

# The Heavens 1241

## Chapter 1241: Scared Half to Death!

The flame of life force burned hot in Greed-possessed Meng Hao's eyes, as if a sea of fire existed therein. However, that sea of flames was being reduced as the fourth Nirvana Fruit in his forehead sucked it away.

That Nirvana Fruit seemed like a bottomless pit!

When Meng Hao had absorbed the fourth Nirvana Fruit before, he had only been able to endure for a brief moment before stopping. The Nirvana Fruit had emerged from him of its own volition; had it not, he would have been sucked dry.

Furthermore, every time he used it resulted in a period of weakness afterward, a time that had to be spent in recovery. That was the obstacle preventing him from stepping into the Ancient Realm; if he could not fully absorb that fourth Nirvana Fruit, then he would never be able to do so.

However, this was something that couldn't be rushed. Each time he absorbed a Nirvana Fruit, it required a terrifying amount of life force; furthermore, that amount increased with each Nirvana Fruit. By the time he had reached the fourth, the amount required was virtually impossible to describe.

Unless he came across some sort of good fortune that could aid him, Meng Hao had been under the assumption that it would take a very, very long time before he could truly fuse with the fourth Nirvana Fruit.

Although he wasn't very anxious about the matter, Greed, who was in possession of his body, was.

"Dammit, what is this thing!?!?" Greed growled, eyes wide. He was a stubborn person; all he had to do was let the fourth Nirvana Fruit pop out, and he would be in no danger.

However, he was stubborn and proud, and almost refused to believe that he couldn't succeed in this situation.

“I refuse to believe that I, Greed, can’t absorb some crappy Dao Fruit thing like this!!” He gritted his teeth, and instead of undoing the seal he had created, he caused more of his life force Essence to rumble through his body into the fourth Nirvana Fruit.

ROOOOOAAAARRRRRRRRRRRR!

If the fourth Nirvana Fruit were capable of feeling emotion, it would be screaming in joy. Previously, Meng Hao had been incapable of satiating its desires, and thus had never been able to maintain a fusion. But now, with Greed’s willing help, the fourth Nirvana Fruit... was actually being absorbed!!

As soon as the process truly began, Greed’s face flickered as about ten percent of his life force Essence was almost immediately absorbed. He hesitated, but then gritted his teeth.

“I refuse to believe!!” He drew fully on his life force Essence, pouring it into the fourth Nirvana Fruit. He could already imagine what it would be like if he fully fused with this fruit. The body he had possessed would experience a cultivation base breakthrough, and once that happened, shocking transformations would occur.

Soon, twenty percent of Greed’s life force Essence had been absorbed. He shivered, and fear began to shine in his eyes, and yet he gritted his teeth. All the way to... thirty percent, and then forty!!

When forty percent of his life force Essence was absorbed, the flame of life force in his eyes grew incomparably dim, and terror filled his eyes. As of this moment, whatever obsessive stubbornness he had was thrust to the very back of his mind.

Forty percent of his life force Essence still wasn’t enough to fully absorb the fruit, leaving Greed so frightened that his face was pale. Without any further hesitation, he reached up to undo the seal on his forehead.

“Fudge, this fruit is too freaky! I’m done fooling around with it. Done, alright?!?! ”

“Get OUT!” Greed roared. He no longer wished to absorb the terrifying Dao Fruit. He was scared, so he tried to force the fruit out, but... the Nirvana Fruit was already more than half absorbed. How could it possibly just stop?

Furthermore, although Greed's actions caused the fruit to pause momentarily, there was apparently some bizarre force that caused the Nirvana Fruit to resume sucking away at Greed's life force even more voraciously than before.

"NO!!" Greed's eyes were wide, and suddenly, a sensation of crisis filled his heart, something that Greed couldn't accept. He could well imagine that if he continued, and the fruit completed the fusion process, then all of his life force could very well be sucked away.

He would become the first person throughout all the years... to actually be killed by the very body he had possessed....

The mere thought of that left Greed petrified. His expression was one of astonishment as yet another ten percent of his life force Essence was rapidly sucked away.

"Fudge! What the hell is this thing?!?!" Greed shivered as he realized that only about half of his life force Essence remained. His heart felt as if it were being sliced with a sharp blade, filling him with indescribable pain.

After all, his life force Essence was his most precious possession, and the entire foundation of why his soul could not be exterminated.

Greed's eyes were crimson, and he was shaking violently as he sped through the necropolis. The flames in his eyes were very weak, and even showed signs that they might be extinguished soon.

In his heart, he felt deep regret, regret that he had thought too much of himself, and looked down on this tiny fruit.

"But wait, there's still another way. The stronger this body is, the more it will help me. I'm gonna go for it!" Gritting his teeth, Greed flashed through the air in a gray streak. He moved with incredible speed, the lightning dancing around his head ensuring that he could break through any wall that got in his path.

In the blink of an eye, he appeared in another corridor, where two Ancient Realm cultivators were proceeding along cautiously. Before they could react, Greed turned into a blur as he pounced on one of them.

That cultivator let out a bloodcurdling scream as his body withered. In the blink of an eye, he transformed into dust, and a white mist which instantly merged into Meng Hao's body and was then absorbed by the fourth Nirvana Fruit.

The other cultivator was shocked, and immediately began to flee. Performing an incantation gesture, he unleashed divine abilities and magical items. And yet, they were completely useless against the gray blur that was Greed. In the blink of an eye, he burst through them, and latched onto the cultivator.

Another miserable shriek could be heard as the cultivator's body withered away into dust. The white mist poured into Meng Hao, who then flickered, vanishing. When he appeared again, he was in yet another corridor, near another Ancient Realm cultivator, who was speeding along. A moment later, a gray blur overwhelmed him.

It was in this manner that Greed's slaughter was carried out. He was a gray blur that sped about devouring and killing in the necropolis. No one who encountered him could escape.

One, two, three... ten, fifteen, twenty....

In a very short time, Greed-possessed Meng Hao had slaughtered numerous cultivators in his attempt to fully absorb the fourth Nirvana Fruit. Even so, it could only reduce the speed with which his own life force Essence was being sucked away.

"I need more life force!" Greed growled, on the verge of becoming unhinged. He began moving faster, killing faster, until finally, his divine sense picked up another of the Dao Realm experts that had been pulled into the necropolis.

"He's next!" Greed's eyes were sunken. He had killed a Dao Realm expert already, and this would be his second. He burst through a nearby wall into a corridor, a bit behind a figure who was speeding along.

Greed's entrance caused the man to turn and look back, his eyes flashing like lightning. It was an old man, one of the two 2-Essences Dao Realm cultivators who had tried to interfere with Meng Hao outside of the necropolis.

"Meng Hao!" he said. However, he almost immediately realized that something was off. Although Meng Hao had seemed strong before, it had been nothing more than that: strength. Now, he seemed terrifying, superior in a way that caused the old man's heart to tremble with fear.

Without the slightest hesitation, he fell back. Simultaneously, though, Meng Hao's body was compelled by Greed to charge forward in attack.

"Dammit, how dare you run!" The maddened Greed's words were somewhat illogical, but inwardly, he was both irritated and afraid.... In his fear of having his life completely sucked away, this Dao Realm cultivator was essentially a surrogate to take his place in death.

To see that surrogate running away left Greed enraged. He increased his speed, making it impossible for the Dao Realm cultivator to flee. Seeing this, the cultivator suddenly turned while performing an incantation gesture, a fierce glow rising up in his eyes.

"Lightning!" He roared, causing numerous red lightning bolts to suddenly shoot out from his skin. They merged together into the image of a huge lightning bolt, which then exploded out, transforming into a rapidly-expanding lightning globe. This old man was a decisive person, so he quickly bit his tongue and spit out some blood.

"Water!" he roared. A red mist spread out from the blood, as if the blood and the water were being separated. What was left behind was only a drop of water, which was also Essence formed from the old man's life force.

That drop of water could contain entire worlds, and as the glow of lightning shone down on it, it began to emanate a seven-colored glow, within which numerous land masses could be seen. Instantly, that light shot toward Greed.

The flickering lightning swirled around the drop of water and then also shot toward Greed.

Earlier, if Meng Hao had gone up against this old man's lightning and water Essences, he would definitely have had to unleash the Paragon Bridge. But Greed-possessed Meng Hao simply smiled.

Then... he opened his mouth and actually consumed the drop of water!

As he swallowed, a massive rumbling filled Meng Hao's body. As for the boundless lightning, he absorbed that too!

Unexpectedly, it didn't hurt him at all, which caused the old man's eyes to go wide. Shocked, he was just about to flee when Greed-controlled Meng Hao laughed viciously.

"Now, it's my turn... The Wolf Conquers All!" Greed said, his voice strange and sinister. He lunged forward in the direction of the old man, mouth wide.

As he breathed in, no force of absorption appeared, and yet the old man let out a miserable shriek. Rumbling could be heard as boundless white mist poured out of him toward Greed, who immediately sucked it in.

It was a bizarre sight; the old man screamed as his body withered up. In the blink of an eye, he turned into a desiccated corpse, which then collapsed into ash.

All of his life force had been consumed by Greed!

Chapter 1242: Blue Sun!

