

## The Heavens 1171

### Chapter 1171: I'm Meng Hao!

The old man immediately waved his hand, and in response, the dozens of people following him split up and began to search the island. He also sent his divine sense out, but came up with nothing. Frowning, he turned to the three cultivators who had sounded the alarm and began to question them.

When they told him that the intruder looked exactly like the Sacred Ancient, the old man's face flickered. Then they recounted how the intruder said this place was his home, he gasped.

It was at this point that a glittering jade slip flew out of his bag of holding. He grabbed it and scanned it with divine sense, whereupon a look of bewilderment appeared on his face. Gritting his teeth, he said, "We found him. He's... in the Sacred Mansion at the center of the island!"

The old man disappeared toward the center of the island in a flash, simultaneously sending orders to his subordinates. Soon, all of the other cultivators who had spread out across the island were heading toward the building in the middle.

The three cultivators followed along nervously. They were anxious, not because someone had come to the island; rather, they were anxious about who that person was!

It didn't take long before the old man arrived at island's center, where he caught sight of the disciple who had just notified him about Meng Hao's location. That disciple was kneeling on the ground in front of the Sacred Mansion, trembling.

The structure itself was actually little more than a log cabin, and didn't look unusual in any way. In fact, many of the cultivators who had come here in pilgrimage throughout the years had often wondered why this seemingly ordinary log cabin was referred to as the Sacred Mansion.

Meng Hao was currently standing in the doorway, facing away from everyone on the outside, examining the inside of the cabin. Two statues could be seen inside, sitting there looking at each other.

They were dressed in long red wedding gowns, and they were holding hands and smiling. The statues had been carved with incredible grace and skill, making them look extremely lifelike.

One depicted Meng Hao. The other depicted Xu Qing....

Meng Hao stood there looking at the statues in somewhat of a daze. Memories poured into his mind like floodwaters.

Outside of the Sacred Mansion, the old man looked at Meng Hao and could sense the terrifying, indescribable pressure that existed within him. However, that pressure was not radiating out; if it were, the old man was certain that everything in the surrounding area would be instantly transformed into ash.

He took a deep breath, but didn't dare to say anything. Instead, he stood there respectfully. At this point, it didn't matter who this trespasser was; considering the level of his cultivation base, it would be impossible to do anything to stop him. However, the old man secretly crushed a jade slip, sending a notification to the powerful experts in his sect, telling them to hurry over.

The other disciples who had been searching the island had arrived, and stood nervously outside of the Sacred Mansion, not daring to speak.

After a long moment passed, Meng Hao asked, "Who carved these two statues?"

The old man's heart thumped, and without even thinking about it, he replied, "It, it... was carved by all of the members of the Senior generation in the Southern Domain, people who actually knew the Sacred Ancient."

Meng Hao turned and looked at the old man.

"And you people? Are you disciples of the Blood Demon Sect?" he asked.

The old man nodded, and was about to say something else, when he saw Meng Hao's face. He felt as if lightning were crashing around in his mind, and he stood there in a daze. It wasn't just him. All of the other disciples around him were also staring in shock.

Subconsciously, they all looked away from Meng Hao toward the statue behind him.

The two of them looked exactly the same!!

The only difference was that somehow, the person standing in front of them seemed to have an ancientness to him, and wasn't a youth like the person depicted on the statue.

Panting, the old man murmured, "Sir... are you...."

"I'm Meng Hao," was the calm reply.

"Sacred Ancient!!"

"I can't believe... it's the Sacred Ancient. How... how could this be possible?!"

In the midst of the exclamations of shock by the old man and his subordinates, an enraged roar echoed out off in the distance. Several hundred beams of light shot through the air, the leader being a middle-aged man. At first his face was twisted with rage, but as soon as he caught sight of Meng Hao, it filled with shock.

"Sacred Ancient!!"

Everyone was in a tumult, so Meng Hao waited in silence for a moment before saying, "I want to spend the night here alone. I would like to thank all of you for keeping this place in order for all these years."

With that, he waved his hand, sending hundreds of bottles of medicinal pills flying out to those present.

Then he turned and walked into the log cabin, slowly closing the door behind him. Soon, lamplight could be seen in the oilpaper windows.

Outside the log cabin was deathly silence. The middle-aged man and the hundreds of other cultivators he had led here could hardly believe what was happening. Exchanging glances, they transmitted messages to each other, not daring to speak out loud. Then they all fell back a short distance and sat down cross-legged, whereupon they began to send messages via jade slip back to Mount Blood Demon. From there, word quickly spread to the rest of the Southern Domain.

As far as Meng Hao was concerned, this was one of the few occasions since he had left Planet South Heaven in which he had shown so much emotion. It was also one of the few nights he could spend in complete peace and calm. He sat in the log cabin, looking at the statue of Xu Qing, and he soon lost track of time.

In contrast, that night was a sleepless one for the entire Southern Domain. News spread to all the sects and clans that Meng Hao had been seen on the Holy Island. Soon, countless cultivators of the Senior generation, veterans who had fought alongside Meng Hao in the wars of the past, were completely shaken.

It had been years since Meng Hao had left, and although people had seen images of Meng Hao in his various escapades, this was different. The news from the Blood Demon Sect said that this was the real Meng Hao, and that his cultivation base was unfathomably high.

Most importantly, he was on the Holy Island. It didn't matter if it was really him or not, all of the powerful experts of the Southern Domain unhesitatingly made their way there. If it was the real Meng Hao, then they would offer worship to him. If it was not him... then whoever the blasphemer was would face the wrath of the entire Southern Domain.

It was during the great war of the Southern Domain that Meng Hao had truly risen to the level of being a Sacred Ancient. In fact, he was one of three Sacred Ancients, the other two being Pill Demon and Patriarch Song.

They had been the only three peak experts left alive at the end of that war. Later, Pill Demon reached Immortal Ascension and left Planet South Heaven, becoming nothing more than a figure of legend. As for Patriarch Song, he ended the war having been seriously injured, after which he went into secluded meditation and never came out.

Later, Meng Hao also left. However, it was because of how he had sealed the experts of the Northern Reaches into the mountain called Sin of the North that the spiritual energy of the Southern Domain was gradually restored. That mountain still stood, and it was because of it that his name had reached such heights of glory.

After the war, the Violet Fate Sect and the Song Clan became Holy Lands, and along with the Blood Demon Sect, became the most powerful forces in the Southern Domain. As for the island, because of the wedding which had begun there all those years ago, the Southern Domain cultivators made it their Holy Island, a place to commemorate Meng Hao and Xu Qing.

On this night, all of the sects in the Southern Domain mobilized. The war veterans from the elder generation flew toward the Holy Island, as did people who had been born since then.

Even more surprising... deep in the Song Clan, Patriarch Song, who had been in secluded meditation for years, suddenly opened his ancient eyes. When he heard the reports of what was happening, he sat there silently for a moment, then slowly rose to his feet. Filled with ancientness and exhaustion, he left the Song Clan, taking his fellow clan members with him to the Holy Island.

The emergence of Patriarch Song sent the whole Southern Domain into a huge commotion. Overnight, all cultivators were either thinking about the Holy Island, or talking about it!

Patriarch Song arrived on the island at around midnight, flanked by numerous members of the Song Clan. One of them was a middle-aged woman. She was beautiful, but old, and it was obvious that when she was young, she would have been considered one of the top beauties of the land.

It was none other than Song Jia.

Because of what had occurred with Meng Hao, Song Jia had a special position in the Song Clan. She had chosen to never officially take a beloved partner, and had remained single, focused on cultivation.

As soon as the word about Meng Hao began to spread, she also emerged from secluded meditation and calmly joined Patriarch Song to come to the Holy Island.

The arrival of Patriarch Song sent all the cultivators on the island into an uproar. They bowed in respectful greeting, simultaneously clearing a path for Patriarch Song to walk directly up to the log cabin.

Patriarch Song looked at the lamplight flickering in the oilskin windows, and his dim eyes gradually sparkled with bright light. Gradually, he began to emanate a powerful energy like that of an unsheathed magical sword.

The other cultivators in the areas were now staring nervously at Patriarch Song.

“Is it my old pal Meng Hao?!” Patriarch Song suddenly asked, his voice booming like thunder. A huge wind sprang up in the sky, and the land quaked. Massive waves rolled out across the surface of the water.

After a moment, Meng Hao's voice could be heard from inside the log cabin, sounding somewhat emotional. "Senior Song, please come in."

The door of the log cabin slowly opened, revealing Meng Hao, looking out at Patriarch Song. His eyes seemed to be filled with memories as he recalled their times fighting together against the invading Northern Reaches army.

The instant Patriarch Song caught sight of Meng Hao, his eyes began to shine brightly. He trembled slightly, then threw his head back and laughed. It was a laughter filled with joy, and the excitement of seeing an old friend.

He walked forward, entering the log cabin, after which the door slowly closed.

"It's really him...." Song Jia murmured, a complicated look flickering in her eyes.

The night passed slowly. More and more cultivators gathered outside the log cabin. There were cultivators from the Violet Fate Sect and the Blood Demon Sect, as well as others who had fought with him against the Northern Reaches. There were even cultivators gathering on the shores of the lake, packed tightly, their eyes filled with awe and reverence. To them, this was like a holy pilgrimage.

The fact that Patriarch Song had entered the log cabin made it clear to everyone... that this really and truly was the Sacred Ancient Meng Hao!

The news filled everyone with excitement and anticipation. The veteran cultivators who had fought with him recalled their old comrade-in-arms. As for those who had never met Meng Hao before, they merely hoped to catch a glimpse of the majestic Sacred Ancient.

No one spoke. They simply sat there quietly, waiting for the door to open.

Chapter 1172: A Sermon On The Dao, By The Sacred Ancient!

Gradually, the light of dawn filled the air. The door opened, and Patriarch Song walked out. He looked different than before. He didn't seem like an ancient old man; he was younger, and his eyes flickered with excitement. The injuries he had sustained during the war were now healed, and he looked far more energetic than before.

He subconsciously patted his bag of holding. Inside... was an Immortality Illumination Vine, a gift given to him by Meng Hao which gave him the hope of reaching Immortal Ascension....

A few paces outside of the log cabin, Patriarch Song turned, clasped hands and bowed deeply. Then he looked back up for a moment before leaving. The members of the Song Clan were shocked at the appearance of their Patriarch. They quickly realized that a Heaven-shaking, Earth-toppling transformation must have occurred.

Just as the Song Clan cultivators were about to leave with their Patriarch, a beam of light suddenly shot out from the log cabin toward Song Jia.

Meng Hao's voice could then be heard once again. "It's nice to see you, old friend. Please accept this parting gift. Use it to nourish your spirit. It will make cultivation base breakthroughs much smoother."

Song Jia looked at the light floating in front of her. It was an emerald green magical jade which emanated Immortal qi, and was clearly not an ordinary item.

Then she looked back at the log cabin, a complicated expression on her face. Finally, she took the piece of jade and left with the other Song Clan cultivators.

The Song Clan left, but other Southern Domain cultivators continued to arrive. By noon, there was no room left. Crowds of cultivators blotted out the sky and stretched out in all directions.

Meng Hao was done reminiscing. Sighing, he walked out of the log cabin. As soon as he appeared, the surrounding cultivators excitedly clasped hands and bowed.

"Greetings, Sacred Ancient!!"

"Greetings, Sacred Ancient!!" Their voices echoed out in all directions, reaching other cultivators who couldn't even see Meng Hao, who in turn bowed, and began to cry out the same thing. The sound of all the voices was like thunder booming everywhere.

One by one, the most powerful experts of the various sects stepped forward to offer excited greetings.

