenty percent left. However, the difference between his current cultivation base, and his cultivation base before, was like the difference between Heaven and Earth.

Currently, he sat in place, cross-legged, completely motionless. Countless sparks of electricity danced around him, and although his eyes were closed, streams of white mist seeped out from between his eyelids, making him appear extremely mysterious.

His skin was whiter, and his aura explosive. Terrifying ripples rolled off of him. The Demonic cultivators in the pool of the water were in a state of shock, and when they looked at Meng Hao, terror filled their hearts.

As for Su Yan, she was also astonished by the changes she had seen Meng Hao undergoing. It left her terrified. To her, it felt as if some mysterious will were currently awakening inside of him.

“He has a terrifying aura,” she thought anxiously. “But what exactly is it...?” As far as she was concerned, Meng Hao was completely enigmatic.

Another half month passed. Meng Hao had now been in the Nine Seas God World for more than two months. Eventually, the day came... when he finally absorbed the last bit of the Nirvana Fruit. The last trace of it faded away into Meng Hao, and a tremor ran through him.

Along with the tremor were cracking sounds, and a Heaven-shaking, Earth-shattering energy. In that moment, his cultivation base rocketed up to new heights of power. A massive wind sprung up around him, causing the Demonic cultivators to shake. Su Yan’s eyes went wide with disbelief.

Meng Hao’s energy caused his hair to whip around his head, and his robes to flap. Gradually something formed inside of him, which was... an Imperial will!

It was domineering to the maximum, towering. This was the Imperial will of an Immortal Emperor Realm!

His eyes opened, and the Demonic cultivators could hear something like peals of thunder. There were eight thunderclaps in total, each one shocking to the extreme, causing strange colors to flash about, and making everything shake!

Blood sprayed out of the Demonic cultivators’ mouths, and some of them simply passed out. Su Yan found blood oozing out of the corners of her mouth, and her face fell completely.

“Eight illusory thunderclaps, shaking the Heavens!!” she said.

“This... you... you actually reached THAT Realm. This is impossible....

“Those peals of thunder are a terrifying sign that will appear when someone reaches the absolute pinnacle of the Immortal Realm. Eight illusory thunderclaps, shaking the Heavens!”

Meng Hao took a deep breath and slowly stood up. As he did, the aura of the Immortal Emperor suddenly erupted out of him, causing the entire Immortal’s cave to shake. Even the Ninth Sea was trembling.

“The limit of the Immortal Realm?” Meng Hao said coolly. “Apparently, you don’t understand... the meaning of being Immortal! The limit is far, far beyond this!” His voice was calm and filled with a threatening pressure that far exceeded anything that had existed there before!

Chapter 1058: The Echelon Reacts!

“Any further pinnacle is still just the Immortal Realm!” Su Yan replied through gritted teeth.

“You don’t understand,” said Meng Hao, shaking his head. The mark of the Echelon had appeared on his forehead, sinking deeper into him with each pulsing flicker.

Su Yan looked at the mark silently, her feelings clearly conflicted.

Meng Hao rubbed his forehead, then turned to look at the wreckage of his residence. All of a sudden, he had realized something, something that appeared in his mind after absorbing the Nirvana Fruit completely.

“The word Immortal is extremely profound...” he murmured to himself. He suddenly raised his right hand, within which was a second Nirvana Fruit. He looked at it thoughtfully.

“I can sense that the primary function of the Paragon’s blood was to provide true approval of me as part of the League of Demon Sealers. Paragon Sea Dream has her Echelon. However, I am the sole member of Paragon Nine Seals’ Echelon.

“The strengthening of my fleshly body, and the absorption of the Nirvana Fruit were side effects.

“Furthermore, after absorbing one drop of the blood, it wouldn’t matter if I absorbed hundreds or thousands more. They wouldn’t do anything. Also, I can’t continue to use Paragon’s blood to absorb Nirvana Fruits.

“Moreover... using Paragon’s blood to do so is a huge waste.” After a moment of thought, he probed his cultivation base to sense how vastly, vastly more powerful he was than before.