Thanks to the life force of the Dao Realm cultivator, Greed-possessed Meng Hao trembled. Suddenly, brilliant light began to shine out from his forehead. Although the fourth Nirvana Fruit was not completely absorbed, it had apparently reached a milestone in the process!

Rumbling could be heard as the fourth Nirvana Fruit slowly began to rotate in place in addition to its absorption of life force. Next, the third Nirvana Fruit, as well as the second, and finally the first, all spun in unison, causing an ancient aura to erupt out of Meng Hao. That terrifying aura spread out, causing the entire necropolis to shake.

That aura did not belong to Greed, but rather, the fourth Nirvana Fruit!

As the fruits rotated, and the aura spread out, the power of an Allheaven Dao Immortal also rotated at its peak. Gradually, the ripples of the Ancient Realm began to radiate out from Meng Hao.

Countless symbols appeared all over his skin, symbols that had apparently been hidden in his bloodline. Now they appeared all over him, causing an ancient, awe-inspiring aura to emanate out.

Greed was trembling in excitement.

“I bet, and it paid off big. This body is a huge treasure! With a body like this, I’m fully confident that I can eventually reach Heaven Trampling!!”

“I might not have fully absorbed this Dao Fruit thing yet, but it won’t be long before I will!

“A fleshly body comparable to the Dao Realm, and a cultivation base even more powerful than before! It won’t be long before this body erupts with... completely extraordinary power!” Greed took a deep breath. Currently, he only had about thirty percent of his life force Essence left. However, to him, it was all worth it!

“That bridge, this exceptional bloodline, a powerful fleshly body, and a cultivation base with unlimited potential. This body is definitely worth it!” Greed licked his lips, then threw his head back and laughed.

“Once I get out of here, I’ll find some God blood to get even more powerful, and then, everyone who humiliated me in the past will find out that... Greed is back!” Greed laughed, and as he did, a white-robed figure suddenly appeared in his mind, a figure which always filled him with resentment when he thought of him.

“Just wait until I reach Heaven Trampling!” Enlivened, Greed shot through the necropolis at top speed, sending his divine sense out to lock onto... Xuan Daozi!

In another corridor in another part of the necropolis, Xuan Daozi’s eyes were wide, and his heart was uneasy. He could sense fluctuations off in the distance that left him completely unsettled. Muttering to himself, he increased his speed as he sent his divine sense out to scan a shrine hall in the center of the necropolis up ahead.

By now, nearly ninety percent of the cultivators who had entered the necropolis were dead, most of them at the hands of Greed. Some had already been wounded before entering; after being infected by the aura of death in the place, they were now at death’s door.

Meng Chen was one of those people. He currently lay in the dirt, his vision fading to black, his expression blank. His aura was growing weak, and his complexion was ashen as the aura of death caused his internal organs to slowly decay. Occasionally, black blood would ooze out of his mouth.

Even his flesh was beginning to decay. By now, not even a Dao Realm cultivator would be able to save him, the reason being that his soul was already dispersing. The aura of death slowly corroded his soul, and as it faded away, he slipped into death.

He was dying, but that was not his wish. There were still many things he wanted to accomplish. He was the only member of his bloodline to have ever gone out into the world in recent years, and he had grand aspirations. He wanted to lead the members of his bloodline back to prominence, to restore his bloodline to its former glory.

But now, all he had were regrets.

Suddenly, his lips quivered as he said, “Dad.... Mom.... I’ve been an unfilial son....”

His thoughts were somewhat muddled, and at the moment, he thought he could see the members of his bloodline, and the hard lives they lived.

He thought about many things. He thought about how excited everyone had been when they found out that he had shown the ability to cultivate. He thought about the oaths that he had sworn from the time he was young, and the first time he had left the ancestral lands. When he had set foot onto that merchant ship and received his orders from Young Lord De, he had gritted his teeth and complied, willing to pay any price for his bloodline and for his ambitions.

But now, all his humiliations, and all his grand aspirations, were nothing but memories....

“If I die,” Meng Chen murmured, “what will become of my little brothers and sisters...? What will all my other relatives do...?” Meng Chen’s vision was growing blurry; too much of his flesh was rotting away, and much of him was already being absorbed into the soil itself.

His current location wasn’t very far away from where Greed-possessed Meng Hao was speeding along toward Xuan Daozi’s position.

About ten breaths of time passed, during which time Greed got closer and closer to Xuan Daozi. At one point, when Greed passed by one particular side chamber, he suddenly stopped and looked inside. Approaching in his direction was Han Qinglei, who suddenly looked at him with an expression of delight.

“Meng Hao!” Han Qinglei’s anxiety suddenly lessened now that he had seen Meng Hao. He began to hurry over, but had only taken three or four steps when he suddenly stopped in place, his pupils constricting.

“Meng Hao, what’s wrong?” Han Qinglei could sense that something was off. There was a cold mercilessness within Meng Hao’s eyes, as well as an avarice that he could tell was completely different from the Meng Hao he remembered.

Although this Meng Hao and the other Meng Hao looked alike and their auras were the same, the different look in this one’s eyes made Han Qinglei immediately begin to back up.

Greed-possessed Meng Hao looked Han Qinglei up and down, then smiled viciously. “I can’t believe there’s another excellent fleshly body here....”

“Except it’s not quite as good as the one I already have. However, it’s not good to waste. There’s plenty of excellent life force to be sucked away.” Grinning, Greed shot toward Han Qinglei.

Han Qinglei’s face fell. He was an intelligent person, and was able to detect enough clues to be suspicious. Then he heard Greed’s words, and he understood everything.

“Possession!” he said, sucking in a breath. He immediately fled backward at top speed, performing a double-handed incantation gesture that caused a green cauldron to materialize. Rumbling could be heard as he continued to retreat back at top speed. Greed grinned viciously, and his right hand shot forward in a gray blur as he made to grab Han Qinglei.

Han Qinglei’s expression was one of hopelessness; based on the level of his cultivation base, he was fundamentally no match at all for Greed.

However, even in the moment that Greed’s hand turned into a gray blur and was about to latch onto Han Qinglei, all of a sudden, it stopped moving, as if it were fighting back against Greed’s consciousness.

Greed’s face fell, and he shot backward, grabbing his right hand hard with his left, a surprised and suspicious look in his eyes. Next, his eyes flickered as he examined his body. However, he could find no trace of a discarnate soul, which led him to only one conclusion.

“Dammit, there must still be tiny fragments of his soul left!!”

“However, the resistance was weak, and the soul fragments are acting on instinct alone. It seems Meng Hao and this person had some sort of friendship....”

With a cold harrumph, he caused the qi and blood in his body to begin to burn, and even sent some of the lightning flame from the Lightning Cauldron to surround him, burning him from the outside in, and then vice versa.

After about ten breaths of time passed, the flames dissipated, and Greed stopped burning his qi and blood. Feeling much better, he looked up in the direction of the fleeing Han Qinglei. He was about to give chase, when suddenly the force exerted by the fourth Nirvana Fruit grew stronger, as if it were intent on completing its fusion.

Greed hesitated for a moment, then gave up on the idea of pursuing Han Qinglei. Instead, he flew in the direction of Xuan Daozi.

Currently, the most important thing was to complete the fusion with the Dao Fruit in his forehead, and he was confident that after consuming Xuan Daozi, he would be very close to just such a conclusion.

As Xuan Daozi and Greed both sped along, they gradually neared the exact same area!

That area was none other than the huge temple in the middle of the necropolis!

The necropolis was a vast construction, all of which was built around the temple in the middle. There were dozens of side chambers, all of which were connected by tunnels. The entire structure was arranged almost like a spell formation.

Currently, Xuan Daozi had just sped through one of the more than ten entrances to the central temple, piercing through the air like lightning.

As soon as he entered, he could sense a terrifying pressure that caused him to tremble. He took a deep breath and looked around, and as soon as he saw where he was, his pupils constricted.

The central temple had nine enormous stone columns that almost looked like spikes driven into the ground. In the very middle of those nine stone columns was a raised platform, upon which could be seen... a blue-robed figure sitting there cross-legged!

It was a withered corpse that emanated a boundlessly ancient air, as if it had existed for countless years. There was absolutely no life force to be sensed on this corpse; it had been dead a long time.

However... visible on its forehead was an astonishing flame, blue in color. From a distance, it almost looked like a sun, floating within which was a face. That face had its eyes closed, and shockingly... looked very similar to the corpse's face.

Connecting the corpse to the platform were numerous iron chains. Furthermore, the giant pillars pulsed with fire that almost seemed to be refining the corpse!

On the wall behind the corpse was a fresco. Astonishingly, it depicted... a blue sun!

That blue sun was incredibly realistic, and if you looked at it long enough, it would make you feel as if you were being roasted alive.

Also within the area of the nine pillars, on the left side of the corpse, a small shield could be seen lying on the ground. It was also blue, and emanated a faint, flickering light.

On the right side of the corpse was a bell; small and a dark-colored, it didn't look very impressive. Scattered around were piles of other magical items; however, due to the passage of time, they were in various states of decomposition. Some were apparently still usable, but none of them attracted the attention of Dao Lord Xuan Daozi.

What caught his eye... was the blue sun on the corpse's forehead, as well as the shield and bell.