“The Sect Leader of the Violet Fate Sect offers greetings, Sacred Ancient!!”

“The Sect Leader of the Blood Demon Sect offers greetings, Sacred Ancient!!”

Meng Hao looked around at all the cultivators, many of whom he recognized. Smiling, he sat down cross-legged on the stone steps leading up to the log cabin.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Fellow Daoists, welcome to my home. I'm pleased you could come. I haven't been back for many years, and would like to sincerely thank all of you for your care and concern. You kept this place exactly as I remembered it.

“It is a great kindness shown to me by all cultivators of the Southern Domain. Therefore, I will speak of the Dao here, for seven days. During those seven days, all Southern Domain cultivators are welcome to stay and listen.

“I will explain how my understanding of cultivation has evolved through the various stages, and will explain how I have been enlightened.” With that, he flicked his sleeve, causing the clouds to part, brilliant sunlight to flow down, and an aura of Immortality to spread out. Almost instantly, the entire area seemed like a celestial paradise.

“After careful study,” he began softly, “I have come to find that the Dao of Heaven and Earth, and one's own Dao, is a willful return to one's natural state...” He had chosen to bestow some good fortune upon the cultivators of the Southern Domain, both as a means of thanking them for caring for his former residence, and also... for the mere fact that he felt this place to be his home. It was different than Planet East Victory.

“Therefore, cultivation is also known as ‘cultivating truth.’ Of the two characters which make up the latter term, the first refers to the method, the second refers to the mental state...” His voice seemed to contain a bizarre power that caused it to spread out in all directions, causing every audience member, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, to slip into a strange, trance-like state.

“Simply put, it is very similar to how I once described to someone the different Realms of life.

“In the past, various people have asked me what the Dao is.... My responses have varied depending on the occasion, the circumstances, and the level of my cultivation base. In fact, every single time, I gave a different answer. I’m not even sure what my answer will be the next time someone asks me.

“However, there is one thing that will never change, as far as I can tell. And that is... that I don’t know what the Dao is. There are too many answers to the question. All I know... is that what I am pursuing is freedom and independence. To be free and unconstrained. That is my truth, and that is my Dao!

“In cultivating truth, what we cultivate... is the heart.” Meng Hao’s voice reverberated out as he expounded upon his understanding of the Dao, and the enlightenment he had gained regarding cultivation. The words he spoke were like seeds that became buried in the hearts of the various cultivators.

Perhaps most of them would never feel that seed for the rest of their lives. Or perhaps... some would reach a certain point in their cultivation or receive a sudden epiphany which would allow them to acquire the good fortune contained within the seed planted in them by Meng Hao.

You could say that what Meng Hao was giving them... was not just a chance at enlightenment, but also... a path to follow to Immortal Ascension. Given the right chances, it wouldn’t be impossible for them to follow a similar path to Meng Hao’s, and reach... true Immortality.

But even if they couldn’t, they could gain enlightenment from that seed, and break out of the Spirit Realm to become... false Immortals!

Although it could be said that this Immortal seed which Meng Hao was bestowing upon the cultivators of the Southern Domain was not at all like the Dao seed in the blood of his clan, in any case, it was a benevolence on his part. He simply hoped that the cultivators from his home could become more powerful.

“If your heart is steadfast, it cannot be trampled by Heaven or Earth, nor can it be broken by any living thing. You will never bow your head in acquiescence, and you will be able to advance without hesitation, and you will never stop moving forward. This is the meaning of cultivating the heart and cultivating the truth. It is traveling along the path of cultivation itself.

“My life has been spent practicing cultivation. I started in the Qi Condensation stage, and now here I am, having experienced numerous twists and turns. I will merge my body, my mind, and my soul into an image which will become like a spirit in your heart. Observe it. Contemplate it. It can become the truth, the path, and the heart which you cultivate!” Meng Hao’s voice seemed profound

and ancient. The surrounding cultivators, be they on the island itself or elsewhere in the area, were all shaken and many were instantly enlightened.

Time passed. As Meng Hao sat outside his log cabin speaking of the Dao, more and more Southern Domain cultivators arrived. People even came from the Black Lands. Over the course of the seven days, the island became the complete focus of the entire Southern Domain.

As Meng Hao spoke, it seemed as if every sentence and every word that he uttered originated from nature itself, and contained a great Dao. In fact, there were even some extraordinarily talented listeners who made immediate breakthroughs.

Because of that, the spiritual energy in the area grew stronger, and more Immortal qi built up. Cultivating in that area for one day was like cultivating for a year elsewhere.

The place now truly deserved to be called... a Holy Land!

By the third day, it wasn't just cultivators who could be seen gathered in the area around the Holy Island. Numerous wild animals appeared. Normally they would be fierce and violent, but right now they were strangely docile. They soon filled the area, and it almost seemed as if they could understand what Meng Hao was saying, and were being enlightened.

Cultivators and wild beasts could both gain Dao enlightenment at the same time; everything was peaceful and calm.

If you looked around, you might see a huge python gaining enlightenment, or an enormous liger prostrating itself in worship. Some of the powerful beasts were rarely seen in the open, but here they were, as if participating in some naturally-occurring rite, gaining enlightenment from Meng Hao's Dao-filled voice.

Birds circled in the sky overhead, and fish leapt out of the water of the lake as they attempted to hear more clearly. Even the grass and vegetation benefited from the Dao, and began to sway gently and emanate spiritual energy.

The Southern Domain was as shaken as if it had experienced a massive earthquake.

As Meng Hao gave his sermon on the Dao, the Fang Clan cultivators buzzed about in preparation for the Clan Chief coronation ceremony. Preparations were completed first in the vast Eastern Lands, where numerous altars and palaces were set up. Teleportation portals were also erected.

The ceremony was set to begin in three months, and invitations were already being sent out through the teleportation portals to the various sects and clans in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. The entire Ninth Mountain and Sea was abuzz with the news about Fang Xiufeng becoming the Clan Chief.

It wasn't just an important matter for the Fang Clan. It was a big event for the Ninth Mountain and Sea as a whole. The decision of who was to be the Clan Chief could affect everyone. For example, if the Clan Chief was a person fond of fighting and warfare, then it would be possible to predict that war would soon strike the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

If the Clan Chief was weak and docile person, then other inescapable problems could arise.

However... before Fang Xiufeng was sent to stand guard over Planet South Heaven, he was well-known in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. He had many friends, as well as many enemies.

Virtually all of the sects and clans had interacted with him in the past, and knew him well. He was known as someone who didn't speak much. However, when he did speak, he always followed through on what he said. He was tough and unyielding, and an old hand when it came to scheming.

He had lots of tricks at his disposal. He fought decisively, and was never sloppy. Back when Meng Hao had been small, certain clan members who coveted his Nirvana Fruit had once looked at him almost as if they wished to eat him. Meng Hao had run to his father in tears to tell him about what had happened.

That night, Fang Xiufeng drew his sword and went on a rampage. That night he killed dozens of subversive clan members, which shocked not only the Fang Clan, but the Ninth Mountain and Sea as a whole.

From that point on, everyone knew that Fang Xiufeng... was a very protective person, protective to an indescribable degree.

With a personality like that, Fang Xiufeng ended up having many friends, and at the same time... many enemies.

It could well be imagined how busy and exciting it would be on the day of the ceremony, when the various sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea came to pay their respects. It was even likely that some of his enemies would come and challenge him to battle, on the pretense of sharing fighting tips.

That was something that was permitted whenever anyone rose to the rank of Clan Chief or Sect Leader. After all, when the ceremony was over, that person could no longer pursue personal matters, but instead, had to be focused on the clan or sect as a whole.

After that day, all grudges would be dissolved.

Of course, it was only a formality. Unless there was some sort of life-and-death enmity, no one would choose to issue a challenge. Anyone who had become a Clan Chief or Sect Leader had to have an incredibly powerful cultivation base, one powerful enough to support everyone around him. Therefore, such customs also served to allow him to demonstrate his battle prowess and strike awe into the hearts of all onlookers.

Chapter 1173: Another Encounter With Shui Dongliu!

The seven days passed by in a flash. After Meng Hao concluded his sermon outside the log cabin on the Holy Island, the surrounding cultivators, beasts, birds, and even the vegetation and fish seemed to be completely absorbed in the process of being enlightened, even though he had already stopped talking.

Meng Hao slowly rose to his feet and looked around at all the beings surrounding him. After a moment of thought, he murmured, "Since we're connected by destiny, I might as well help all of you one more time."

He waved his right hand, causing the Immortal qi and spiritual energy in the area to churn. It then poured into the soil of the Holy Island, nourishing it, bolstering it for all eternity.

Now it was really and truly a Holy Land. For years to come, practicing cultivation for a single day there would be like cultivating for a year elsewhere. Even the land beyond the shores of the lake was affected. The effect wasn't as strong, but it still made the entire area incredibly suitable for cultivation.

When he finished, Meng Hao looked back at the log cabin, then turned and vanished into thin air. The door closed, leaving behind the two statues in their red robes, which would remain sealed there forever, smiling and looking into each other's eyes.

From that day forth, the Holy Island was open for all to visit. However... the log cabin was a place that could not be entered by anyone whose cultivation base was lower than Meng Hao's.

Meng Hao left the island and went to Blood Prince Gorge in the Blood Demon Sect, which was now a restricted area that no one was allowed to enter. If the island was a Holy Land for the Southern Domain, then Blood Prince Gorge was a Holy Land for the Blood Demon Sect.

Patriarch Blood Demon had long since passed away into meditation. Meng Hao stood outside of his cave, clasped hands and bowed deeply.

He stayed in Blood Prince Gorge for seven days, although no one in the Blood Demon Sect was aware of that fact, ensuring that the seven days passed very quietly.

During that time, he removed the black bat from his bag of holding. He performed a soulsearch, but even with the current level of his cultivation base, he was still unable to uncover any useful information. All he knew was that the black bat was consumed with a powerful desire to possess him.

In addition, he was clearly able to detect the aura... of a renegade spirit. He even called the parrot out to check.

After a bit of curious investigation, the parrot told Meng Hao that the black bat... definitely had the soul of a renegade spirit somewhere in its bloodline. That information confirmed Meng Hao's suspicions that the renegade spirit bat the mastiff had possessed in the Windswept Realm might not have been complete. After a bit of thought, he gave the black bat to the mastiff, who was clearly ravenous.

The mastiff howled and began to absorb it.

Seven days later, Meng Hao left Blood Prince Gorge. He also... imbued the place with Immortal qi, making it a extremely suitable place for cultivation, similar to the Holy Island. He also sealed the log cabin in Blood Prince Gorge.

He wasn't sure when he might be able to return, and deep in his heart, he hoped... that when he returned with Xu Qing, everything would be the way he left it.

After leaving the Blood Demon Sect, he went to the Ancient Temple of Doom, where he waved his hand to create a statue. It was a statue... of the mastiff.

The mastiff was a blood spirit which had originated with the Blood Immortal. If that Blood Immortal were in Meng Hao's presence right now, she wouldn't be a match for him at all. However, Meng Hao felt it was still appropriate for him to help the mastiff create this statue, as a way of connecting it to its original ancestor.

After seeing the statue of itself, the mastiff looked around at the Ancient Temple of Doom with a complicated expression.

Eventually, Meng Hao left for the Rebirth Cave, taking the mastiff with him.

Throughout the years that Meng Hao had been away from the Rebirth Cave, cultivators continued to travel there to attempt rebirth. Unfortunately, none had succeeded, as was evidenced by the fact that there were more bones there than the last time he had been here. He proceeded in toward the depths of the cave until he found the same wall he had stood in front of the last time he had been here. He studied it, his eyes flickering.