A month or so ago, he had been an Immortal Realm Paragon. Now, he was above that, an Immortal Emperor!

The current era had no such thing as an Immortal Emperor. In fact, even in the days of the Immortal World, the Immortal Emperor Realm was something rarely seen, like a level of complete perfection.

It represented a level of profound understanding of the Realm of Immortality.

Meng Hao might have only 123 Immortal meridians, but each and every one had widened and become extremely sturdy. The feeling of power he was experiencing was something he previously could only feel on a temporary basis with the aid of Nirvana Fruit. Now, he was eternally within that Realm.

The Echelon mark on his forehead glittered brightly, and was clearly more firmly implanted. Because of that, he looked completely different than before.

He even had a new strange feeling. If he closed his eyes, he could almost sense that, far out in the vast Mountain and Sea Realm, in other areas, there were... familiar fluctuations.

Those fluctuations were not coming from a specific person. Rather, it came from other people who... were like him! Members of the Echelon!

In total, there were twelve other members of the Echelon!

He was the thirteenth member, and the most recent one to be added. He was also the last member of the Echelon. Before him, there were a total of twelve. These were people from other locations in the Mountain and Sea Realm, whom Paragon Sea Dream had pulled into the Echelon.

Meng Hao had no illusions about how difficult it was to become part of the Echelon, nor how powerful its members were. After seeing the shocking and majestic sight of the first generation Patriarch, he could well imagine how powerful the other members were.

It was only after Meng Hao received the enlightenment of Paragon magic... that he had been able to join the Echelon.

Meng Hao could sense twelve fluctuations, and every one left him with a feeling like that of a Paragon. The level of power caused his heart to sink.

“Now I see. Before, my cultivation base and Realm simply did not qualify me to sense their existence. It is only now that I have reached the proper degree to do so.

“Furthermore, that means that as of this moment, not only can I sense them, they... can also... sense me!” He frowned.

By the time that Meng Hao frowned, the flurry of activity that had resulted from the events the previous month had died down. There were still many people who were paying attention to the situation, but the most tense juncture had passed.

Life went on. The sun and the moon went back into motion, almost as if nothing had happened. However, deep in the hearts of many people, questions still lurked about who the future Lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm was....

In the Eighth Mountain and Sea was a location out in the void that was comprised of a vast field of skeletons that almost looked like puppets. Their eyes flickered with ghost fire as they swirled around. In the very center of all of them was an enormous palace constructed of bones.

Within that palace, a young man in a black robe sat there cross-legged, meditating. He was extremely gaunt, and his face was as pale as death, completely lacking even a trace of color. Furthermore, the flame of his life force was very dim. Suddenly, his eyes opened, and all of the skeletons surrounding the palace dropped down to kowtow. At the same time, a terrifying energy surged out from the young man.

A mark appeared on his forehead, flickering brightly. All of a sudden, he could sense something within the Ninth Mountain and Sea... the fluctuations of the Echelon!

“So, there’s actually a thirteenth member...” he murmured, and a sinister glow like that of blood appeared in his eyes.

At the same time, a massive vortex could be seen in the Fourth Mountain and Sea. A handsome young man in a blue garment sat cross-legged in that vortex, meditating. He was surrounded by ten old men, all of whom were at the peak of the Ancient Realm. Clearly, these men were the Dao Protectors of the younger man.

Roughly 3,000 meters away from him in the vortex was a young woman clad in a simple white gown. Her cultivation base was not in the Immortal Realm, but rather, the Nascent Soul stage.

However, there was an aura to her that ensured that, despite being inside the vortex, she wasn't harmed at all. She sat there, her eyes closed as she practiced cultivation.

Next to the young woman was an old lady who looked like a servant of some sort. She sat there quietly, completely ignoring the young man and his ten Dao Protectors.

After a long moment passed, the young man in blue opened his eyes and looked at the young woman in white. His eyes flickered with a mysterious light, and he suddenly approached her, after which he clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Miss Xu, we meet again! I, Lin Cong, offer greetings to the 49th Princess of the Underworld!”