It was at this moment that, all of a sudden, Meng Hao came flying into the same area.

Chapter 1243: Nine Seals' Handiwork

"Meng Hao!" After seeing Meng Hao, Xuan Daozi's eyes flickered with killing intent. He had paid a huge, bitter price for the chance to obtain Meng Hao's Essence. After their initial encounter, he had pursued him into the 33 Hells. Then he had experienced the bloody battle within the mists, and finally had been sucked into this necropolis. The incredible danger of it all left Xuan Daozi filled with astonishment.

“At long last we’re in a place where no one can interfere,” he said in a hoarse, ghastly voice filled with killing intent. “Nor can you escape. Therefore... this is where everything will come to a conclusion between us!”

However, as soon as Greed-possessed Meng Hao entered the central temple, his eyes filled with mixed emotions and melancholy. It was almost as if he had forgotten about Xuan Daozi and the fourth Nirvana Fruit. Instead, he stood there, staring at the withered corpse.

“Exalted Celestial... Sea-Dao,” he murmured, expression complex and filled with numerous emotions.

“The sea in the name represents two people. As for the Dao, the true meaning of the Daoist name given me was not Sea-Dao, but Sea-Dog.” Greed seemed to be bitterly lost in the depths of his memories. Because of the profound ancientness of those memories, it was impossible for him to not emanate an incredibly ancient air.

That ancientness caused Xuan Daozi, who was in the middle of attacking, to suddenly stare in shock. He lurched to a stop, staring suspiciously, unable to determine what strange development had occurred, but deeply moved by the ancient aura radiating off of Meng Hao.

Then he heard the words spoken by Greed, and his eyes widened. He suddenly remembered that on the surface of the gravestone outside the necropolis was a name written down by none other than Paragon Nine Seals.... It read: Paramita, Exalted Celestial Sea-Dao.

Shockingly, Greed was suppressed in this very location.... Exalted Celestial Sea-Dao was actually one aspect of his soul. Years ago, he had split himself into two, one part of which remained in his fleshly body; as it had slowly withered away, that soul had condensed into the sun of an Exalted Celestial on his forehead.

The other part had been hidden away in dormancy in the surrounding area, avoiding true death. In all the years since then, that aspect of his soul had attempted to free itself on many occasions, to escape. However, he had never been able to see any acceptable host, not even when cultivators came to this place from the outside world. He had tried on numerous occasions, but had never succeeded in possessing anyone.

But then he had laid eyes on Meng Hao, which was the first time he had actually been able to see another cultivator.

Greed sighed, an ancient sigh which echoed out in all directions. The entire temple seemed to fill with wind, and caused all light to grow unstable.

The blue sun on the corpse's forehead suddenly flared to life. At the same time, the shield and the little bell on either side of the corpse began to tremble.

The already intense pressure in the area grew stronger, explosively powerful, causing Xuan Daozi to shiver. Only Greed seemed completely unaffected.

“The cruel Paragon Nine Seals...” Greed murmured, traces of fear visible within his expression. “He had a Heaven Trampling fleshly body and a cultivation base half a step away from that same Realm.... What a pity he was the only one. If the Immortal World had another Paragon of the same level, the war might not have ended the way it did....”

“Cruel. I never sensed it before, but now I can see the truth. He could have exterminated us all along but instead, he created these 33 Hells, not simply to suppress us, but to use the power of the Mountain and Sea Realm to take the 33 of us, powerful peak experts, and... refine us into pills!!”

“You wanted to pass us onto your successor, huh...? You wanted to take 33 Dao Divinities and Exalted Celestials, refine them into pills, and leave them behind for your successor!” Greed took a deep breath. Shaken, his eyes began to shine with a bright light.

“Unfortunately, you could never have anticipated me escaping by splitting myself, nor could you predict... that I would possess this body! I have no idea where your so-called successor is, but as for this grand gift you prepared for him, I'm going to take it now!” With that Greed took a step forward.

However, as soon as that step landed, Xuan Daozi suddenly couldn't take the tension anymore and he howled, shooting toward the Greed-possessed Meng Hao.

“Stop spouting mumbo-jumbo, Meng Hao! Today is the day you die!”

Flying at top speed, Xuan Daozi closed in and waved his hand, causing Essence and natural law to erupt out and bear down on Meng Hao.

In this attack, Xuan Daozi drew on all the power he could muster. Inwardly, all of the dangers of this place were weighing down on his heart, and also felt shaken by the words uttered just now by

Greed. Therefore, even as his Essence and natural law shot out, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing nine reptilian scales to fly out of his bag of holding.

As soon as the scales appeared, a brutal aura exploded out, and the scales transformed into nine Scale Dragons, each one fully 300 meters long. Thankfully, the temple was a large place, otherwise they wouldn't even have been able to move. As soon as they appeared, they roared and charged toward Meng Hao.

Xuan Daozi hadn't even finished that attack before he performed another incantation gesture and then waved his finger. His flesh and blood instantly withered, making him incredibly gaunt, yet simultaneously causing a mist of flesh and blood to transform into a blood sword.

The sword droned like a Blood Dragon as it shot toward Meng Hao.

Next, Xuan Daozi performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing one magical symbol after another to appear. All of them were golden, and made popping sounds as they transformed into golden-armored celestial soldiers, which formed up and advanced on Meng Hao.

Next, a strange light gleamed in Xuan Daozi's eyes, and the killing intent within them swirled. Glaring coldly at Meng Hao, he began to mutter, then raised his right hand, which radiated a shocking black mist. The black mist swirled around, causing the air around him to distort.

He really was going all out in this attack, doing everything possible to kill Meng Hao and end the fighting that had been dragging out between them.

Greed-possessed Meng Hao's eyes flickered with a mysterious light, and he smiled viciously. He stopped walking toward the nine stone columns, and instead turned and headed toward Xuan Daozi.

"You're the only Dao Realm cultivator left? Well, just to make sure I don't run low on life force, I'll seal you before you die."

As he took his first step, Xuan Daozi's power of Essence and natural law descended, enveloping him. But Greed simply opened his mouth and swallowed. The Essence and natural law shuddered; it was as if Greed's mouth had turned into a black hole, and they were sucked in and completely consumed.

Xuan Daozi's eyes went wide, but before he could even react, the nine Scale Dragons closed in. Greed took a second step, causing rumbling sounds to echo out, shaking the entire necropolis. The nine Scale Dragons screamed miserably and shattered, transforming into white mist that Greed sucked in.

He licked his lips, eyes shining as he smiled and said, "Lovely flavor."

With that, he took a third step, waving his finger. The blood sword lurched to a halt and trembled in midair. Greed tapped on it, and it shattered, transforming into a blood mist which spread out in all directions.

As for the incoming gold-armored celestial soldiers, they began to shake, and then fell into retreat. However, Greed waved his hand, shattering them and transforming them into a white mist which he then absorbed. The fourth Nirvana Fruit in his forehead was now significantly further along in its fusion process.

"You're not Meng Hao!!" Xuan Daozi exclaimed. "Who are you?!?!" If he couldn't piece the clues together by now, then how could he have practiced cultivation to this level? Shock filled his face, and his scalp felt numb. How could he ever have imagined that all of his divine abilities and Daoist magics would be completely dismantled in an instant!?

The two sentences he had just uttered were completely involuntary. He had begun to guess at the truth when he saw the expression on Meng Hao's face when he looked at the withered corpse, and heard the words he had spoken. The terrifying possibility was something he almost couldn't believe. But now, there was no denying it.

"Of course I'm not Meng Hao," said Greed, voice cool and expression both arrogant and disdainful. "You can call me Exalted Celestial Sea-Dao. Although, I like my former name better. Greed!"

Xuan Daozi's eyes filled with madness. His first reaction to encountering a terrifying entity such as this was to raise his right hand, which was now so enveloped in black mist that it was impossible to see with the naked eye.

"Profound Heavens Grand Magic!!" Xuan Daozi roared. He lowered his hand, and suddenly, the image of an enormous palm appeared, completely black. It seemed illusory, but was in fact corporeal, and it shot toward Meng Hao with incredible speed, distorting natural law and affecting even Heaven and Earth as it sped along.

A strange light appeared in Greed's eyes; he appeared to be somewhat surprised. However, when he opened his mouth and began to suck in a breath, the gigantic black hand began to shrink, transforming into a cyclone of wind that Greed then sucked in and swallowed.

The sight caused Xuan Daozi's heart to tremble, and he started to wonder if there was anything that this thing couldn't eat....

He was already starting to edge backward, but there was nowhere to flee to in the huge temple.

"What makes you think I would let you leave?" Greed asked, smiling. "I was the reason you people were sucked into this place. This... is my necropolis, and yours too." Even as Greed smiled, the surrounding walls began to rumble, and suddenly, the ten entrances all collapsed.

If it were just an ordinary physical collapse, that wouldn't be able to stop a cultivator from bursting through. But the ripples of a magical technique spread out, turning into a seal that kicked Xuan Daozi back as soon as he got close. It was now impossible for him to flee.

Xuan Daozi's face fell, and his heart began to tremble. Greed stepped forward, and suddenly appeared in front of him.

Xuan Daozi's eyes widened as Greed pointed out with his finger and then tapped his chest.