Never for all eternity would he forget the door he had seen in this location last time, just as he had been about to leave. In that moment, it had almost seemed like an illusion which instantly faded away. However, Meng Hao was sure of what he had seen.

Because of the level of his cultivation base at that time, he had been unable to get an answer to the puzzle of that door. Now he was back, standing in front of that same wall, his eyes gleaming.

"I wonder if I'll be able to unearth any more clues, given the current level of my cultivation base...." He unleashed his cultivation base, causing scintillating azure light to shine out. His Allheaven Dao Immortal Realm was more refined than before, and the fusion with his third Nirvana Fruit was now more complete.

As the power of his cultivation base spread out, he waved his finger in the direction of the wall, causing the azure light to spill onto the wall, illuminating it completely.

He stared at the wall as it began to transform. It seemed to wriggle and writhe, and gradually, an archaic and ancient door appeared.

However, the door seemed unstable, as if it were shifting between being illusory and corporeal. It appeared to be exuding a sinister air, and Meng Hao was even able to detect a bit of wild energy that seemed to seep into him.

It was as if someone were erupting with rage, screaming words that he didn't understand. It sounded like the murmurings of all living things crying out in his ears. With a cold harrumph, he said, "Illusions and lies!"

He reached out and pushed down onto the door, causing a rumbling sound to echo out. However, the door didn't even budge.

He frowned and pushed on the door again more forcefully, but the result was the same.

All of a sudden, an archaic voice spoke from behind him. "You can't open it..."

The voice spoke completely abruptly, and despite the level of Meng Hao's cultivation base, he hadn't been able to detect anyone behind him at all.

He spun around and saw an old man standing there. The old man had the demeanor of a transcendent being, and wore a slight smile on his face as he looked at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao gaped in shock; he instantly recognized this old man. It was none other than the man who had once painted him... Shui Dongliu!

"Senior Shui Dongliu!"

"You cannot, and must not, open that door," Shui Dongliu said, looking at Meng Hao, his eyes beaming with admiration.

"What's behind it?" Meng Hao didn't take the time to think about why Shui Dongliu was here. Years ago, he had told Meng Hao that anyone who existed in his memory could not have their Karma severed by the Ji Clan. At that time he had guessed that such an ability revealed how incredibly powerful Shui Dongliu's cultivation base must be.

In fact, Meng Hao could tell that Shui Dongliu... was probably even more powerful than he had imagined, although he had no proof to back up that feeling other than a hunch.

“It leads to another world,” Shui Dongliu said slowly. “Do you... want to have a look?” He waved his hand, causing a vortex to appear on the door. “Place your hand on the vortex, and you’ll be able to see.”

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. After a moment of thought, he extended his hand and placed it onto the vortex. In the instant that he touched it, his vision suddenly swam.

When it became clear, he was looking at a starry sky. It was vast and boundless, and there were no Mountains and Seas, nor were there any planets. There was only a boundless void, within which Meng Hao saw several gargantuan butterflies. The butterflies were so indescribably large that entire worlds existed on their wings!

There weren’t just worlds, there were cultivators!

As the butterflies flew through the starry sky, it was possible to detect lines stretching out behind them, connecting them to an enormous land mass, which they were dragging behind them.

That land mass was shaped like a person!!

The butterflies dragged the land mass through the starry sky, and as they passed through the void, the stars shattered, and the Heavens collapsed!

Meng Hao took a deep breath as the vision of the world faded away, and everything returned to normal. The door on the wall was still there, but the vortex was gone.

“They’re going to be here soon....” Shui Dongliu said, his voice reverberating through the Rebirth Cave.

“They’re coming from outside the 33 Heavens. When they arrive at Planet South Heaven, then South Heaven will be displaced. In that moment... the catastrophe will begin.” Meng Hao turned around again, and Shui Dongliu had vanished without a trace, although the echoes of his voice could still be heard.

Meng Hao stood there silently for a moment, looking at the door as it slowly faded away. The wall returned to normal, and Meng Hao stood there, lost in thought.

Meng Hao knew a lot about the history of the Mountain and Sea Realm, and knew that it was facing a grave crisis and catastrophe. He was also aware that... it had something to do with the copper mirror in his bag of holding.

“It’s coming, and there’s no hiding....” he murmured. “However, before it comes, there’s still time to get stronger.” Then he turned his head in the direction of the Ancient Dao Lakes, and his eyes gleamed with anticipation.

Beneath the Dao Lakes was the Divine Flame world, a place he very much looked forward to visiting again. The last time he had been there, he had braved great danger to extract a bit of the Essence of Divine Flame. In fact, that Essence of Divine Flame had become one of his trump cards.

Now, he would go back to visit the Ancient Dao Lakes again, and the Divine Flame world underneath them. This time... he would not only take away a sliver of the Divine Flame, he planned to take away more, whatever he was capable of laying hands on....

To him, it was a location where he could vastly increase his battle prowess.

Meng Hao left the Rebirth Cave, filled with anticipation. He and the mastiff transformed into a beam of light that shot through the air at top speed. The clouds trembled, and colors flashed in the sky, and in the space of a few breaths of time, he had appeared in the air near the Ancient Dao Lakes.

He looked down at all the lakes, and his eyes came to rest on the largest of them. Eyes flickering with an intense, sharp gleam, he shot down from the sky like a meteor, kicking up a huge wind as he shot toward the central lake.

Closer and closer!

Chapter 1174: Dismemberment by Five Dragons!

The last time Meng Hao had come here, cultivators had been gathering in a search for good fortune. Occasionally, Dao Lakes would erupt. If Dao projections appeared, they offered a chance at enlightenment. Or if the surrounding cultivators were lucky, magical items might shoot out, which would be true good fortune.

Just as at that time, there were cultivators present at the lakes, searching for opportunities for good fortune. It was at this point that Meng Hao shot down from the sky like a meteor.

“What’s... what’s that?”

“A shooting star?”

“No, it’s a person. A cultivator! What’s... what’s he doing?” As people caught sight of what first appeared to be a shooting star, their eyes went wide and their jaws dropped. They had never even heard of someone using such a method to try to reach the central Dao lake.

After all, the pressure that weighed down on the region got more intense the closer one got to the center. Even Dao Seeking cultivators had to be careful. Furthermore, if you attempted to just fly down from up above, the effects would be even more severe; to the people present, it actually seemed like an impossibility.

And yet, that is exactly what they were seeing happen in front of their very eyes, causing everyone to gasp.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as Meng Hao shot down like a meteor toward the largest Dao lake, which was in the center of them all. He moved with incredible speed, and nothing could impede his passage. It almost seemed like there was no pressure in the area at all, although the truth of the matter was that the pressure which did exist was completely insignificant as far as he was concerned.

Meng Hao shot into the central lake, and the surface of the water virtually exploded up into the air. He shot down, and within the blink of an eye, was at the bottom of the lake where he spread his right hand out into a palm and pushed down onto the lake floor.

The sludge at the bottom of the lake writhed, and was then shoved away from Meng Hao’s location, revealing a teleportation portal. Meng Hao stood on top of it, then stamped his right foot down, causing the portal to shine with scintillating light that even people beyond the surface of the lake could see.

In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao had vanished. When he reappeared, he was in the first level of the world down below, surrounded by mountains of magical items, and countless beasts who were in the process of carrying the treasures toward a huge door that hung in the middle of the air. The door

itself was flanked by several huge beasts, which lay there dozing. A moment later though, they trembled as if with excitement, and opened their eyes.

When they saw Meng Hao, several of the beasts roared, but almost immediately, went as quiet as if someone had gripped their throats and covered their mouths. Their eyes went wide, and they didn't dare to make any more noise. They just lay there, staring at Meng Hao in terror and disbelief.

What they saw was azure light radiating off of Meng Hao, a light which next caused all of them to suddenly fly forward and prostrate themselves in front of him.

It wasn't just them. All of the beasts in sight dropped down in worship as soon as they saw Meng Hao. Their eyes shone with fear and shock, and they trembled in place. Meng Hao's aura filled with them with terror, as did the azure light.

Not even Meng Hao had imagined that such a thing would happen. As he glanced around thoughtfully at the Allheaven Dao Immortal light which surrounded him, the beasts joined their voices together and called out, "We offer greetings, Dao Immortal!!"

Eyes glittering, Meng Hao nodded slightly. Without saying a word, he shot past the prostrating beasts, entering the door and appearing in the second level beyond.

That was the level with a huge altar that resembled a huge mountain. There was also a beast there at the top of the mountain who was enormous, and emanated an ancient aura. After catching sight of Meng Hao, its eyes went wide with disbelief. It examined him for a few seconds, then took a deep breath.

"So, it's you again. You... have become an Allheaven Dao Immortal!!"

Meng Hao flew up to the top of the mountain and looked around. There was no sign of the Northern Reaches cultivator with whom he had challenged this trial by fire years before.

Seeing Meng Hao look around, the beast said, "He left."

Then it clasped hands and bowed.

"Greetings, exalted Dao Immortal!"

“I want to go to the next level!” Meng Hao replied calmly. This time, the beast said nothing to dissuade him. It immediately backed up, leaving the way open for Meng Hao to enter the passageway to the Divine Flame world.

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his eyes flashed with determination. He shot forward, vanishing into the world of Divine Flame. The ancient beast remained behind, just as astonished as it had been moments before. When Meng Hao first came here, it could never have imagined that he would end up amazing it so much.

“The first time he came, he could barely get through the second level.

“The second time he came, he was strong enough to take a bit of Divine Flame....

“I never thought that the third time he came, he would do so as an Allheaven Dao Immortal. In fact, his aura leaves me trembling and filled with fear. If he wanted to kill me... all it would take on his part would be a simple thought.” The beast took a deep breath and looked fearfully at the passageway leading to the Divine Flame world.

When Meng Hao appeared within the world of Divine Flame, he looked around and saw countless enormous pagodas, all of them surrounded by boundless Divine Flame.

In addition to the majestic flames which filled the world, Meng Hao could also see endless piles of bones. The previous times he had been in this place, his cultivation base had been too weak, and he had been in too much of a hurry, therefore, he hadn't been able to examine them closely. But with his current cultivation base, he was not only able to see the bones scattered about below the pagodas, but could also see that the 990,000 pagodas themselves were made of bones.

“My cultivation base this time is much different than last time. I'm curious to find out what exists in this world of Divine Flame. I want to see whether or not anything exists here that I didn't spot last time!” Eyes flickering, he sent his divine sense out to fill this third level, the Divine Flame world. Not only could he see the vivid image of 990,000 pagodas, but, just as before, the enormous city in the middle of them all.

The city was pitch black, but covered with white vines and vegetation. Hovering in the air above it was a flame spark that seemed capable of burning for all eternity, a spark which cast boundless firelight into the world around it.

As Meng Hao's divine sense slowly spread out, he suddenly heard a familiar roar.

"Dao Fang, you must die!!

"You killed me, Dao Fang, and if I'm reincarnated, I'll definitely kill you!!

"The Immortal World is doomed to experience tribulation! The Immortal lands will grow old, and the Immortals will perish. But I refuse to give in!!

"I know the truth! No matter how long you suppress me, I won't admit defeat!

"Damned monkey! If I can get free, I'll have your hide!!

"If I'm transmigrated, I will slaughter myself out of this place! If my transmigration fails, I will fall into oblivion like all other living things, with virtually no hope of reawakening even after countless cycles of reincarnation. Therefore, I will leave a Dharmic decree for this place!

"My decree contains the Essence of my Dao flame, the last vestige of me, Huoyan Zi. I hope that countless years later, that vestige will still exist!"