The young woman in white opened her eyes and looked at the young man. After giving him a slight smile, she closed her eyes again.

The young man smiled back, seemingly having taken no offense. However, when he turned away, a sinister gleam could be seen deep in his eyes. He was just about to leave when, all of a sudden, an Echelon mark suddenly appeared on his forehead, and he could sense that there was now another member of the Echelon in the Mountain and Sea Realm.

“The Ninth Mountain and Sea huh.... He's much weaker than any of the others....” Killing intent flickered in the young man's eyes.

Similar scenes played out one after another in other locations in the other Mountains and Seas. Just as Meng Hao had suspected, the other twelve members of the Echelon were all able to sense him.

Competition was something that came with the status of being in the Echelon itself. Plus, there were also people in the outside world who wanted to kill those Echelon members and take their status for their own. Such an attitude was even stronger among the Echelon members as well.

To them, weak people weren't qualified to stand among them. Although nobody who was truly weak was allowed to even join the Echelon, any member who didn't make progress quickly enough would soon be left behind, and eventually eliminated.

On the First Mountain was a young man with ordinary features. However, on his forehead could be seen a third eye. He currently sat in front of a Go board, holding a game piece in his hand, apparently lost in thought.

In front of him was a young woman wearing a long, emerald-green gown. She was so beautiful that it was impossible for anyone to compare to her. She had an alluring figure, and phoenix-like eyes that radiated a vigorous spirit. The wind slowly blew her long black hair, causing a single strand to gently sweep across her chest. The cosmetics she wore added a bit of color to her face, making her cheeks slightly rosy. She was both lithe and tender, and overall, completely attractive.

She was like a butterfly fluttering in the wind, or a fairy floating across the snow. She was the type of woman who, wherever she went, the flowers darkened, the sun and moon dimmed, and all other women somehow looked less beautiful.

She was also surrounded by Immortal qi, which slowly swirled around her, causing her to seem completely extraordinary.

“Elder Brother Chen, it looks like you’re going to lose this game too,” she said with a smile. It was a smile that made her consummate beauty even more attractive. The wind that was blowing past seemed unwilling to part with her, and instead, continued to swirl around her.

“The world is like a game of Go,” the man said lightly. “And life is like a dream. Each stone that is played must be played with extreme thought and precision.... Miss Xue’er, you truly deserve to be the number one successor of Immortal Ancient. You’ve experienced the wide world in your long travels, and the gracefulness of every step you take causes lotuses to bloom.” He looked up at the young woman and smiled slightly.

“Miss Xue’er,” the man said coolly, “among the twelve members of the Echelon, you came to find me first. Then you left to travel across the Mountain and Sea Realm, and now, you’ve come to find me again. It seems like I’m the chosen one.”

“Unfortunately, I can’t find anyone who can beat me at this game. Elder Brother Chen, among all the other members of the Echelon, you are the one who can hold out the longest. Since that’s the case, well....” The young woman lapsed into silence for a moment. Finally, she nodded, and was about to continue speaking when, all of a sudden, her expression flickered.

Simultaneously, the refined young man with whom she was speaking also looked surprised. An Echelon mark appeared on his forehead, and he was suddenly able to sense the fluctuations from Meng Hao in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“A new member. Too bad he’s far too weak.” After a moment, the man paid no further attention to Meng Hao. Instead, he looked at the young woman in front of him. Although his expression was placid, inwardly, he was a bit nervous.

The young woman didn’t say anything in response. She looked down at the Go board for a moment, then back up at the man. Finally, she stood up and waved her hand, causing the game board to vanish.

“Since a new member of the Echelon has appeared, I’m going to go extend greetings. I want to see if I’m connected to this person by destiny. Elder Brother Chen... if I have no destiny with him, then I’ll come find you again to discuss the Dao.”

“A person that weak... wouldn’t it be a waste of your time, Miss Xue’er?” the man said slowly.

“The first time I found you, Elder Brother Chen, you did not have the cultivation base you have now either.” The woman smiled, then turned and made her way off into the distance.