Xuan Daozi screamed miserably as he shot backward. The spot Greed had just touched was now decaying, radiating a powerful aura of death. However, even as the decay spread, and the aura of death grew, his life force also increased dramatically.

"Essence of Life and Death!!" Xuan Daozi cried in shock.

Chapter 1244: Meng Hao Awakens!

"Smart guy," Greed said, licking his lips, eyes shining mysteriously. "Seems like I shouldn't just eat you. Maybe a bit of Soulsearching would help me to better understand the current state of the Immortal World." Greed flashed toward Xuan Daozi, closing in on him no matter how he tried to evade. Yet again, he waved his finger, tapping Xuan Daozi's chest, causing it to decay and wither rapidly.

Xuan Daozi let out a miserable cry as his life force once again flourished explosively. His face was ashen, nearly despairing. He could sense the aura of death radiating off of Greed's finger, and yet, as that aura entered him, the destruction and death which followed actually stimulated his latent powers, causing the life force in his flesh and blood to flourish.

The pain involved in such a technique was indescribable; Xuan Daozi's eyes were crimson, and he immediately unleashed another divine ability, and yet, it was powerless against Greed.

“Tell me, what has occurred between you and Meng Hao? From the look of it, you don't really want to kill him, you want to get something from him....”

Greed moved with incredible speed, tapping his finger once, twice three times. Xuan Daozi's screams echoed out, incredibly shrill, as his body continued to wither. His chest, arms, head, every part of his body that Greed touched began to rot, and didn't ooze a single drop of blood.

As he rotted, his life force grew stronger, causing him to shiver. In the blink of an eye, Greed once again tapped him, this time on the back. Xuan Daozi's entire body was brimming with life force. Pain spread through his body, and he felt as if he were about to go mad; knowing that he was about to die, he roared. Unexpectedly, he was choosing to self-detonate.

However, in the moment that the power of self-detonation appeared, Greed viciously tapped down with his finger. Rumbling could be heard as the power of self-detonation was suppressed. By now, Xuan Daozi's body was almost completely decayed everywhere.

His clothes were gone, and he was radiating a rotten aura of death. He looked completely vicious as the rotting spread to his organs, and his bones, and his qi passageways. Everything was decomposing.

He was an illustrious Dao Lord, a powerful expert in his Realm, but even still, he cried out, “Kill me! Kill me! I beg of you, kill me!”

It wasn't that he didn't have a steadfast heart, or that his Dao was incomplete. Rather, this pain was something that a cultivator simply couldn't bear.

“Tell me,” Greed said, chuckling. “Tell me what you know. It'll make you feel good. Just so you know, you aren't the first cultivator from the Immortal World to experience pain like this. Back in the war, lots of people were able to enjoy it.” Greed's eyes gleamed with the thirst for blood. He

was by no means a virtuous person to begin with, and when he saw the suffering Xuan Daozi was going through, it made him feel wonderful.

“The Daosource!” Xuan Daozi shrieked. “It was all for the Daosource. When I fought Meng Hao, I saw him use a time-walking technique. It stirred my own Essence, so I was sure that if I could absorb his time-walking technique, then it might give birth to a bit of Daosource!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, Greed’s pupils constricted, and his expression became unprecedentedly serious.

“Daosource... that’s a supreme Realm comparable to Heaven Trampling and Boundless Dao!!” Greed was shaken. Gasping, his eyes began to gleam with the light of wild joy.

“I, Greed, have experienced countless good fortune in life. Whoever tries to kill me gets crushed by objects falling from the sky. Whatever places I go to turn out to be treasure houses. Anything that I want, I can get my hands on.

“This time, not only did I get a precious treasure of a fleshly body, I even got news about the Daosource!!

“Daosource, Daosource, the paramount Realm of the Immortal World. If I can get that... then I’ll be that much more likely to succeed in cultivating the path of Heaven Trampling!!” Greed was incredibly excited, so much so that he lost interest in torturing Xuan Daozi. No longer caring about Xuan Daozi’s terrifying rotting body, his hand shot out and latched onto the top of his head.

“Soulsearch!” Greed licked his lips as he unleashed the magical technique, too anxious to wait for Xuan Daozi to speak. He wanted to find the answers himself.

Xuan Daozi’s body began to shake, and he screamed miserably. All of the intense pain before had come from within his own body, but this pain came from his soul. Popping sounds rang out from inside of him, and his eyes bulged. The pain he was enduring now was indescribable.

Greed was panting as Xuan Daozi’s memories flitted by. He learned that the Immortal World had fallen, and the Mountain and Sea Realm had risen. He found out that Nine Seals was dead, and how the 33 Heavens existed. He learned many, many things that were different from when he had been alive.

Eventually he reached the battle between Xuan Daozi and Meng Hao, and as he stabbed into Xuan Daozi's consciousness, it was as if he were re-experiencing Meng Hao's walking technique.

When he saw it, Greed gaped in shock. For some reason, the technique looked very familiar to him, although he couldn't remember exactly where he had seen it. Instead of spending time considering the matter, he sank further into the sensation of how Xuan Daozi's Essence had stirred in that moment.

The feeling left Greed completely excited. He was suddenly hit with an intense premonition that this was the key to Heaven Trampling!

In his excitement, Greed wasn't even looking at Xuan Daozi, who was currently hovering on the brink of death, screaming miserably. However, it was at this point that Xuan Daozi's eyes suddenly glittered with an icy calmness that reached a terrifying level.

Although he seemed to be screaming, he had actually split and compartmentalized his mind. Apparently... everything from before had been an act, and he had kept his killing intent deeply hidden.

Suddenly, he spoke out in a completely calm voice: "I'm a Dao Lord. Getting killed in battle is fine, but I won't die in such utter humiliation!"

As his voice echoed out, Greed suddenly felt an intense sensation of crisis rise up within him.

In that critical moment, Xuan Daozi spread his arms wide and wrapped them around Greed, a look of contempt gleaming in his eyes.

"Profound Dao of Heaven, One Profound Magic, Across Life and Death, Essence Arises, Essence Destroys!!" As Xuan Daozi's archaic voice echoed out, he suddenly exploded, causing numerous chunks of rotting flesh and blood to spray out. His soul, his Nascent Divinity, his Essences, all collapsed.

However, because of that collapse, his soul, Nascent Divinity, and Essences were able to merge together and form a gigantic magical symbol.

That magical symbol bore the semblance of the character 'profound', and it shot toward Greed with incredible speed, then branded itself onto his chest.

Greed howled and shot backward, blood spraying out of his mouth, his face ashen. The ‘profound’ character sank into his chest and then vanished, merging into him, searching for Greed’s soul.

Greed was shaking, and his face was flushed. Once again he coughed up a mouthful of blood. Roaring, he tried to suppress the character by waving his hand behind him in the direction of the nine columns. Immediately, the shield and bell next to the withered corpse flew into the air and floated gently above him, emanating bright glows as they assisted Greed.

Greed’s Essence of life force also flowed into operation as he used ten percent of it to try to drive out Xuan Daozi’s dying attack. The result was that the ‘profound’ character was cleanly wiped away.

However, Greed’s life force Essence had dwindled down to less than twenty percent. Panting, he looked at Xuan Daozi’s mangled blood and flesh, and then gritted his teeth.

He had to admit that he had been careless, and had even been a bit arrogant. After taking over this fleshly body, he had virtually lost all sense of vigilance, and in that state of pride, he had overlooked the killing intent that could lurk in the heart of a hopelessly cornered Dao Lord.

Now that he thought about it, the screams emanating out earlier due to the fleshly body pain had actually seemed a bit fake. Their entire purpose had been to lure Greed closer; in fact, the reason why Xuan Daozi had even uttered the word Daosource was to attract his attention, and lure him into performing a Sousearch.

Once Greed began the Sousearch, then Xuan Daozi would have his chance to unleash that deadly magical technique.

“He was willing to die to try to strike me with a fatal blow...”

Greed took a deep breath, and vigilance once again burned to life within his eyes. He could sense that he only had twenty percent of his life force Essence remaining. Suddenly, he spun to look at the withered corpse within the nine pillars, and especially the blue sun. Finally, he smiled.

“Not very many people strike me with a deep impression, but this Xuan Daozi was definitely one of them. However... he was a bit too childish. That magic wasn’t capable of exterminating me. In fact,

if that damned Dao Fruit hadn't sucked away more than half of my life force Essence, then I wouldn't even have needed to use ten percent of it to wipe away the attack.

“Oh well, it's all over now. I'll undo the seal now and retrieve my Exalted Celestial sun and absorb the other half of my soul. Then, I will no longer be half of a soul, but a full, complete soul. I can fight my way through each of the other 32 Hells and pick them clean one by one. By the time I leave this place... I might already be in Heaven Trampling! Even if the process isn't complete, I'll be at least half a step there!” Licking his lips, Greed shot toward the nine columns. Stopping in front of one, his eyes shone with anticipation as he stretched his hand out to push down onto the column, completely confident that he would be able to undo the first seal.

“OPEN!” he said, his voice echoing out. His hand turned into a gray blur as it closed in on the column. However, before he could actually touch it, when he was only an inch away, his hand suddenly stopped in place and began to tremble.