Even with his current cultivation base, hearing the words still left Meng Hao completely shaken. The voice seemed to come from within the spark, a spark which also seemed to contain a vertical pupil inside of it.

The last time he had been here, it had been at this point that his divine sense felt as if it were being burned into ash, and he had been forced to give up. However this time, despite being shaken, he was able to continue to send his divine sense out. It passed the spark, and then proceed further on.

Meng Hao's face quickly flickered with surprise. On the previous two occasions in which he had come here, his divine sense had told him that this world was a small place. Now, though, as his divine sense spread out, he was shocked to find that this world... was actually far, far larger than he had realized!

There weren't just 990,000 pagodas!

Or perhaps it was more accurate to say that the 990,000 pagodas were simply one part of the world of Divine Flame. The world itself was divided into six regions!

Meng Hao was currently in the central region, which was surrounded by five other regions. If you looked closely, you would see that the six different regions were all connected. Shockingly, they formed... the shape of a person!!

Each region was filled with innumerable pagodas that almost seemed to weigh down like sealing marks. Most shocking of all was that each of the regions had a black city within it, above which was a burning spark!

Truth be told, that was not what astonished Meng Hao. What left him flabbergasted was that attached to each of the surrounding five regions was a war chariot. There were five war chariots, each one being pulled by an enormous, red-colored dragon. Those five enormous dragons appeared to be asleep, and as they lay there, they bore the semblance of five mountain ranges.

However, as soon as his divine sense passed over them, the enormous dragons... suddenly shivered, apparently having been stimulated. Simultaneously, an explosive, stifling power erupted out from all of them.

Meng Hao began to pant, and immediately retracted his divine sense. He waited by the exit for a bit, and after seeing that the five dragons apparently hadn't awoken, he finally heaved a sigh of relief.

Those five dragons brimmed with an air of extermination that was even more terrifying than the Dao Realm. Meng Hao could sense that they exceeded even Fang Shoudao's cultivation base.

Suddenly, an image appeared in his head, a vision of five roaring dragons, attached to war chariots. Those chariots were in the process of dismembering a gigantic, almighty figure!

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his expression flickered. After standing there silently for a moment, his eyes glittered.

“Whoever Huoyan Zi was, the Essence of Divine Flame has been and will continue to be incredibly useful to me.... Therefore, it doesn't matter how strange things get in here, I'm not going to give up on my idea of acquiring the entire Essence of Divine Flame!” The grandeur of the place filled Meng Hao's heart with vigilance, and its bizarreness weighed down on him like pressure.

When he thought back to what he had accomplished the last time he had been here, he had to admit that ignorance was bliss. Had he known more about the situation, it would have been hard to avoid having misgivings.

Chapter 1175: Channeling the Spark!

Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he looked off toward the huge black city covered by white vegetation. Then he looked at the spark hovering above it, and his eyes gleamed with determination.

"No matter what, I'm going to get that spark!" he murmured. That was his goal in coming here; he wouldn't be content with merely replenishing his current Divine Flame. Although there was a lot of the stuff here, the amount he had acquired last time had been limited.

It was a mere strand of Essence. Even if he replenished it, the amount he would end up with in the end would still be limited, just as before. If he wanted more, he would need more of the Essence itself. That Essence... was located deeper in than his current location. It was located where the cities were located, and especially within those flame sparks.

Meng Hao flashed into motion as he headed deeper in. He stopped at the nearest pagoda, where he sat down cross-legged, unleashed the power of his cultivation base, and began to absorb more of the Divine Flame into the Essence which he already had.

Soon, he was completely engulfed in fire. However, the power of his cultivation base was far beyond what it had been last time he had been here. His facial expression didn't even change in the face of the Divine Flame, which he quickly absorbed.

After enough time went by for an incense stick to burn, he rose to his feet and proceeded to the next pagoda. Time passed in this fashion, and as he continuously absorbed more and more Divine Flame, the Essence of Divine Flame inside of him grew larger and more powerful.

So far, he was merely replenishing the Divine Flame, not gaining more overall Essence. It was a process which he couldn't continue indefinitely. However, he wanted to proceed cautiously, and was using this method to get closer to the black-colored city, in order to observe the flame spark which floated above it.

It didn't take long for half a month to go by. Meng Hao had passed through thousands of pagodas, continuously absorbing flames until his Divine Flame was now ten times larger than it had been when he had entered the place.

He could tell that the next time he unleashed the Essence of Divine Flame, its power would vastly exceed the last time he had done so, to a terrifying degree. Eventually he reached the point where he couldn't absorb any more. Inwardly, he sighed.

He knew that he was at his limit, and if he wanted to break through to a higher level, he couldn't just absorb the Divine Flame in the surroundings. He needed to get in deeper, and absorb the Essence itself.

"Those flame sparks seem strangely dangerous...." he thought as he sat there atop one of the pagodas, gazing at the black city off in the distance. There were still tens of thousands of pagodas in between him and the city. After a bit of thought, he proceeded onward, shooting along with such speed that he left behind afterimages. His determination was such that he ignored any feelings of crisis and charged ahead.

Divine Flame swirled around him, and even the sky was a sea of flames. However, Meng Hao flew through the fire at top speed, kicking up a huge wind as he passed, which in turn set the flames dancing. Soon he had passed more than 5,000 pagodas. Although the temperature of the flames continued to grow hotter, he didn't slow down at all.

8,000. 10,000. 15,000. 20,000. 30,000....

Meng Hao sailed madly through the air, throwing the whole world of Divine Flame into chaos. Flames danced madly, and soon only 10,000 pagodas remained between him and the black city.

By now, the temperature was so high that sweat was dripping down his forehead, and he was panting slightly. Azure light sprang up around him as the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal exploded out. He pressed onward, passing the final 10,000 pagodas to appear directly outside the black city!

Being this close up allowed Meng Hao to clearly sense its might and majesty. When he looked at the white vegetation which covered the walls, it filled him with a strange and odd sensation.

He took a deep breath, flashing through the air to appear atop the city wall. When he looked down into the city itself, his pupils constricted.

Instead of seeing residential buildings, he saw an enormous, sprawling structure that resembled an Imperial palace.

In the very center of the Imperial palace, in the very center of the city itself, was a collapsed temple. Shockingly, a huge golden throne could be seen in the rubble of that temple, upon which was lying... a pile of human skin!!

The skin was intact, and seemed to have belonged to an ancient old man. Apparently he had been skinned alive, and then that skin had been draped over the throne. It was a bizarre sight, and even more bizarre was that, hovering 3,000 meters directly above the throne, was none other than the flame spark!

Meng Hao's eyes went wide. More vigilant than ever, he sped forward, leaving afterimages behind. In the exact moment in which he left, a hand suddenly reached out of the flames and closed around the afterimage he had left behind, as if it had been attempting to rip his heart out of his body.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered with killing intent as he looked back at the hand of flame, which instantly began to retract back into the flames. However, Meng Hao stretched out his hand and made a grasping motion.

"Get out here!" he said, snorting coldly. The flames behind the hand suddenly trembled, and a figure was dragged out. It was a body composed entirely of fire, without facial features. Although it was shaped like a person, it was clearly no cultivator.

"Flame spirit!" he thought, eyes narrowing. The flame spirit screamed shrilly, causing the surrounding sea of flames to churn. Suddenly, hundreds upon hundreds of flame spirits appeared, brimming with brutality and rage.

Even the flame up above in the air flickered. The flame spirits then charged toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao frowned as the more than one thousand vicious flame spirits closed in on him. He extended his hand with a cold harrumph, performing an incantation gesture and then waving a finger. Immediately, numerous Immortal mountains appeared, shining with azure light as they crushed down toward the flame spirits. Miserable shrieks rang out as virtually all of the flame spirits were crushed. As they were destroyed, they transformed into Divine Flame which scattered about.

Meng Hao didn't pause. He kept flying through the air directly toward the flame spark. As he neared it, he extended his hand and made a snatching motion. Immediately, a roar of rage could be heard from the sea of flames in the area.

“This is the Holy Land of the Five Dragons, and we are following the orders of the exalted Dao Fang, to suppress Huoyan Zi! Regardless of thine identity, begone immediately! Stay, and thou shalt be destroyed in body and soul!”

As the voice echoed out, the sea of flames churned, and a huge flame hand formed, which then shot toward Meng Hao. It looked almost like a hand which would appear in a Tribulation.

It bore down on Meng Hao as if to grab him and crush him out of existence. Meng Hao’s eyes flickered with a cold light, and he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand, then pointed out. Immediately, rumbling sounds could be heard, and a rift opened up in front of him. Blood Demon hands appeared, which tore the rift open further, allowing the Blood Demon to charge out toward the flame hand with a powerful roar.

A huge boom rang out as the flame hand and the Blood Demon began to fight. At the same time, Meng Hao’s right hand flashed like lightning, making contact with the flame spark. In that instant, his mind trembled, and cold laughter rang out from the sea of flames up above.

“Ignorant fool. So-called Immortal. Throughout the years, countless imbeciles like yourself have come from the Immortal World attempting to acquire the core Daoist teachings and doctrines of Huoyan Zi.

“In the end, none of them ever succeeded. The only thing they acquired was an early death. And now, nobody will be able to save you, either.”

Even as Meng Hao touched the flame spark, something that looked like a vertical pupil opened up within the flame.

It looked at Meng Hao emotionlessly.

“Do you wish to acquire more Essence?”

“Do you wish to acquire eternal life?”

“Do you wish to have a Daoist magic that can exterminate the Heavens?”

“Dao Fang once said that the Immortal World was doomed to experience tribulation. He said that the Immortal lands would grow old, and that the Immortals would perish. Impossible! I refuse to give in! I refuse to admit defeat!

“I can give you my Essence, I can give you my Daoist magic, and I can give you power. However, you must carry out my deepest desire. You must exterminate Dao Fang!!

“Slay Dao Fang!”

Meng Hao’s mind trembled from the sheer madness of the voice. It contained boundless hatred and obsession, and as it filled Meng Hao’s mind, it also seemed to influence the lands of Divine Flame around him. The fire raged higher up into the sky.

At the same time, the flame spark shrank down into his palm, fusing into his body, boring into him, becoming... a part of him!

Apparently, the flame didn’t care whether or not Meng Hao agreed; it fused into him. If it succeeded, then on some level, Huo Yanzi could be considered to have been reincarnated. Even if that reincarnation was merely as one of Meng Hao’s Essences, he would gladly accept that.

If the process failed... then Meng Hao would die. Then the flame would wait for the next Immortal to come and pass on its legacy. Eventually, someone would come who would be the successor of this Essence!

The world of the Divine Flames churned. Shockingly, innumerable flames suddenly began to surge through the air, shooting directly toward... Meng Hao!

If you could look down at the scene from up above, it would be more clear what was happening. The sea of flames was shrinking, with Meng Hao being the center. All the fire was now being sucked into him.

He was on fire, and a roaring bellow echoed out from his lips. Flames erupted out from inside of him and burned out, and he was wracked with indescribable pain. The feeling of imminent death filled him.

He knew that he had two paths stretching out in front of him now. If he succeeded, then he would be able to truly control this Essence, and would be far more powerful than before. If he failed, then he would be transformed into ash!

There was no third option!

The cold voice once again rang out from the sea of flames: “Throughout all the years, no one has ever succeeded. I’m looking forward to seeing you burned alive.” Apparently, the owner of that voice had seen many cultivators like Meng Hao die while trying to accept the legacy of this Essence.