The man she called Elder Brother Chen sat there quietly for a long moment. Finally, a glow of self-confidence appeared in his eyes, which he then closed.

Meng Hao’s debut into the Echelon gave rise to a variety of intense reactions among the other members. At the same time, in the other Daoist Societies in the other eight Mountains and Seas, there were people who suddenly became aware that there was a new member of the Echelon!

A true member of the Echelon was difficult to produce. Someone who wasn’t qualified to remain in the Echelon, and yet received an Echelon mark, would not be accepted. Meng Hao, after successfully absorbing his first Nirvana Fruit, finally... was acknowledged as being a true member of the Echelon. Also... he was now placed within the hearts and minds of the other members.

Currently, Meng Hao was in the Nine Seas God World in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. His eyes glittered, and he muttered to himself. Finally, he put the matter of the Echelon aside, and focused fully on himself.

“An Ancient Realm expert below five extinguished soul lamps would not be a match for me!” he thought, his eyes shining as he looked down at the Nirvana Fruit in his hand.

“I wonder if it would be possible to continue and absorb a second Nirvana Fruit. If I could exceed the power of the Immortal Emperor... I wonder what Realm that would be? The mere thought filled Meng Hao with excitement. He lifted the Nirvana Fruit up and, without any further hesitation, pushed it into his forehead.

RUMBLE!

Chapter 1060: Threats!

“Battle Weapon?” Meng Hao asked hesitantly.

“A weapon used in battle,” the parrot replied slowly. “A treasure that can seize the Heavens without magical techniques!” The parrot looked very solemn as it spoke. However, its next sentence revealed its true feelings.

“Obviously, it’s actually Lord Fifth that becomes a Battle Weapon. Hahaha! Keep working hard, Haowie. Lord Fifth hasn’t had a chance to be a Battle Weapon for a long, long time. I really miss that feeling of being able to penetrate all holes that I can lay eyes on....” With that, its eyes began to glow, and it shivered with so much excitement that it forgot to flap its wings and promptly fell out of the air.

Meng Hao cleared his throat and ignored the arrogant parrot. He looked over at the meat jelly, which was standing there, eyes burning with passion. Considering how uncharacteristically reticent it was being, Meng Hao could help but ask what was going on.

“Ah, you finally asked,” replied the meat jelly. “Seeing you as an Allheaven Immortal moments ago caused me to recall something from years ago. It happened long, long, long ago, so listen carefully as I explain.

“First, we need to start by clarifying some things that happened last year. Gradually, everything will become clear. Ahem... hey, no need to get anxious. We’ll go over things very slowly. My estimation is that I can finish explaining within three days.” It cleared its throat, tilted its jaw up, and began to speak.

A strange expression could now be seen on Meng Hao’s face. He was well aware that the Meat Jelly could only count to three. Furthermore, to it, the number three... was essentially limitless.

Based on Meng Hao's analysis, the three days that the meat jelly referred to could be three days times a hundred, or times ten thousand, or even millions....

He coughed dryly and quickly sidled away. Turning toward the bare rock cliff, he waved his hand, using a magical technique to carve out a new Immortal's cave. It wasn't a residence like before, but there were still plenty of stone chambers inside, more than eight.

A flash could be seen as he flew inside. The meat jelly's lips twitched slightly. Looking pained, it turned to the Demonic cultivators, and Su Yan, and its eyes suddenly brightened. It then hopped over innocently and stared at Su Yan.

"Hey there Fellow Daoist, would you like to hear my story?"

"Huh?" Su Yan was still shaken by everything that had occurred just now with Meng Hao. Her mind was still reeling, so she didn't even think before responding to the meat jelly. The meat jelly was instantly very excited. A pop could be heard as it transformed into a tiny bell-shaped hair clip which flew up and attached itself to Su Yan, where it hung down next to her ear.

It sighed, and then began to speak. "Let's start with that huge rainstorm from last year. Lord Third happens to remember being very curious about the rain that day. He really wanted to know exactly how many raindrops were falling. So, Lord Third started counting. One, two, three, one, two, three...."