Greed's eyes went wide with disbelief as he realized that a tiny face had suddenly appeared on his forehead. That face looked exactly like Meng Hao's, in fact it was... the real Meng Hao!

Meng Hao's cool voice suddenly echoed out within Greed's mind and thoughts.

“Thank you for helping me re-mold my body, for refining my magical items, for increasing my cultivation base, for helping me fuse with my fourth Nirvana Fruit, and for giving me such a precious life force Essence. Oh, and thank you for taking care of all my enemies.”

“Impossible. This is impossible!” cried Greed. “I already consumed your soul, I cleared out every part of your body with fire. It's virtually a completely new body. There can't be any remnant of your soul left. This is impossible...” Greed was shaking. Although his words seemed to be those of disbelief, his sinister soul exploded out in an attempt to wipe and drive away any remnants of Meng Hao.

“Nothing's impossible about it,” Meng Hao replied. “I was hiding in the third Nirvana Fruit, and the Paragon's blood. Come and check if you want.” Almost in the same moment that Greed made his counterattack, and Meng Hao spoke, the fourth Nirvana Fruit suddenly erupted with an even more terrifying absorption force than it had ever shown before!

Greed's soul trembled as his life force Essence poured forth like a waterfall.

“NO!!” he shrieked miserably. “Nine Seals! It's Nine Seals! Nine Seals has schemed against me!!” That was because all along he had never been able to sense the tiny bit of Paragon Nine Seals' blood. Apparently, it was simply impossible for him to see.

Chapter 1245: Signs of the Door of the Ancient Realm!

Greed's soul let out a miserable shriek as he attempted to get out of Meng Hao's body. Unfortunately for him, the power exerted by the fourth Nirvana Fruit was completely shocking, causing his life force Essence to rapidly vanish.

To Greed, his life force Essence was his most prized possession; it was what kept him alive, and the foundation of his soul, and was now also what made it impossible for him to escape Meng Hao's body.

Finally, he let out a vicious howl and ceased any attempts to flee. Instead, he faced Meng Hao's soul and tried to consume it. He really had no other option than to risk it all in an attempt to fight for that tiny chance at life.

However, even as he lunged, Meng Hao snorted coldly, and a blood-colored light shot out from within his third Nirvana Fruit.

That blood-colored light contained Paragon power. Rumbling could be heard as it swept through Meng Hao's body, surging toward the trembling Greed, who screamed, “Nine Seals, Nine Seals!!”

Greed was in a state of despair. By this point, how could he not understand that he had been set up by Paragon Nine Seals? Years ago, he had assumed that his act of splitting his soul had gone completely undetected. The truth was that Nine Seals had seen everything.

Greed now knew why he had been unable to see anyone else throughout all the years, not even when cultivators came into the 33 Hells to explore. He could sense them, to be sure, and even try to possess them. However, the result was inevitable failure, as if there wasn't even a host to enter.

But then Meng Hao came along. Greed believed himself to have possessed him, but now, he realized that it had all been a trap, a ruse to lead him into an even greater snare.

“Nine Seals!!” Greed howled as his life force Essence continued to be consumed by the fourth Nirvana Fruit. With Greed's help, the fourth Nirvana Fruit had already been more than half

absorbed by Meng Hao. Thanks to its consumption of Greed, the process was becoming ever more complete!

Eighty percent, eighty-five percent, ninety percent!

Booms echoed out that no one could hear except for Meng Hao and Greed. To them, they seemed loud enough to cause everything to tremble. As Greed's life force Essence faded away, his struggling grew weaker and weaker.

He was now lost in despair, thanks especially to the pressure of the Paragon's blood. Soon, he was suppressed to the point where he couldn't fight back. He could only watch as his life force Essence slipped away, consumed voraciously, and his soul fire slowly began to flicker out.

Worst of all was that Meng Hao's fleshly body was far more powerful than before, like a rampart, such that the power exerted by the fourth Nirvana Fruit could grow boundlessly stronger without him needing to worry about the strain it would place on his body.

"I refuse to accept this! I refuse! I've been preparing for years! I endured the pain of splitting my soul apart, all to get free. I'm so close! So close!!" Greed's miserable shrieks echoed out within Meng Hao's mind. Meng Hao's body was shaking, and the image of four Nirvana Fruits appeared on his forehead, flickering brightly. An incredible power erupted from them, filling his body.

As Greed himself was absorbed into the Nirvana Fruit, Meng Hao then acquired... Greed's memories. They weren't completely intact, and there were many blurry areas, but they still left Meng Hao completely shocked.

In addition to Greed's memories, he also acquired... Xuan Daozi's memories, which Greed had just Soulsearched. Those images were fresh, and were quickly snatched up by Meng Hao.

It was at this point that his fourth Nirvana Fruit reached a state of ninety percent absorption. As for Greed's life force Essence, there was only a strand of it left.

"I re-molded this body with my Essence. I made it stronger! It's the same with the cultivation base. I even sealed the Dao Fruit so it couldn't emerge. I was the one who refined his magical items. I spared no cost....

“I destroyed his enemies, and turned them into life force which he absorbed.... I... I... I refuse to accept this! That jinx overcame me so many years ago, and what’s done is done. But now, Meng Hao does the same thing!?!?”Greed laughed bitterly as his aura dissipated. His struggles ceased, and he was completely blotted out by the Paragon’s blood inside of Meng Hao.

At the same time, the corpse sitting cross-legged in the middle of the nine stone columns suddenly trembled slightly. It wasn’t that the corpse once again had life force, but rather, the blue sun on its forehead was vibrating, causing the entire body to tremble.

As the last strand of Greed’s life force Essence was absorbed by the fourth Nirvana Fruit, as the last bit of Greed’s soul was wiped out by the Paragon’s blood... Greed’s screams were cut off; he had been completely and utterly refined!

It was at that point that the blue sun on the corpse began to shine with radiant light. Then, it suddenly dimmed. However, when that happened, a face became visible within the sun. Floating there... was none other than Greed!!

His eyes had been closed, but now they snapped open, filled with madness as he glared at Meng Hao, revealing that wild, unyielding air. He even opened his mouth and howled noiselessly.

His eyes were filled with venomous hatred, hatred toward Meng Hao and hatred toward Paragon Nine Seals, all of which had reached the pinnacle.

He had given Meng Hao incredible good fortune, only to be consumed by him. Of course, it was only part of Greed’s soul, not the entire thing. The rest existed within that blue sun.

Back when he had been suppressed by Paragon Nine Seals, he had split his soul, with one half remaining on the outside. That part had now been absorbed by Meng Hao, which constituted a grievous injury to Greed.

In fact, not even the wounds inflicted on him by Paragon Nine Seals years ago had been as bad.

Half of his soul meant that half of his life force Essence was now gone as well. To Greed, that was like half of his life!

Even as Greed's face howled noiselessly within the blue sun, Meng Hao trembled, and the glittering image of his fourth Nirvana Fruit appeared on his forehead. It was now almost completely absorbed.

However, the key was the word 'almost,' since it still lacked just a tiny, tiny bit before being completely absorbed.

It was now at ninety-nine percent. The last bit would need time, not any influx of life force. Based on what Meng Hao could sense, he was confident that it would take a few months at most before... he was ready to break into the Ancient Realm!

At the same time, he could sense from the rumblings of his cultivation base that he was far more powerful than he had been before. He was even confident that if he faced Dao Lord level opponents, he would no longer only be able to fight them to a deadlock, but rather, would be able to secure victory.

Even more shocking was that the Allheaven Dao Immortal blood inside of him was boiling, which affected the Fang Clan back in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

On that day, the Dao seeds in many Fang Clan cultivators sparked to life. There were even some whose blood awoke to the point of being in the initial stages of an Allheaven Immortal!

On that day, the overall power of the Fang Clan increased by a whole level. On that day, the Fang Clan was shaken, and all of the clan members were in shock. On that day, Fang Shoudao experienced a cultivation base breakthrough!

In one short day, the Fang Clan grew far, far stronger. At the same time, on that day, countless members of the Fang Clan could sense a distant, awe-inspiring aura surging up in the Eighth Mountain and Sea.

That... was Meng Hao!

Meng Hao's eyes burst open, and they seemed to contain the stars hidden in their depths. If you looked closely, they seemed to house vortexes that could suck in the power of all types of divine sense!

Even more shocking was that... there was lightning dancing around him that came from none other than Greed's Essence of lightning.

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and as a result, the entire aura of the necropolis seemed to begin to spin toward him.

Meng Hao's eyes began to gleam with wild joy. He clenched his fists together and relished the sensation of power he felt from his body, which far, far exceeded that from before.

He could sense the resilience of his bones, and how much more terrifyingly strong they were. His qi passageways were the same, and most importantly, his blood was too. Greed had paid an extremely heavy price to purify his blood, of which even a single drop now contained massive power!

Right now, he didn't need to use his cultivation base to fight the Dao, he could use his fleshly body alone!

In fact, there would surely be some powerful experts who would wish to refine his body into a Dao Realm treasure if they could!

Meng Hao began to laugh heartily. In his opinion, this Greed really was a good guy.