Meng Hao’s eyes were bright red, and it was impossible to tell what part of that red was blood, and what was flame. His body was withering, his hair burning. Even his bag of holding seemed incapable of standing up to the force, and was starting to crumble. Meng Hao, sensing this, tossed it away from him. Understanding his intention, the mastiff let out an anxious howl and caught the bag.

“Trifling Essence of Divine Flame, you think you can do anything to me?!” Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. He could sense the impending crisis, and yet to him, it was nothing compared to what he had experienced in the Windswept Realm!

Chapter 1176: Great Circle: Fleshly body!!

Meng Hao’s eyes were bright red, and his clothes were burning away, revealing his powerful body. He was undergoing a baptism of Divine Flame, and was surrounded by an endless sea of fire.

The sea of flames roared toward him, pouring into his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. A fierce expression appeared on his face as he rotated his cultivation base, closing off all of his orifices, even the pores on his skin.

“The Divine Flame might be powerful, but it’s not invincible. I’ll use this flame to refine my body, to take myself to the next level!” He waved both hands, causing his Ancient Realm fleshly body Soul Lamps to suddenly appear.

He had nine in total, but only two were currently lit. The other seven were dark.

An Ancient Realm fleshly body like Meng Hao's was a rare thing, and was in fact in the anti-Ancient Realm. His Ancient Realm fleshly body Soul Lamps started out dark, and were then lit aflame!

As his fleshly body became more powerful, and as he practiced cultivation, he would light those Ancient Realm fleshly body Soul Lamps, one by one!

"Refine!!" he roared, causing the flames to begin to spin around him. They were incapable of entering his body, but instead, began to roast it from the outside.

He trembled, and quickly performed some double-handed incantation gestures. He wasn't using some sort of body-refinement magic, but rather... a pill concocting technique!

Meng Hao's Dao of alchemy was one in which he could use Heaven and Earth as his pill furnace, and his body as the medicinal pill! In that way, pill concocting techniques could be used to refine his body. However, what he was doing in this case, he was not using Heaven and Earth as the pill furnace, but instead... his own body! His body was both the pill furnace and the medical pill, as he attempted to use the power of the surrounding flames to make himself even stronger!

Shocking rumbling sounds echoed out. Meng Hao's eyes were closed, and his body was bright red as he continuously performed double-handed incantation seals. His hands moved so fast they blurred, casting enchantments not on his surroundings, but on himself.

Even the guardian of the place, who still remained hidden, was shocked. However, he quickly began to laugh coldly.

"No one can succeed. With the curse of the exalted Dao Fang in place, there is no one in the Mountain and Sea Realm who can fuse with the flame spark of the renegade Huoyan Zi!"

Meng Hao's eyes suddenly snapped open, and they shone with bright red light. Staring up into the empty sky, he said, "Say that again after I absorb it!"

Although he couldn't see the person who was speaking, that guardian was as shocked as before at the energy which was rising up from Meng Hao.

He threw his head back and roared as his fleshly body underwent continuous refinement. As the flame sea around him raged, as the Essence battered him... his third Soul Lamp suddenly lit up!

When that happened, rumbling booms echoed out from inside him. His body became mightier than before, his fleshly body power having broken through from the previous level. He was now far stronger than before!!

As his fleshly body grew stronger, he became increasingly capable of withstanding the sea of flames! However, as long as he had the flame spark within him, the surrounding fire would eternally burn him. Either he would be transformed into ashes, or... he would eventually completely absorb the sea of flames.

“Refining my body was the first step. Only by getting my body to the proper level can I successfully absorb the Divine Flame. My body is like a pill furnace; if it takes too much heat, it will explode!” He gritted his teeth, and his expression twisted. He rotated his cultivation base fully, fighting back against the sea of flames which sought to bore into him, and building up Immortal power within his flesh and blood to once again refine himself!

Booms echoed out as the sea of flames engulfed him. It was almost as if it really wished to melt him into a medicinal pill!

The mastiff howled anxiously, but couldn’t get near. Meng Hao had already transmitted strict orders to it that it must not get too close to him.

Meng Hao was rapidly withering, and just when it seemed like he couldn’t take it any more, his eyes snapped open yet again. He threw his head back and bellowed as a fourth Soul Lamp flickered to life.

The lighting of that Soul Lamp gave him a bit of breathing room. His body was now almost doubly as powerful as before. His eyes glittered as he performed more double-handed incantation gestures with even greater speed, producing even more sealing marks.

“Bring it on!” he cried, waving both arms, allowing the sea of flames to once again engulf him....

Soon, his fifth Soul Lamp was burning!!

His energy soared to a terrifying degree, and that wasn’t because of his cultivation base. Instead... it came from the terrifying qi and blood of his fleshly body!

The power on display caused the hidden guardian's face to fall. Suddenly, he appeared out in the open, a middle-aged man wearing golden armor. He looked like a celestial warrior, and currently, his expression was one of complete astonishment.

He could never have imagined that Meng Hao would actually be able to last this long. In the past, nobody had ever been able to last more than ten or so breaths of time before being killed.

"The flame spark is eternal," the guardian said coldly, looking at Meng Hao as if he were a dead man. "The Divine Flame is boundless. Even if you hold on for longer, all it means is that the pain that you endure will increase."

Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, Meng Hao's eyes opened again. He looked through the sea of flames at the guardian and smiled slightly. Because of the pain he was enduring, the smile seemed especially ferocious.

"If I'm not mistaken, you can't do anything to me while I'm in the middle of absorbing the flame spark," he said. "In that case... why don't you just sit back and enjoy the show? Watch... how this flame spark is supposed to be used. Watch... how to absorb all of the flame sea in this place. I'll suck it all in. After that.... Watch as I cut you down!"

The decisiveness in Meng Hao's voice caused the guardian's face to flicker. What Meng Hao had said was correct; he couldn't interfere with the absorption process. The Divine Flame was in its most wild state, and regardless of what Meng Hao was doing, if he got too close, the flame would go even crazier.

After all, the flame spark contained the will of Huoyan Zi. Normally, that will was kept in a state of suppression. However, when it came time to pass the legacy on to an Immortal, it would erupt wildly.

Indeed, the guardian... didn't dare to get too close. He could only wait until Meng Hao died amidst accepting the legacy.

His face flickered as rumbling sounds echoed out from Meng Hao, who was now withering even more; his qi and blood having almost completely burned away. However, it was at this point that his sixth Soul Lamp lit up!!

When that happened, Meng Hao began panting raggedly. Adding a sixth Soul Lamp only meant that the time that he could endure the Divine Flame had been extended. However, he was still forced to

use it for purposes of exterior refinement; he still didn't dare to absorb it internally. If the flame raged on both the inside and outside simultaneously in his current state, he would die beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"I need to be stronger. REFINE!!" The speed of his incantation gestures increased. In order to refine his fleshly body to increased heights of power, he even went as far as to stimulate the flame spark inside of him. That in turn caused the sea of flames around him to grow more intense. Boundless fire raged around him, causing both the mastiff and the guardian to back up.

Meng Hao looked like little more than a sack of bones. However, his eyes shone brightly as his seventh Soul Lamp suddenly lit up.

In the instant that the seventh Soul Lamp came to life, Meng Hao's fleshly body experienced an unprecedented increase in power. The sound of his heartbeat pounded like thunder. He was now several times stronger than before, so much so that if he were to now encounter the Echelon cultivator from the First Mountain, Dao-Heaven, a single punch is all it would take to cause him to cough up blood...

His fleshly body was now powerful to an incredible degree, and was continuing to grow even stronger. To Meng Hao, this world of Divine Flame was a location of incredible good fortune when it came to his fleshly body!

Of course, that came with the assumption that Meng Hao would be able to fully absorb the Essence of Divine Flame afterward. If he couldn't... it wouldn't matter how strong his fleshly body got, it would all be in vain!

"I can light another!" he said. He was on the verge of being completely withered up, and was panting. Although his fleshly body was at a state of incredible power, the flame of his life force was weak. The sea of flames continued to refine his fleshly body, and yet it was simultaneously consuming his life force.

The continuous increases in fleshly body power were insufficient to replenish the life force that had been exhausted. Not even the recovery power of his Eternal stratum could match the destruction wreaked by the Essence of Divine Flame. Just as Meng Hao's vision began to swim, he smacked his chest with his hand, stimulating his heart, which surged with power, causing the qi and blood flow within him to speed up. That in turn caused his fleshly body to burst with power.

RUUUUUUMMMMBLLLLL!

In that critical moment, his eighth fleshly body Soul Lamp lit up!!

In that instant, his fleshly body power reaching a Heaven-shaking, Earth-shattering level. It had achieved the peak of the Ancient Realm, and was just a step away from being equivalent to the great circle of the Ancient Realm.

“Useless,” the guardian said, staring at Meng Hao. “What you’re doing is like drinking poison when you’re thirsty. The sea of flames is boundless, and moments from now, I can watch as you burn away into nothing more than specks of ash.” Although the man was actually inwardly shocked, he still believed that it was impossible for anyone to overcome the curse of the exalted Dao Fang.

Meng Hao looked up through the flames at the man.

“Well then, watch carefully,” he said, voice hoarse. He suddenly caused his cultivation base to cease any sort of resistance against the sea of flames. He opened his pores and orifices, allowing the sea of flames to suddenly wash through him with wild abandon!

Pain filled him, and he trembled violently, gritting his teeth. This type of pain far exceeded the type he had felt during the body refinement. Thankfully, his body was much stronger than before, otherwise, the sudden onslaught would have transformed him into ash within a few breaths of time.

The flame spark inside of him seemed to be calling the Divine Flame, causing it to seethe. Meng Hao was the center of it all, and it was as if the flames had suddenly found the place they had been seeking to go all along.

As they simultaneously poured into him, his cultivation base erupted with the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal. Azure light shone out, and his third Nirvana Fruit was more fully absorbed!

When that happened, he went from being sixty to seventy percent of an Allheaven Dao Immortal to even higher. The sea of flames around him roiled as it poured into his body.

Shockingly, he was now using the flame spark to further refine his third Nirvana Fruit!

First he refined his body, and then he refined his Nirvana Fruit. This was the idea that Meng Hao had come up with, to borrow the power of the Essence of Divine Flame to grow more and more powerful, all for the purpose of fully absorbing the Nirvana Fruit!

“That azure light... it’s...” The middle-aged guardian’s eyes went wide. Although he had seen the same thing earlier, he hadn’t been paying very close attention. Now, the azure light glittered resplendently within the sea of flames, forcing him to pay it full heed. His face fell.

Chapter 1177: True Dao Immortal!

“Allheaven Dao Immortal!!

“Impossible!” the guardian said hoarsely. “How could there still be an Allheaven Dao Immortal in the Mountain and Sea Realm? Impossible!!” He hadn’t paid any attention to Meng Hao’s azure glow before. After all, there were many Daoist magics and defensive magical items that could cast off green or azure glows. It wouldn’t be realistic to think of Allheaven Immortals every time such a light appeared.

From what he could recall, Allheaven Dao Immortals were the stuff of legend, and only almighty figures could be counted among their ranks. As a simple guard that had been conscripted into service here, Allheaven Dao Immortals were the type of existence that was far above and beyond his station.

If Meng Hao weren’t currently engulfed in the sea of flames, shining with an azure light that outshone the Divine Flame, thus provoking a close inspection by the guardian, then he would never have recognized that it was the light of an Allheaven Dao Immortal.

A cold gleam flickered in Meng Hao’s eyes, and rumbling sounds emanated out from his fleshly body. His cultivation base soared, and his Nirvana Fruit fused more fully into him, thanks to the Divine Flame.

Soon, he had reached seventy percent!