Gradually, Su Yan began to tremble, and her facial expression slowly changed. Soon, blue veins popped out on her forehead as the meat jelly continued to count, saying the words "one, two, three" over and over again.

"Dammit, get off of me!" she growled, grabbing the meat jelly and throwing it onto the ground. Unfortunately for her, her cultivation base was sealed, so she was no match whatsoever for the meat jelly.... As for the meat jelly, it wasn't afraid of being spoken to, regardless of what was being said; it only feared being ignored. Seeing that Su Yan was suddenly engaging it in conversation, it got very excited. It quickly picked a new position and continued speaking.

The parrot rolled its eyes. In its opinion, the meat jelly didn't set its ambitions high enough. The parrot flew up into the air and began circling around the Demonic cultivators as it went back to teaching them to sing.

A moment later, the sound of music filled the entire valley.

“I was a bad kid when I was young, I’m a little seafood dish, lalalalala, little seafood dish, dobedobedoooo, little seafood dish....”

The parrot and meat jelly were both very happy. Seven days went by. Meng Hao had now been in the Nine Seas God World for more than two months. The appointed date to enter the Windswept Realm was now only about twenty days away.

Four days earlier, two jade slips had arrived in quick succession. They were obviously imbued with incredible power, as they passed directly through the walls of his Immortal’s cave to stop in front of him, hovering and flickering with brilliant light.

After they floated down onto his palm, he glanced at them and then simply continued to meditate, ignoring the jade slips. He did not duplicate Paragon’s blood, but rather, spent the time getting accustomed to his new cultivation base, and how it affected his various divine abilities and magical techniques.

At the same time, he sent numerous Ghost Eye Beetles into the surrounding stone chambers and waited for them to transform into the blackpod imps.

By the time the seven days were up, he had eight new blackpod imps, putting the total number that he had under his control at ten.

“If I transform all of the black beetles, I should have about fifty black pods.... It’s kind of a small number, but it still qualifies as a small army.” He put the black pods away, then quickly carved out some more stone chambers, into which he threw more black beetles to begin their transmutation. Finally, he ended his seven days of secluded meditation.

“I’m much more comfortable with the Immortal Emperor Realm,” he thought. “I just need to have a bit of practice with some of my magical techniques and divine abilities, and I’ll be good to go.” The rise in his cultivation base had been significant. Although it wasn’t quite the same as going from the Spirit Realm into the Immortal Realm, it was still a massive leap upward. A mere seven days wasn’t enough time to get completely familiar with his new state. He needed experience in battle to fully appreciate all the differences.

Finally, his gaze came to fall on the jade slips that had arrived a few days before. He picked them up and scanned them with divine sense, after which his eyes glowed with a cold light, and he started to chuckle.

The first jade slip came from the Nine Seas God World's Department of Tasks and Missions. The God World Department of Tasks and Missions was a part of the sect specifically devoted to giving various assignments to disciples. The assignments were arranged into grades, with the highest grade assignments being the type that you couldn't refuse to accept.

Of course, most such assignments were essentially given out as trials by fire. Although they were often dangerous, they would never exceed the capabilities of the disciples they were assigned to. Disciples needed to have a chance to go out and participate in real, live battles. On the other hand, safety was also a priority.

The first jade slip was exactly that type of assignment, something that could not be refused.

"A bloodthirsty cultivator has appeared on Seajacket Island," Meng Hao murmured as he studied the information. "He has murdered other cultivators and slaughtered numerous sea beasts.... According to the investigation, his cultivation base is not in the Ancient Realm, but rather, at the peak of the Immortal Realm. However, his specific whereabouts are unknown, as he is difficult to track. They only know that his general location is Seajacket Island." With that, his smile grew cold.

Naturally, he hadn't forgotten about his agreement with the nine Sea Realm Demons.