In addition to what he had done with his fleshly body, he had increased his cultivation base, something that left Meng Hao smiling broadly. He rubbed his forehead, thinking about how much time he had saved with the fourth Nirvana Fruit thanks to Greed. Suddenly, he felt very appreciative. Were it not for the fact that Greed had forcefully sealed the fruit inside of him, even though he still could have taken his body back, his cultivation base progress would not have been as incredible.

"What a great fellow," Meng Hao said. Licking his lips, he smiled and smacked his bag of holding. Eyes shining brightly, he took a deep breath and took out the long spear which had been turned into a dragon, and the superimposed swords. When he swung the long spear, the dragon roared. The pressure it now exuded was over ten times that of its previous power, as far as Meng Hao could tell in his initial estimate.

As for the superimposed swords, the murderous aura they emitted was even greater than before.

He suddenly regretted not leaving some more magical items sitting out in his bag of holding. If he had known things would end up like this, he definitely would have....

Then he looked up at the Lightning Cauldron floating above his head, and his eyes gleamed.

“Rich!” he murmured. “This time I’ve really struck it rich.... I wish I’d known earlier that lending out my body could lead to so many benefits. From now on I’ll loan it out a bit more often....” Then he looked over at the blue sun on the forehead of the corpse, and Greed’s face therein. Greed looked like he was about to go mad from the sight of Meng Hao’s glee regarding his fleshly body, his excitement regarding the transformations to his cultivation base, and his excitement at the items in his bag of holding.

All of it was too much for Greed, who let out a miserable howl. His heart felt like it was breaking, and his regret was enormous.

“Mine! All of that should be mine....

“I spared no cost to refine that body, and I wasted tons of Essence to mold its cultivation base. And I was the only one who could unseal those magical items.... Mine! All of that should rightly be mine. ...”

Chapter 1246: Cleanly and Thoroughly!

Greed wanted to weep, but had no tears to shed. He felt embarrassed, even humiliated.... And yet that humiliation soon turned to indignation as he saw Meng Hao’s delighted gaze shift from the Lightning Cauldron to... the shield and the little bell.

“Those are mine!!” Greed roared, his eyes wide. However, the sound of his voice couldn’t leave that blue sun. Even if he roared louder, the only thing anyone might be able to see was the blue glow of the sun intensifying a bit.

Meng Hao stared fixedly at the little shield, then took a deep breath. For some reason, he had the feeling that he... could control it.

Heart thumping, he sent out some divine will, and the shield twitched. A moment later, it appeared directly in front of him, radiating a scintillating light. Meng Hao gazed at the shield, contemplating how easy it had been to control it, almost as if it were connected to him. It made him realize that the

result of consuming Greed's life force Essence wasn't simply a matter of completing his fourth Nirvana Fruit.

He could sense that his control over the shield didn't come from himself, but rather... the fourth Nirvana Fruit.

It was similar to how... he didn't directly control the Paragon's blood inside of him, the third Nirvana Fruit did.

However, the specifics weren't really important. Meng Hao's eyes gleamed as he next looked toward the bell. It flickered, then floated over to rest in Meng Hao's hand, emanating a feeling of extreme ancientness.

"Not only did you help me refine my body, you increased my cultivation base, fused my Nirvana Fruit, re-forged my magical items, and even... gave me some of your own treasures." Meng Hao sighed and looked over at the blue sun on the corpse's forehead, and Greed's face, which was currently screaming silently at him.

Meng Hao cleared his throat and then clasped hands and bowed deeply.

"Many thanks, Senior," he said. Then he put the shield and the bell away.

Greed glared at him, and truly wished to weep.

After putting the items away, Meng Hao looked back up and saw Greed staring at him with madness and killing intent. All of a sudden, memories floated up in his mind that he had just acquired.

"When he was suppressed, he split his soul into two parts, huh...?"

"The 33 Hells are actually thirty-three medicinal pills left behind by Paragon Nine Seals.... Hmm, medicinal pills concocted by a powerful Dao Realm expert could rightly be called Dao pills.

"If that's the case, then did I actually just consume half of a Dao pill?" Meng Hao murmured, looking at Greed, and his eyes shone brightly. He licked his lips. He had no way of knowing, but when Greed saw the look on his face, he suddenly shivered.

After standing there thinking for another moment, Meng Hao organized his thoughts. In addition to Greed's memories, he also had Xuan Daozi's memories in his head too. From those memories, he was able to see Xuan Daozi's final moments before his death.

Although he and Xuan Daozi had been trying to kill each other, when Meng Hao saw how he had died, he couldn't help but sigh emotionally.

"In the Immortal World, cultivators with less than three Essences are ordinary Dao Realm cultivators. Three Essences earns you the right to be called Dao Lord, which is essentially the peak of the early Dao Realm. After that are the Dao Sovereigns, who have up to six Essences. They are essentially the mid Dao Realm.

"After that is the late Dao Realm, which is... the Paragon stage. 7-Essences Paragons, 8-Essences Paragons, and 9-Essences Paragons!

"It seems that the Paragon stage is equivalent to Paramita's Exalted Celestial, which is likewise equivalent to Paramita's Dao Divinity....

"Furthermore, beyond Paragons, there is another legendary Realm, the Daosource!!" Meng Hao's eyes shone brightly as he realized why Xuan Daozi had been so focused on killing him.

"Essence stirs only for the Daosource.... The Daosource Realm is similar to Heaven Trampling, which is likewise similar to the Boundless Dao?" Meng Hao was unfamiliar with these two terms. After searching through some of Greed's memories, he understood. Exalted Celestials and Dao Divinities were cultivation base terms used by the two powers that had been involved in the war with the Immortal World.

"Daosource. Daosource.... According to the information in Greed's memories, back in the day, Paragon Nine Seals had a Daosource fleshly body, but his cultivation base was only half a step into the Daosource Realm. So, he never counted as a true Daosource cultivator.

"In that case... exactly how powerful is the Daosource Realm? If a Daosource Realm cultivator appeared in the Mountain and Sea Realm, would it be enough to resolve the war between the three powers?!"

“Furthermore... might it be possible... that there is an even more powerful Realm beyond the Daosource?” Meng Hao was nearly overwhelmed by the mass of new information.

After a long moment, he shook his head and cleared his thoughts. After looking over at the blue sun on the corpse’s forehead again, his eyes glittered. Muttering to himself, he took another long moment to still his beating heart.

“My cultivation base isn’t high enough to undo that seal and consume the rest of the Dao pill.... Since that was the purpose of the creation of the 33 Hells, then there’s no need to get anxious about receiving all the benefits.

“Once I get into the Dao Realm, I’ll come back and get all the Dao pills in one fell swoop!” Meng Hao stepped back, then waved his right sleeve, collecting all the other magical items which had been laying around in the area for countless years. After looking around one more time to make sure he hadn’t missed anything, he turned and prepared to leave.

Within the blue sun, Greed stared at Meng Hao, swearing that if he had a chance, he would definitely consume Meng Hao.

However, just as Meng Hao was about to leave, he stopped in place, then smacked himself hard in the forehead. Greed gaped in shock, wondering whether or not Meng Hao was going crazy.

Meng Hao appeared to be furious as he once again smacked himself.

“Ah, Meng Hao you fool, I know you’re rich now, but you can never forget that money comes by saving up a bit at a time. Every time you don’t earn some money, you’re losing money. Plus, once you get it, you can’t spend it frivolously!

“You got some amazing good fortune this time around, and earned quite a bit, but that doesn’t mean you can be extravagant all of a sudden!” Taking a deep breath, he reminded himself of the lessons he had been taught, then squatted down and tapped some of the floor tiles in the temple. Finally, he let out a long sigh.

“I really was being negligent. These floor tiles might not be made from Immortal jade, but they contain a Dao will within them that makes them the perfect ingredient for forging magical items. Even one of them would fetch an incredible price on the outside.” Eyes gleaming, he smacked his bag of holding to produce a sword, which he edged into the corner of one of the tiles. A moment later, the sword snapped in half.

“Wow, they’re pretty tough!” Licking his lips, Meng Hao produced the long dragon spear, stabbed it into the ground, and began to pry upward. Meanwhile, Greed looked on, astonished.

A boom rang out as the floor tile flew up into the air. Meng Hao grabbed it and looked it over, whereupon a radiant smile appeared on his face. Eyes shining, he slapped his bag of holding, causing the parrot and meat jelly to fly out.

“No jabbering,” he said. “Let’s clean this place out. Just don’t touch those nine pillars.” With that, he went to work prying up the next tile.

The parrot and meat jelly had just been about to launch into a debate, but were cut off by Meng Hao. They looked around, and suddenly their eyes began to shine brightly, and they immediately began to help Meng Hao pry up the floor tiles.

One piece. Two pieces. Three pieces.... Ten pieces. Thirty pieces. One hundred pieces. Meng Hao was going mad, buzzing around like a tornado as he used the dragon spear to pry up one floor tile after another.

Greed watched what was happening, eyes wide with shock and disbelief. Meng Hao was using the very spear that he had paid such a heavy price to unseal, to run around like mad and pry up floor tiles. Greed suddenly shivered.

By now, he realized that Meng Hao was definitely not to be trifled with.

Absolutely, positively not to be trifled with. In fact, he was even more terrifying than the jinx that had sealed Greed here to begin with.