Trembling, he threw his head back and roared. The azure light shining off of him grew more scintillating, spreading out in all directions with incredible strength that seemed capable of suppressing the Divine Flame. In fact, the flames shooting toward Meng Hao even paused in place.

However, no matter how powerful that azure light became, the flame spark inside of Meng Hao continued to pull at the Divine Flame, exerting more force, causing it to move once again. All of the flames in the entire world trembled.

Meng Hao shook violently within the sea of flames. He was reaching the point where he couldn't hold on much longer. His body was beginning to crack, and the Divine Flame was making it difficult to rotate his cultivation base.

Were it not for the presence of the azure light, Meng Hao would already be dead.

“Allheaven Dao!” Meng Hao roared in this critical moment. His third Nirvana Fruit fused even more. More azure light emanated out from him, reaching a distance of thirty meters!

Within that thirty meters, nothing existed but a world of azure light!

By now, his third Nirvana Fruit was eighty percent absorbed!!

Normally speaking, the extra ten percent which had just fused would have taken a month of work. But now, with the burning Divine Flame, the process was completed in a flash. This could be seen as an opportunity for Meng Hao. However, that opportunity was backed by the shadow of death.

With eighty percent of the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal, Meng Hao could relax for a moment. His Eternal stratum worked rapidly to heal his life force, and yet even still, he could sense the impending threat of doom from the Divine Flame.

“You're going to die for sure!” said the guardian. “Who cares if you're an Allheaven Dao Immortal? I never imagined that after standing guard here for all these years, I would eventually be able to see an Allheaven Dao Immortal burned alive right in front of me!” The man threw his head back and laughed.

“You're getting excited a bit too early,” Meng Hao said in a grating voice. His eyes shone with determination as he extended his right hand and pushed down hard onto his forehead.

Incredible power surged into his mind, and it was almost as if he were attacking his third Nirvana Fruit. His whole body shook, and he coughed up three mouthfuls of blood. Almost instantly, the blood was scorched into a blood mist, and Meng Hao's body withered even more. However, he was able to use the power his strike unleashed to further absorb the Nirvana Fruit.

Ninety percent!!

Ninety percent of an Allheaven Dao Immortal!

Azure light exploded around him. No longer did it reach out to 30 meters, but rather, 300 meters, an increase of tenfold. At the same time, Meng Hao's life force exploded up, and was significantly restored.

He panted for a moment, then threw his head back and roared, a roar which caused tens of thousands of the surrounding 990,000 pagodas to collapse.

This development caused the guardian's face to fall. He stared at Meng Hao in complete shock, almost unable to believe the things that Meng Hao was doing. All of a sudden, his confidence was beginning to waver, and he had the feeling that perhaps... Meng Hao might succeed after all.

"Impossible," the man murmured, his eyes filling with a staunch gleam. "The exalted Dao Fang has a towering cultivation base. His curse cannot be broken by anyone in the Mountain and Sea Realm! He said that nobody can acquire this legacy, so therefore, nobody can!"

"If the curse of Dao Fang really is impossible to break," Meng Hao said, "well then... what are you guarding, and why does this place even need a guardian!?" He extended his right hand and pushed forward, causing the Divine Flame to seethe and then suddenly stop.

Within the 300 meters of azure light, not a bit of Divine Flame existed. It had all been expelled outside the perimeter, allowing Meng Hao to finally breathe a sigh of relief.

His Eternal stratum surged, restoring his body and replenishing his life force. Combined with the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal, it ensured that Meng Hao's energy rose higher and higher. Colors flashed up above, and although there was usually no weather in this place, roiling clouds materialized out of nowhere, writhing in the sky.

An indescribable energy was now rising up from Meng Hao.

It was nothing more than energy, but it caused the guardian's face to fall. He began to pant as he looked at Meng Hao, eyes wide. He could sense the soaring rise in Meng Hao's cultivation base, and it filled him with intense fear.

The combination of explosive growth in fleshly body and cultivation base at the same time caused incredible pressure to radiate out.

Meng Hao raised his hand, and the mastiff also began to emanate an azure light. The azure light obeyed Meng Hao's will, blessing the mastiff, giving it the added protection of an Allheaven Dao Immortal.

The mastiff let out a long howl of joy, then transformed into a beam of light that shot toward Meng Hao and flew into his bag of holding. Afterward, Meng Hao patted his bag of holding and produced a new set of clothing, which he donned. Then he looked up at the middle-aged guardian.

"It doesn't matter if you're a bit stronger," the man roared, glaring at Meng Hao, "you still can't absorb the entire sea of flames. Even if the flame spark can't kill you, you still won't be able to take it away!"

"You're right, I can't take it away now," Meng Hao said. "But... I will soon. Don't worry, I'll let you watch, and then I'll close your eyes forever!" With that Meng Hao closed his own eyes.

Instantly, an azure magical symbol appeared on his forehead, not the Echelon mark, but rather the symbol of an Allheaven Immortal.

It was circular, and was divided into nine complete sections and one incomplete section. However, that incomplete section was rapidly filling in.

In the space of a few breaths, the final ten percent of the azure magical symbol began to glow with blinding azure light.

The light was now several times more intense than before. It... almost looked like an azure sun.

Meng Hao's cultivation base rocketed up with increasing power. Heaven and Earth trembled, and the entire world shook as ripples spread out in all directions.

At the same time, the numerous pagodas in the world began to collapse one by one under the increasing pressure of Meng Hao's energy.

Thousands. Tens of thousands. A hundred thousand. Two hundred thousand....

As the pagodas collapsed, the whole world descended into rumbling that sounded like screeching roars that emanated from deep underground. Heaven and Earth shook violently, almost as if doomsday had arrived.

All of that was because of Meng Hao!

All of that was because Meng Hao was... an Allheaven Dao Immortal!

The azure light spread out in all directions, and as it did, the Divine Flame shot back to avoid it. In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao was the only person in the entire 3,000-meter area.

Even the guardian was forced to retreat, feeling more astonished than ever.

Meng Hao's body emanated boundless azure light, as if he were an azure-colored sun. His energy rocketed up, his cultivation base exploded, and he felt more powerful than he ever had in his entire life.

If he met a Quasi-Dao Guru Heavencloud in his current state, he was completely confident that he could crush him as easily as dried weeds.

He could even kill... Dao Realm experts, as long as they had 2 Essences or less!

Meng Hao's eyes snapped open, and azure lightning shot out of them, smashing through the void and slamming into the middle-aged guardian's eyes. The lightning smashed his mind, crushing him like a wet branch.

He screamed miserably, and blood sprayed out of his mouth as he tumbled backward, accompanied by terrifying booms. A single glance forced him backward by seven steps, after which he exploded into bits.

As his Nascent Divinity flew out, it was clear a single thought on Meng Hao's part could cause the surrounding azure lightning to destroy him.

"Like I said, I'm going to let you watch me take away the flame spark," Meng Hao said coolly, hovering there as if he were the most supreme being in Heaven and Earth.

The guardian's Nascent Divinity trembled in intense fear of Meng Hao. He still almost couldn't believe that he... who had guarded this land for so long, who had a cultivation base in the great circle of the Ancient Realm, would actually... have his fleshly body destroyed by a single look from Meng Hao. Even his Nascent Divinity could be killed at any moment.

"Allheaven Dao Immortal... so this... is an Allheaven Dao Immortal!

"Back in the Paragon Immortal Realm, they weren't Paragons, and yet, even Paragons had to respect them. No wonder they were called the most terrifying slaughter cultivators.... Allheaven Dao Immortals!!"

The man's Nascent Divinity was trembling as he stared at Meng Hao. His mind spun, and he just couldn't believe that he had actually seen a legendary Allheaven Dao Immortal. Furthermore... it was not an awakening Allheaven Dao Immortal, but a complete, fully awoken, completely powered up...

Allheaven Dao Immortal!

Chapter 1178: Peak!

The middle-aged guardian was mistaken. He had never seen an Allheaven Dao Immortal, so he didn't know... that even if you said Meng Hao was the first Allheaven Immortal, and that later there might be a second or a third or even more, Meng Hao would still be the most powerful type, an Allheaven Dao Immortal!

Furthermore, he was one of the most powerful Allheaven Dao Immortals in history.

And that was because... of his fleshly body!

The strength of his fleshly body made his Allheaven Dao Immortal battle prowess even more powerful.

“There’s no need to rush the absorption of the Divine Flame....” he said softly. “I can still become more powerful!” He could sense that, based on the boundless Immortal power within him, if he wanted to, he could grow to a size of well over 3,000 meters tall.

“My fleshly body... still has an unlit Soul Lamp. I wonder... how powerful I’ll be after I light all of them!” A strange light appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes as nine Soul Lamps materialized around him. Eight of them were now lit for all eternity, but the ninth was still unlit.

He looked thoughtfully at that ninth Soul Lamp for a moment, then waved his right hand. Instantly, the 3,000-meter azure light vanished. Likewise, the pressure weighing down on the sea of flames vanished, allowing it to rage with fury.

Instantly, the entire area was completely engulfed in fire that obscured all else. The guardian in Nascent Divinity form couldn’t even catch a glimpse of Meng Hao.

He remained within the sea of flames, eyes closed, allowing the fire to enter his body. However, he prevented the flame spark from absorbing the flames, and instead allowed them to build up inside of him.

More Divine Flame poured into him, raging, sweeping about inside of him, pouring through his qi passageways, inundating his internal organs, filling his flesh and blood. It even seeped into his bones.

Meng Hao began trembling slightly, but his expression was the same as usual. Keeping the flame spark sealed, he allowed more and more Divine Flame to build up inside of him, until he was like a being of fire. His flesh, bones, qi passageways, and the other parts of him all contained Divine Flame.

And the amount only continued to increase. If you likened Meng Hao to a bottle, then at the moment, that bottle was now more than forty percent full of Divine Flame.

And he wasn’t finished!

Bizarre light gleamed in his eyes as he sucked in the Divine Flame as if he were a black hole. None of it was allowed into the flame spark, but instead, built up inside of him. The sensation of burning increased as the flames did. Meng Hao was using this method... to temper his fleshly body!

BOOM!

Fifty percent. Sixty percent. Seventy percent!

This process of body tempering left him trembling. The difficulty was almost impossible to describe. Were it not for the fact that Meng Hao already had an incredibly powerful fleshly body, plus the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal, then he would not have been able to take the intense heat of the flames.

However, in order to strengthen his fleshly body, and in order to take full advantage of this instance of good fortune, he sucked in more. Rumbling sounds echoed out as the boundless Divine Flames coursing through him pushed him from seventy percent to eighty!

The process continued rapidly, until he was at ninety percent!

In that moment, he shook violently and coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. Even though he was a creature of flesh and blood, he had absorbed the Divine Flame by ninety percent, causing Heaven-shaking, Earth-toppling transformations. He was almost like a flame spirit now, except with a body of flesh and blood.

“I can keep going. Bring it on!” Meng Hao eyes shone with bright light as he looked at his nine Soul Lamps. A tiny flame had already appeared on the last lamp, and it was growing larger; soon the lamp would be completely lit. Eyes gleaming with determination, he gritted his teeth and sucked in more flame.

Rumbling sounds echoed out, causing everything to shake violently. Pagodas toppled, and the sky appeared to be on the verge of being ripped apart to reveal the lands up above.

After all, this location was underground!

Meng Hao threw his head back and roared as the Divine Flame within him finally reached... one hundred percent!

Each and every part of him was now Divine Flame. At the same time, his ninth Soul Lamp flared to life!!

When that happened, rumbling sounds filled his entire body. His heart began to beat with more power than before, and even his qi and blood caused the outside world to dim. A terrifying power rose up from him, a power that had reached a Heaven-defying level!