Essentially, Meng Hao was in an invincible position in terms of the stakes of the bet. If he lost, it didn't really matter. Even if he wanted to give them his place in the Echelon, it was impossible. The only way to get his spot would be to kill him two times. If they wanted to do that, then it would have to be done outside of the sect. There, it could feasibly happen. The Demonic Cultivator Horde seemed to regard themselves as having a great understanding of the Echelon. However, the truth of the matter was that they didn't know much at all. A place in the Echelon was not something that could be given away as the stakes of a bet. It was something that existed as part of a cycle of death.

Unfortunately for the Demonic Cultivator Horde, they didn't know about things like that. After all... after countless years, Meng Hao was only the second person in the Ninth Mountain and Sea to join the Echelon!

He would naturally agree to a bet that he essentially couldn't lose. The only reason he had said he would give his final answer in a month was to make the situation seem more realistic.

The appointed time passed, and he never responded, then all of a sudden, this jade slip arrived.... It seemed obvious that it was a tactic being employed by the Demonic Cultivator Horde.

The other jade slip was from Ling Yunzi, who informed Meng Hao that the assignment had been pushed by the Demonic Cultivator Horde. Opening the Windswept Realm required their cooperation, and as such, it had been impossible to refuse.

As a disciple of the sect, Meng Hao had to carry out assignments for the sect. That was the honorable thing to do, and furthermore, there was no reasonable grounds upon which to refuse.

Even though it was obvious the Demonic Cultivator Horde had arranged the assignment, Ling Yunzi was able to ensure that no Dao Realm experts would be involved, nor peak Ancient Realm cultivators. His request of Meng Hao was that he not really leave the sect. Instead, he should take a single step outside and immediately turn back, then report that he had failed in the assignment.

If a punishment was involved because of that, Granny Nine and the others would handle it.

If Meng Hao wasn't comfortable accepting the assignment, he could refuse, and they would try to find another way to resolve the issue. However, if that happened, it would cause an indeterminate delay in opening the Windswept Realm.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. After a moment of thought he decided that he wouldn't actually complete the mission. He would step out of the sect, but then come back almost immediately and try to come up with some excuse to explain the matter.

What he really wanted to do was challenge the ninth golden gate stone stele again and see whether his current cultivation base could handle... that body cultivator's third fist strike!

"Although, the Demonic Cultivator Horde has most likely thought up some way to force me to accept the mission. I wonder what they'll do... Well, in any case, if I don't feel like going, they can't control me."

With that, he left the Immortal's cave, flying up through the water to appear in midair. He didn't stop for a moment, but instead, shot directly towards the main gate of the Nine Seas God World.

As he sped through the air at top speed, numerous cultivators saw him. Strange expressions could be seen on their faces, especially the Demonic cultivators, who clearly despised him and wanted to see him dead.

News about Meng Hao's bet with the nine Sea Realm Demons had long since spread throughout the sect. Furthermore, the fact that he had said that he would provide an answer within a month, and yet hadn't sent word, caused the nine Sea Realm Demons to be furious. As a result, they had spread all sorts of nasty rumors, which many of the disciples had caught wind of.

An hour later, Meng Hao reached the main gate of the Nine Seas God World, beyond which was a pitch black world of seawater. As soon as he passed through the gate, he would be in the waters of the Ninth Sea.

He didn't pause for a moment. He shot out of the gate and into the water, which instantly caused his entire person to be covered with icy coldness.

The instant he stepped out of the main gate, he prepared to go back into the sect. However, it was in that moment that he stopped in his tracks and looked up ahead of him.

There in the dark sea water was a familiar figure. It was... Chen Fan!

Meng Hao's Elder Brother, Chen Fan!

A moment later, his appearance changed, and now, it was Fatty. After another moment passed, it was Chu Yuyan!

A quick succession of three people he knew all appeared in front of him. Then, the figure changed again, and now he was facing the leader of the nine Sea Realm Demons, Long Tianhai!

He stood there, smiling at Meng Hao. Then he opened his mouth and spoke. Although no words could be heard, Meng Hao could read his lips quite clearly.

"I can track down all three of them."

They were only eight words, but they formed a mighty threat!