“That jinx was a killer, but this Meng Hao is more than that. He’ll take everything down to the bones!!”

Before Greed could even finish sighing, Meng Hao suddenly looked up at the walls, and his eyes shone. Hurrying over, he began to dismantle the frescoes piece by piece.

Greed's eyelids twitched as he watched Meng Hao, and his heart was pounding. He had long since taken his own name to be an expression of his personality, but now he realized that compared to Meng Hao, he himself... was an upstanding individual.

It was at this point that Meng Hao's eyes flashed like lightning as he started looking around again, and his gaze met Greed's. Greed once again looked away, fearful that Meng Hao in his madness would go after him again.

"Crazy. Crazy!" Greed murmured, gaping in shock. "This guy is absolutely crazy!" The parrot and meat jelly were also collecting all of the items in the hall, with the exception of the nine pillars.

Greed stared around at the chaos; the once magnificent temple hall now looked as if it had been chewed up by a ravenous dog. It was completely bare, with only a few places left intact. Greed was shaking at how terrifying Meng Hao was.

"I really did underestimate him. He doesn't just give up with the bones, he even scrapes up the dirt beneath the bones. He takes everything...."

"This is the type of guy you can't trifle with, never ever, ever! Now that I think about it, HE should be named Greed!" Greed took in a deep breath as Meng Hao once again seemed to be on the verge of leaving. However, it was at this point that Meng Hao turned and suddenly looked at him.

Greed shivered in shock as Meng Hao once again slapped his forehead.

"How could I have forgotten that...." Meng Hao said, sounding very angry at how dull he had become. He suddenly hurried over to where Greed was located, and a carved stone screen had been erected, which depicted a sun. Meng Hao efficiently dismantled the screen and put it into his bag of holding.

As he looked around the huge temple hall one more time, he tilted his head up and noticed the roof tiles, which he quickly helped himself to. Finally, he left with the meat jelly and parrot.

Greed watched Meng Hao leave, and then glanced around at the mess. Then, he really did start to cry. In his estimation, his necropolis must now be the poorest of all 33.

"I really did underestimate him. Not even ravenous dogs could pick the place apart as cleanly and thoroughly as this...."

## Chapter 1247: Meng Chen Again

Meng Hao left, savoring sweet the flavor of his profits from the central temple. Eyes gleaming, he next focused on the surrounding side chambers. Of course, the meat jelly and parrot hadn't originally cared much about wealth. The parrot liked fur and feathers, whereas the meat jelly was inclined toward bullies.

However, after being around Meng Hao for so long, he had started to rub off on them. Now, they were far more interested in money, which was quite a pleasing development as far as Meng Hao was concerned; having assistants made the plundering process much smoother.

The three of them were like locusts as they descended upon the next side chamber. Because they didn't have to worry about the magical seals like they did in the main hall, things were much easier, and they went right to work.

The parrot flew up toward the ceiling, the meat jelly handled miscellaneous objects, and as for Meng Hao, he felt that prying up the floor tiles and dismantling the wall decorations was right up his alley....

In the end it took barely a dozen breaths of time before the three of them left. The side chamber... was completely empty, even emptier than the main hall.

If Greed were here to see what was happening, his fear of Meng Hao would surely increase.

"Rich! I'm really rich!" Meng Hao thought, his eyes shining as he madly cleared out another side chamber. It didn't take long before the group of three had swept through all of the side chambers. The parrot and meat jelly were starting to feel tired, so Meng Hao put them back in his bulging bag of holding, which he then patted as he laughed heartily.

Then he prepared to fly off and look for the exit. Meanwhile, Han Qinglei was just down the corridor, having just cautiously entered one of the side chambers. At first, he assumed that he had taken a wrong turn and come to a different place than he expected, but just as he was turning to leave he suddenly gaped in shock at the emptiness around him and examined the area more closely.

He looked down at the ground and saw no floor tiles, nor were there any frescoes on the wall. Every single object imaginable had been cleared out. Even the glowing pearl lights up above had been taken away. Han Qinglei gasped in astonishment.

“Wh-what... what happened?!?! Who did this?” Han Qinglei wasn’t actually very familiar with Meng Hao. He only knew about how Meng Hao had acted in the Windswept Realm, so when he saw the shocking scene around him, he didn’t think to connect it to Meng Hao.

Taking a deep breath, he hurried on to the next side chamber, whereupon his face began to flicker with fear. After visiting several more side chambers, he realized that they had all been emptied out, and were in complete disarray.

Not too far off, on another side, Meng Hao suppressed his excitement at everything that had just happened, and was preparing to start searching for the exit. At the same time, he was considering how to escape from the Heavengod Alliance.

“At the most, it will take me a few months before I can break through to the Ancient Realm. For me, the Ancient Realm will be a mere stepping stone, and it should be just a quick succession of breakthroughs on my way to the Dao Realm!” Meng Hao’s eyes shone with anticipation. He had already spent far too much time in the Immortal Realm, and had progressed farther than virtually anyone else ever had.

He had made thorough preparations, and was confident that he would be able to extinguish however many Soul Lamps he needed to. The only thing he wasn’t sure about was how many Soul Lamps that would entail.

“The Dao Realm is the key to everything!” Meng Hao took a deep breath and buried his anticipation deep in his heart.

“If I remember correctly, Han Qinglei is in this necropolis too.” Meng Hao sent his divine sense out and quickly found Han Qinglei. Just when he was about to head in his direction, Meng Hao stopped in place. He had just noticed that in a corridor not too far off, a person was just about to become a corpse.

It was none other than Meng Chen!

“Someone from the Meng Clan....” Meng Hao scanned his face, and despite the thick aura of death which twisted it in a grotesque way, he could tell that it was the same young man he had noticed on the Meng Clan’s ship.

Meng Hao remembered that when Patriarch Blacksoul had pointed out that he came from the Ninth Mountain and Sea, it made him think about the Meng Clan, and then look over at the expressions on the faces of the people on the ship.

Few of them had any reaction when the Ninth Mountain and Sea was mentioned, but this young man, Meng Chen, had looked shocked. His expression had been one of mixed emotions, including anticipation and even nervousness. Meng Hao had noticed that, but at the moment he had been in a very deadly chase, with no time to consider the matter. However, in hindsight he was now convinced that this young man knew about the connection between the Meng Clan and the Ninth Mountain and Sea's Fang Clan.

Meng Hao ignored Han Qinglei for the moment, and instead sped over to Meng Chen. He even used the Lightning Cauldron to bypass some walls, and appeared next to Meng Chen a moment later.

Almost immediately, he was struck by the powerful aura of death emanating off of Meng Chen. The ground in the area had already absorbed his limbs, and was slowly assimilating the rest of him, to the point where only his head was still visible above the surface. His skin was bloated and black, covered with blue veins.

However, he wasn't dead! He still had one breath of life left!

Meng Hao knelt down next to him and placed his hand on Meng Chen's forehead. After a moment, a look of sadness passed over his face. Meng Chen's cultivation base was only in the Immortal Realm. The necropolis they were in was filled with an aura of death that even Dao Realm experts would be leery of. However, Meng Chen was already completely infected, and should actually have died much sooner.

However, a bit of his own aura remained, a bit that was fueled by his unyielding drive and will. The power of that desire transformed into something like a wisp of smoke from a lit incense stick, which kept Meng Chen afloat for just a bit longer.

However, despite the fact that he hovered there between life and death, his soul was still dispersing, and his body was melting away. He would not be able to enter the cycle of reincarnation, and if Meng Hao hadn't come when he had, then it would only have been a few more hours before that final bit of his own aura was completely gone.

"Just what kind of obsession can drive a person to refuse to give in like this...?" Meng Hao murmured. He sighed, wishing that he could do something to save him, but knowing that it was impossible.

Frowning sadly, he reached out and tapped Meng Chen's forehead, sending in a bit of life force. It wouldn't save him, but would give him a bit of lucidity and help him to express his dying wishes.

Meng Chen shivered, and his bulging eyes opened; he didn't look at all handsome like he used to. However, Meng Hao's life force contained Essence power, which caused Meng Chen's dispersing soul to temporarily solidify, and his previously fading eyes to grow clear.

Unfortunately, Meng Hao knew that the brightness in his eyes... was the flicker of lucidity that came moments before death.

"If there's anything you'd like to say, you can tell me," Meng Hao said softly.

Meng Chen looked at Meng Hao blankly for a moment, then realized who he was. Eyes filling with anticipation, he said, "Meng... Hao..." It was difficult for him to speak, and when he did, it was in fits and gasps. "I... have an... aunt named... Meng Li, in the Ninth Mountain and Sea..."

His words hit Meng Hao like lightning, and he began to tremble.

He looked at Meng Chen with wide eyes; although he had guessed that this might be the reality of the situation, to hear Meng Chen say the words out loud caused waves of shock to beat at Meng Hao's mind.

Instead of saying that Meng Hao had deep feelings for the Meng Clan itself, it would be more accurate to say... that he felt deep regard for his grandfather's bloodline. In the final analysis, the reason he wanted to go to the Meng Clan in the first place was because of that bloodline!

His true relatives were the members of that bloodline, not the Meng Clan in general!