You could say that from the beginning of the Mountain and Sea Realm until the modern day, it would be easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone with a fleshly body as powerful as this. If he took a single further step forward, he would have a Dao Realm fleshly body!

As for Dao Realm fleshly bodies... there was no need to even mention how rare such a thing was in the Mountain and Sea Realm. Even in the Paragon Immortal Realm, the only people who possessed bodies like that were Paragons!

Only Paragons could take their fleshly bodies into the Dao Realm!

That was because when the fleshly body achieved the Dao, then even if Heaven and Earth rotted away, that fleshly body would not. The only way it could be destroyed was in battle; neither the ravages of time nor the power of Heaven and Earth could destroy it.

That was the Dao Realm fleshly body!

And right now, Meng Hao was only a step away from exactly that!!

His eyes snapped open, and he threw his head back and roared, causing the land overhead to crumble; dirt and rocks fell down, and although the canopy above didn't collapse, the middle-aged guardian outside of the sea of flames was even more shocked than before.

In response to Meng Hao's roar, the sea of flames around him churned, and hundreds of thousands of pagodas throughout the world toppled over into pieces.

Up in the second level, the ancient beast trembled as the whole level quaked. The first level up above was the same, and even the Dao lakes beyond that were vibrating. Numerous Dao lakes erupted, shooting magical items and Dao projections up into the air, to the shock and delight of the gathered cultivators.

Within the world of Divine Flame, Meng Hao's roars echoed out as his Allheaven Dao Immortal cultivation base exploded with power. There was no azure light though, and he now did nothing to prevent the Divine Flame from pouring into the flame spark.

At long last, the flame spark could absorb the flames it had been blocked off from before. All of the fire outside of Meng Hao surged toward him in waves.

He stretched his arms wide, allowing it to fully flow into the flame spark, which desired to consume all the fire in the world.

"Flame spark... you're mine!" he said, waving his sleeve and rising up into the air. The sea of flames rose up with him, and from a distance, the flames formed an image that looked like a mountain. The sight would be shocking to anyone who could lay eyes on it.

If you looked even closer, it would appear as if Meng Hao had become an invincible bird, with the sea of flames being his wings as he soared through the Heavens, laying waste to everything.

All of the Divine Flame in the world began to converge, shrinking down and pouring into Meng Hao. The flame spark inside of him was shining brightly, and soon, an Essence aura began to emanate off of him.

That essence was no longer just a sliver. It was majestic and boundless, true Essence. Flame Essence. Henceforth, this would be Meng Hao's first Essence.

Meng Hao was the only cultivator ever to be able to control Essence while in the Immortal Realm!

He threw his head back and roared, and the flame sea around him slowly shrank. It was now seventy percent of its original size, then fifty, and then forty!

It was a thoroughly shocking sight. The guardian stared at Meng Hao absorbing the flames, and his previous conviction was now completely shaken.

"The curse of the exalted Dao Fang..." he murmured. "Nobody can acquire the flame spark... how could this be happening...?" By now, the sea of flames was thirty percent of its original size!

The more Meng Hao absorbed, the more resplendent his internal flame spark became. By now, the sea of flames could barely harm him at all, and after he completely absorbed it, fire would never be able to hurt Meng Hao again.

Rumbling filled the entire world. The air shook as the sea of flames once again shrank down!

Twenty percent!!

Only twenty percent of the sea of flames remained. The eternal Divine Flame within the world region was being completely absorbed by Meng Hao. Although this was only a single one of the flame sparks, even someone in the Dao Realm would lust insatiably after it.

Ten percent!!

Brilliant light shone off of Meng Hao, and the flame sea continued to shrink. The Essence aura on him grew more intense, and everything around him shook violently!

In the space of a few breaths, the sea of flames shrank down into a mere strand of Divine Flame, which then merged into Meng Hao. At that point, this part of the world of Divine Flame didn't contain even a single flame!

As of this day, the sea of flames which had existed for so long, and burned eternally... was now gone. There was no Divine Flame, and the lands below were now completely revealed, and at the same time, all of the pagodas collapsed into rubble.

100,000. 200,000. 300,000... in the blink of an eye, massive rumbling could be heard echoing out until the entire place... didn't have a single pagoda standing in it!

Feeling completely shaken, Meng Hao closed his eyes. The flame spark inside of him had absorbed all of the Divine Flame in the entire world. As of this moment, the will of Huoyan Zi approved of Meng Hao, and did not resist him at all. Instead, it merged into him.

When that happened, the Essence aura within Meng Hao was eternally stabilized!

He slowly opened his eyes. This was his most powerful state. Allheaven Dao Immortal. The great circle of the Ancient Realm fleshly body. A complete Essence of Divine Flame!

“Impossible!!” the guardian shrieked. In the instant that he spoke, the azure lightning which surrounded him transformed into numerous azure snakes that stabbed into his Nascent Divinity. To the man’s shock, his Nascent Divinity faded away into the air. Meng Hao had lived up to his word, and allowed the guardian to witness him accepting the legacy of the flame spark!

Meng Hao hovered in midair, looking around until his gaze came to fall on the lands down below. Off in the distance, there were other lands of Divine Flame, and other flame sparks!

However, in the very moment in which he looked off into the distance, there was something that filled Meng Hao with a sensation of crisis. He spun and looked down at the pitch-black city down below, his eyes shining like blades.

Chapter 1179: The Curse of Dao Fang!

Without the sea of flames covering it, the black city was now much more clearly visible. White vegetation still clung to the walls, and there was still a palace in the middle.

At first, it didn’t look much different than the first time he had laid eyes on it.

Meng Hao frowned as he examined it more closely. Then his eyes widened as he realized that something had changed. The pile of human skin which had been draped on the huge throne...

was now gone!

Meng Hao’s eyes shone with a cold light, and he sent his divine sense out in all directions, backed by the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal. Soon, his frown deepened as he realized that there weren’t any clues to be found about what had happened.

The sense of crisis still existed within him, and was growing stronger. He even had the sensation that someone was watching him.

“The curse of Dao Fang....” He thought back to what the guardian had said before dying. Now that he thought about it, he had met Dao Fang. Although he hadn’t seen what he looked like, when he experienced that mental journey out into the void beyond the Windswept Realm, he knew that he had encountered an entity that existed atop the 33 Heavens. That entity’s name was... Dao Fang!

Meng Hao didn't have a very high opinion of this Dao Fang. After all, based on his understanding of the Mountain and Sea Realm, the 33 Heavens were the first barrier sealing the Mountain and Sea Realm.

Dao Fang was the second barrier!

Meng Hao's eyes flickered as he slowly backed up. However, in that moment, the air around him suddenly seemed to be sealed, causing the exit to be completely wiped away.

On the second level of the underground world, the ancient beast gasped. It suddenly rose to its feet as it realized that the passageway to the third level had collapsed noiselessly.

Meng Hao stopped in place, frowning. The sensation of crisis within him exploded with intensity. His pupils constricted, and he looked down at the black-colored city. This time, he couldn't hold back from gasping.

What he saw was that the color of the city itself was now changing. It was no longer black, but instead, pale white. It almost had the luster of skin. Furthermore, the white vegetation on the city walls was gradually turning brown, almost as if they were blood vessels within the skin.

It wasn't just the city walls that were changing. The whole city, including the palace and all the surrounding buildings, was all changing color to pale white. Then, Meng Hao's eyes widened as the entire city began to move!!

It was slowly twitching; the city walls, the palace, the land, everything was moving. Furthermore, an aura of life suddenly erupted out from the city.

It was as if the entire city was no longer an inanimate object, but a living thing!

As the city spasmed, the city wall emitted rumbling sounds. Odd cracks spread out, and the ground quaked. Shockingly, part of the city wall ripped out and began to rise up, transforming into a huge arm. Another part of the city wall also lurched, and then transformed into a second arm.

The other sections of the city wall rumbled as they transformed into legs. As they rose up from the ground, the palace also jerked as it became a torso, with the central part of the palace turning into an Imperial crown!

As for the enormous throne which was in the palace, it turned into a face!

RUMBLE!!

The entire city transformed in front of Meng Hao's eyes, becoming an enormous giant with white skin, fully 30,000 meters tall, causing everything to shake violently. It actually... didn't even look like a city any more. It looked like an actual giant!

Its body was made of flesh and blood, and the blood vessels were even visible on its skin. Its eyes glowed with coldness as it stood there looking down at Meng Hao.

When Meng Hao looked up at the face, he realized that this giant was none other than the pile of human skin he had seen earlier!!

The skin hadn't left, but had instead used some special technique to merge with the city and transform into a giant. Or maybe... the city was actually materialized from a giant to begin with!

Perhaps there was another explanation. Maybe the human skin and the city itself were both parts of the curse of Dao Fang!

Meng Hao wasn't sure which of these possibilities was correct. However, he was currently filled with a sense of deadly crisis. He knew that this giant... was a formidable foe!

He suddenly smiled, and his eyes glinted with the desire to do battle. He was now an Allheaven Dao Immortal, with a fleshly body in the great circle of the Ancient Realm, with the true Essence of Divine Flame.

All of that placed Meng Hao at the ultimate peak. He could fight with the Dao Realm, so this trifling giant only made him want to do battle, to test out his new cultivation base breakthrough. He wanted to prove... exactly how powerful he was!

A powerful voice rumbled out of the giant's mouth, crackling like thunder, filled with awe-inspiring power like Heavenly might. The ground trembled, and everything shook. "Hand over the flame spark, and you will merely be killed. Force me to take it, and I'll kill your whole clan!"

Meng Hao looked at the giant, smiled coldly, and then spoke equally domineering words. “Become my follower, and I won’t kill you! Refuse, and I’ll destroy you in body and soul!”

The giant looked coldly at Meng Hao, then raised his right hand and clenched it into a fist. The air seemed to be on the verge of exploding as incredible power erupted out. He punched toward Meng Hao, and his fist moved with incredible speed, seemingly encompassing the entire world.

Meng Hao snorted coldly. Instead of backing up, he also clenched his right hand, punching out with the Life-Extermination Fist.

When the two fists slammed into each other, a massive rumbling echoed out. The land between them shattered, and a huge crevice opened up. Meng Hao sailed over it, landing on the giant’s hand and racing up toward its neck. Even as he ran, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing numerous Immortal mountains to descend. Then he punched out with the Self-Immolation Fist.

The giant’s eyes flickered and it trembled. That trembling caused an explosive force to rage toward Meng Hao. The giant’s expression was cold as it reached its left hand up and flicked it in Meng Hao’s direction. The massive hand filled the sky; it was almost as if the giant were trying to swat a fly.

“To me, you’re nothing more than an insect,” the giant said coolly. The palm and fist connected, and the giant’s left arm shook. Meng Hao’s face paled, and he fell backward several paces. However, the desire to fight burned brightly in his eyes, and he threw his head back and laughed.

“Insect?” he said. Azure light sprang up around him, and the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal erupted. Azure light spread out for 3,000 meters in all directions, and he began to grow taller. In the blink of an eye, he was 3,000 meters tall.

Although he was still miniscule compared to the giant, he was completely different than he had been before. When the giant saw the azure light, his eyes flickered, and he suddenly experienced a feeling of crisis, caused by Meng Hao. Even as his heart trembled, Meng Hao took a step forward. He might be small, but he was as quick as lightning.

He transformed into an azure roc, which was also 3,000 meters long. He stretched his wings out, growing even larger, letting out a fierce cry as he shot toward the giant and slashed at it with razor-sharp claws. The giant roared, performing an incantation gesture which caused booming lightning to surround it.

Each bolt of lightning was like a Heavenly Tribulation. As it bore down, the Essence of Divine Flame shot out of the mouth of the azure roc. This Essence of Divine Flame was far different than what Meng Hao had wielded before. It was the true Essence of Divine Flame, and its sudden appearance caused the giant's face to flicker. He performed an incantation gesture, causing a wild wind to spring up, which transformed into a roaring Wind Dragon.

Even still, it wasn't enough to block Meng Hao and the Essence of Divine Flame which exploded out of the flame spark. A sea of flames surrounded Meng Hao, and then spread out to envelop the giant. It was quickly engulfed in flames, and let out roars of pain. Suddenly, the giant spat out a pearl.

The pearl was black, and emanated an archaic air. Almost as soon as it appeared, it shattered, and its remnants formed into a spell formation.

"Mountain Ghost Seal, Divine Flame Lightning Spirit Hex!!" the giant roared. Meng Hao's Divine Flame surrounded the spell formation, but then stopped, unable to pierce through it.

Meng Hao wasn't surprised by this. It didn't attest to any lack of power on the part of the Divine Flame, but rather, just went to show that as warden of this place, the giant was obviously prepared to deal with the Essence of Divine Flame. Were this any other place in the outside world, and any other opponent, he would be dead.

The azure roc flashed as it transformed back into Meng Hao. He stepped forward with a cold harrumph, performing an incantation gesture which caused the Blood Demon to emerge from its rift. It grabbed the giant's neck, opened its mouth, and took a vicious bite. Meng Hao waved his hand, and the violet moon mark appeared on the giant's head. Then Meng Hao took another step, and his left hand extended with the Supernova Magic.

This time, it didn't need to absorb any light from around it. Meng Hao caused boundless azure light to stream out of his hand, pouring into the Supernova Magic, causing the star to rapidly grow larger and emanate ripples of destruction as it shot toward the giant.

Huge booms echoed out as the giant was shoved backward, heart trembling. However, Meng Hao didn't stop there. He stepped forward again, taking three steps in a row. His energy began to rise explosively. When you added in the steps from before, shockingly, he had unleashed the Seven God Steps!

As he took his seventh step, his energy skyrocketed. Boundless azure light rose up as he punched out with his right hand. The Life-Extermination Fist, the Self-Immolation Fist, and the God-Slaying Fist, all rumbled through the air.

The three fist strikes, coupled with the Seven God Steps, backed by the peak power of Meng Hao's cultivation base and fleshly body, were enough that... even Dao Realm cultivators with two Essences or fewer would be slaughtered!

Intense pressure caused all light to dim. Heaven and Earth trembled, and the lands cracked. Countless ripples spread out through the air, and Meng Hao shone with azure light so bright that he seemed like an azure sun!

The giant's face fell, and he fought back with all the power he could muster. He roared, shoving both hands down toward the ground. Everything shook, and magical symbols appeared all over the giant. The magical symbols emanated a thoroughly archaic air that exploded out to resist the terrifying power of Meng Hao's Seven God Steps and three fist strikes.

Chapter 1180: Most Powerful State!

The magical symbols on the giant seemed innumerable, but if you looked closely, you would realize that there were actually only nine. However, those nine symbols were constantly splitting apart into multiple overlapping copies of themselves, making it initially seem as if the symbols were without number.

Nonetheless, those nine symbols emanated an incredible aura that provoked shocking transformations in Heaven and Earth. They seemed completely ancient, and as they flickered, they caused nine protective shields to flicker into place around the giant!

The light of the magical symbol shields made the giant even more impressive than before. He pushed his hands down onto the ground, threw his head back and howled. Everything shook violently, and a massive shockwave spread out in all directions

From a distance, it looked like a raging tempest, with nine swirling magical symbols in the middle of it all. Almost instantly, the giant seemed to have entered a state of invincibility.

Meng Hao examined the nine magical symbols with furrowed brow. From those symbols, he could sense... the aura of Dao Fang! Although he had never laid eyes on Dao Fang, he had met him during his mental journey outside of the Windswept Realm and beyond the 33 Heavens. He had even been

attacked by him! The feeling he had experienced back then was the exact same feeling he got from these magical symbols!

“The curse of Dao Fang....” Meng Hao’s eyes flickered, but he didn’t fall back by even half a step. Instead, he charged forward, punching out with his three fist strikes, unleashing a terrifying power onto the protective shield tempest.

From afar, he looked like an azure sun, the only light in Heaven and Earth. His fist was also azure, and seemingly filled with enough power to annihilate the Heavens and exterminate the Earth.

Rumbling echoed out, and as the fist strikes landed, the giant’s tempest shield trembled. Massive booms echoed out, and the tempest exploded. In response, the nine magical symbols glittered radiantly, but didn’t collapse. Instead, they simply shrank down a bit. Despite that, the giant had been protected, and wasn’t injured at all.

Neither was Dao Fang’s aura diminished in the least. It roiled out, transforming into a powerful pressure that crushed toward Meng Hao. He was shoved back, staggering backward seven paces before stopping in place. Then he looked up and let out a roar.

That roar caused his Allheaven Dao Immortal cultivation base to surge with power. It also converged the power of his fleshly body, whereupon he shot forward like a lightning bolt. The air vibrated and the wind screamed, all of which was caused by the magical symbols as they were crushed by Meng Hao’s charge.

The giant’s eyes flickered with killing intent, and he took a step forward, causing the ground to quake. At the same time, he lifted his right hand into the air.

“Exalted Dao Fang!!” he roared. The sound of it caused the nine magical symbols to glitter radiantly as they... converged together!

That convergence caused the aura of Dao Fang to grow even stronger. In the blink of an eye, the nine symbols turned into a suit of armor that covered the giant, making it look like a powerful deity.

It was ferocious armor, green and covered with bristling spikes and images of screaming, suffering faces which were in the midst of devouring each other. It was almost as if thousands of ghosts had been imprisoned inside of it.

On the chest of the armor was a face which looked... almost exactly like... a monkey!!

The monkey's eyes were closed at first, but then they suddenly snapped open. As the monkey stared at Meng Hao, its eyes gleamed with a viciousness that caused Meng Hao's pupils to constrict.

With this armor on, the giant's energy rocketed up, and the power level of his cultivation base doubled.

Simultaneously, the giant roared, lifting his right hand up and the snatching out viciously. The lands quaked and shook, and numerous crevices opened up below, with the giant at the center. The lands almost looked like they would collapse.

Waves spread out across the ground, causing mountains to rise and valleys to fall, and leaving behind a massive crater. All of this happened in the short space of a few breaths worth of time.

"Return!" That simple word uttered by the giant caused the lands to begin to rise up. Countless motes of dust and ash flew out as something rose up from the ground. It looked almost like a pillar, but in fact...

It was an enormous staff!

The gigantic staff was pitch black, and it was impossible to tell what exactly it was made of. It was 30,000 meters long, a size that any mortal would consider gargantuan, but which was perfectly suited to the giant.

The giant's hand closed around the pitch-black staff, and then swung it into a fighting position. Rumbling sounds filled Heaven and Earth, and everything trembled. The giant's energy once again shot up.

As the giant hefted the enormous staff, his voice rumbled out like thunder. "I shall abide by the decree of the exalted Dao Fang. Immortals are prohibited from taking the flame spark. Any who violate the decree will have their entire clan eradicated!"

Meng Hao, even with his current cultivation base, couldn't help but be terrified by the power which radiated off of the giant. A sense of deadly crisis filled him, and his eyes began to glow with bright light.

“I already absorbed the flame spark,” he said coolly. “My life... is not something you can just take away. As for eradicating my clan... you’re not qualified to do any such thing.” In Meng Hao’s judgement, the giant was now as powerful as a 3-Essences Dao Lord, or at the very least, the peak of 2-Essences.

He reached down and slapped his bag of holding, then cried out, “Parrot, meat jelly, get out here!”

Instantly, the parrot and meat jelly shot out in beams of brilliant light. As soon as they appeared and laid eyes on the giant, the meat jelly shrieked, “The aura of Dao Fang!”

Then it tried to fly back into the bag of holding. However, Meng Hao grabbed onto it.

“I’ll give you three bullies,” he said. “Transform into some armor!”

“Four bullies!!” the meat jelly screamed hysterically. “I want four bullies! I just recently learned that four is more than three. Four bullies, and I’ll go all out!” Meng Hao gaped in shock, then nodded.

The meat jelly’s eyes turned red as it began to glow, and then spread out from Meng Hao’s hand to cover his entire body. At the same time, Meng Hao looked at the parrot.

“Battle Weapon!” he roared. The parrot smiled bitterly. Muttering apprehensively, it turned into a beam of light that shot toward Meng Hao. Then the copper mirror flew out of Meng Hao’s bag of holding and merged into the beam of light.

In that instant, Meng Hao’s energy rose to an indescribable degree. A massive windstorm sprung up, within which was the meat jelly as a suit of armor, gray and archaic, emanating a sense of indestructibility.

That suit of armor truly couldn’t be destroyed. As long as the meat jelly lived, the armor would hold. After all, the meat jelly... was fundamentally impossible to destroy, even in armor-form.

With this armor, Meng Hao’s battle prowess shot even higher!

Simultaneously, the parrot and the copper mirror combined on his right arm to form the Battle Weapon!

The Battle Weapon was essentially amorphous, and responded to Meng Hao's will. Shockingly, it was now an enormous, razor-sharp broadsword, fully 3,000 meters long. It radiated sharpness, and even had pulses of strange light dancing about all over its surface. It sent out terrifying ripples that seemed qualified to destroy Heaven and Earth, as well as an aura that seemed capable of making all living things wish to prostrate themselves in worship.

This was the Battle Weapon!

Now that Meng Hao was an Allheaven Dao Immortal, his copper mirror exploded with incredible power. Although this was only the initial stage, it was still a complete and terrifying Battle Weapon!

As Meng Hao's cultivation base rocketed up, his appearance now looked even more domineering than the giant's.

"Mastiff!" he said, waving his right sleeve. Instantly, a blood-colored light appeared, flying out and landing on Meng Hao's back. It was a cape, upon which could be seen a totem. That totem... was none other than the mastiff!

As of this moment, in this state, Meng Hao was truly more powerful than he had ever been since he began to practice cultivation.

"Alright," he said, "let's see how many slashes you can take from my Battle Weapon!" His voice was so ice-cold that the land in the area froze over. As he stepped forward, the giant swung its enormous black staff and roared as it charged. If you looked in the giant's eyes however, you would see a very serious look, perhaps even astonishment. It could now sense something different from Meng Hao, an intense... mortal danger!

As they closed in on each other, the Battle Weapon sliced through the air in a radiant beam of light, heading directly toward the pitch-black staff.

When it struck, the staff trembled. It didn't begin to crack. No... it completely collapsed into pieces, having been utterly destroyed.

“Extermination Essence!!” the giant roared, its expression one of intense shock and disbelief. “What magical item is that? How could it possess the legendary power of Extermination Essence?!?! Impossible! This is impossible!!”

Even as the giant shouted out, Meng Hao pressed the offensive, surrounded by scintillating light.

“NO!!” the giant howled miserably. It suddenly slapped both hands down onto its armor, causing the magical symbols to shoot out to defend against the Battle Weapon. When they slammed into each other, the magical symbols began to shatter!

The first, the second, the third... in the blink of an eye, seven of the nine magical symbols were completely destroyed!

Then... the eighth! And finally... the ninth!

When the ninth magical symbol was destroyed, the giant’s armor collapsed into fragments.

The scintillating blade then continued on toward the giant’s neck!