Meng Hao began to pant from the realization that this Meng Clan cultivator was actually one of his direct relatives. He once again tapped Meng Chen's forehead, giving him some more Essence power. This time, knowing that Meng Chen was not just an ordinary member of the Meng Clan, he gave as much power as was possible.

It still wasn't enough to save him, but it was enough to cause his eyes to shine.

“You... know... my aunt...?” Meng Chen asked, looking at Meng Hao with intense anticipation.

“She’s my mother,” Meng Hao replied softly. “My name is Meng Hao, but at the same time, Fang-Meng Hao.”

When Meng Chen heard that, he shivered, and a look of excitement appeared on his face. He knew that his aunt had gone to the Ninth Mountain and Sea to get married, and that her husband was surnamed Fang....

“So it’s really... you....” Meng Chen still hadn’t released his last breath of life. However, his eyes were growing dim, and the aura of death was overtaking him. Even with Meng Hao supporting him, any moment could be his last.

“Help the Meng Clan... and help our bloodline... rise to prominence!

“I’m... Meng Chen, and I’m... the only Immortal Realm cultivator in our bloodline... help us... rise... to prominence!” Meng Chen shivered, using all of the energy he had left to say the words ‘rise to prominence.’ After he did, black blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and his eyes darkened. However, he still wasn’t dead yet; he was holding on tenaciously, looking at Meng Hao, waiting for him to respond.

Meng Hao’s mind was trembling as he looked at Meng Chen, his own relative. After a moment, his eyes filled with determination, and he nodded.

When Meng Chen saw that, and the determination written on Meng Hao’s face, he smiled. The smile lasted only a moment, but based on the look in his eyes, Meng Hao could sense Meng Chen’s unswerving obsession. The look faded away, and then his gaze stiffened. His eyes stopped moving; the flame of his life force had burned out.

His body was now completely enveloped by an aura of death.

Meng Chen was dead.

Off to the side lay his bag of holding, the only thing that remained of him.

Meng Hao was silent for a while, then he sighed. He was aware that his grandfather's bloodline was in decline, and that one of the main reasons was himself. It was the same with the Fang Clan. If his two grandfathers hadn't gone missing while trying to save him, then his grandfather's bloodline definitely wouldn't be in such a poor situation.

"The only Immortal Realm cultivator in the bloodline...?" Meng Hao murmured, slowly standing up. He stamped his foot, dispersing the aura of death, and sending the soil scattering about to reveal Meng Chen's corpse, which he carefully picked up.

"Alright, time to take you home," he said quietly. Carefully placing Meng Chen into his bag of holding, he turned and began to slowly walk away. As he did, his appearance changed... into that of Meng Chen!

"I'll take your place to fulfill your obsession," he said slowly. "I will lead the bloodline... into prominence in the Meng Clan!"

Chapter 1248: Leaving the 33 Hells!

"Rise to prominence." What those words meant, and what they represented, was different now than what they had meant during his time in the Fang Clan. There, rising to prominence involved he himself flying to great heights.

Meng Hao was a member of the Fang Clan, and the Crown Prince of the direct bloodline at that. His father had a profoundly high cultivation base, and Meng Hao also had the support of the direct bloodline Elders.

Because of that, rather than saying that he had helped the direct bloodline rise to prominence, it would be better to say that Meng Hao had been demonstrating his own worthiness.

The situation in the Meng Clan... was different. Based on the level of his cultivation base, he could earn himself a high position within the Meng Clan if he wanted to. However, unless he stayed with the Meng Clan in the Eighth Mountain and Sea forever, it would do no good. Once he left, the bloodline would be left waiting for his grandfather to return, and would be back in exactly the same position they had been in before Meng Hao had arrived.

To rise to prominence with the Meng Clan meant... that the entire bloodline needed to rise, not just a single person.

Meng Hao stood there, lost in deep and somber thought. Meng Chen's handful of words caused him to ponder the decline of his grandfather's bloodline, and the serious crisis they were now facing. The fact that they only had one Immortal Realm cultivator said a lot.

It meant that the entire bloodline could be wiped away at virtually any time.

In fact, no one else in the clan would care at all about Meng Chen's death, because it would have virtually no impact on the clan as a whole. But to his bloodline, it spelled out certain disaster.

Their only Immortal Realm cultivator was dead....

"How did things come to this?" Meng Hao thought. He truly didn't understand how, in less than a thousand years, a once flourishing bloodline could experience such a decline. There was really only one possibility.

"All of the powerful experts died, leaving behind only widows and orphans...." Meng Hao trembled where he stood, his eyes bloodshot and his heart twinging with pain. He could well imagine the current situation in the bloodline, and it filled his heart with deep guilt.

He then silently made his way off into the distance, ignoring his plan to go find Han Qinglei. As of now, there was no need to rely on him to leave this place. Meng Hao would use Meng Chen's identity instead.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, rumbling sounds echoed out within the necropolis, and everything began to shake as a huge rift appeared. A terrifying power of expulsion also began to rise up.

According to Greed's memories, that was the way to leave this place. There was a small spell formation aperture which, when powered by Greed's life force Essence, would open the exit.

As the rumbling echoed out, Meng Hao took advantage of the expulsion power to shoot out through the rift. He was followed by a shocked Han Qinglei, who quickly turned back to look at the rift leading back to the necropolis. He realized that the only people to be disgorged were himself and this other person from the Meng Clan.

Of all the other people, none emerged... not even Meng Hao.

This could only lead him to one conclusion.

“Dead? Impossible!” Han Qinglei simply couldn’t believe that Meng Hao had died inside. Suddenly, he thought back to the last moment in which he had seen Meng Hao, and how odd the situation had been.

Han Qinglei suddenly had a very bad feeling. Sighing, he turned and looked at the world around him, which was once again wreathed in mists. Roars could be heard therein, as well as the sounds of cultivators unleashing magical techniques.

He looked back at the Meng Clan cultivator who had been ejected from the necropolis along with him. The reason he could so easily identify him as coming from the Meng Clan was that all of the members of the Meng Clan who had come to this place had Immortal Realm cultivation bases, and currently, Meng Hao had suppressed his cultivation base down to that very level.

“Everyone else died, how come he’s still alive...?” Han Qinglei thought, eyes glittering. However, just as he was about to examine Meng Hao closer, an enraged roar echoed out.

“Hungry... so hungry...” The sound was joined by the clank of iron chains. A moment later, a black iron chain shot out from the mists, causing mountains to crumble down below, and destroying a few cultivators who got in its way.

The mists seethed, and soon, a giant became visible, around whose enormous belly were wrapped numerous iron chains.

Several cultivators surrounded it, including Dao Realm experts, all of whom were engaged in fierce battle.

Even though the old man from the Heavengod Society had left after Meng Hao and the others had gotten sucked into the necropolis, obviously other cultivators had entered in search of good fortune.

“What is this thing!?” Han Qinglei gasped. Although the mists made things difficult to see, it was possible to discern that the giant was actually covered by countless whisker-like tentacles, some of which were wrapped around the iron chains and the rest of which flailed about in the air. It was a truly shocking sight.

The creature was currently being besieged by numerous cultivators, many of whom appeared to be collecting the blood that dripped down from the tentacles surrounding the giant.

Han Qinglei, who had just been distracted by all the figures in the mists, turned back only to find that the Meng Clan cultivator was gone. He looked once more in the direction of the necropolis, then let out a long sigh and buried his suspicions in his heart, flying up into the air toward the exit.

Concealed in the mists, Meng Hao watched Han Qinglei heading off. Keeping his head down, he followed along, waiting a bit after Han Qinglei actually left through the exit before flying toward it himself.

It was not that he was on guard against Han Qinglei, who had actually come here to save him. The friendship he had shown was something that Meng Hao would remember. However, it wouldn't be very convenient to meet with him in his current identity. His speculations regarding what had happened to his grandfather's bloodline still weighed heavily on his heart.

As Meng Hao flew up into the air toward the exit, someone spun out of control through the air toward him from off in the distance. It was an Ancient Realm cultivator, who had been attacking the giant and was now coughing up blood and had a very ashen face. Just now, the terrifying giant had swiped at him, and just the ripples of pressure from the blow had very nearly killed him. He was sent spinning tens of thousands of meters away, ending up right in front of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao dodged to the side and then continued on his way up. The Ancient Realm cultivator was a middle-aged man, who wiped the blood off his mouth, glanced fearfully at the giant off in the distance, then looked at Meng Hao.

"Immortal Realm? You actually dared to enter this place as an Immortal Realm cultivator? What sect are you from?" The cultivator's eyes flashed as he flew forward to block Meng Hao's path.

"Screw off!" Meng Hao said icily, not slowing down a bit.

"How dare you!" the man said with a cold snort. "Are you looking to die?!" As he shot toward Meng Hao, he reached out to grab him. Meng Hao frowned, eyes flickering with killing intent at the man's obvious ill designs. However, before the man could get close, massive rumbling sounds filled the air.

The surrounding mists began to seethe and churn. At the same time, the besieged giant suddenly became completely clear to Meng Hao's eyes.

It was fully 3,000 meters tall and had a belly that was so fat it seemed almost like a sphere, surrounded by writhing tentacles. Were it not for the fact that it had a head and four limbs, it might look like a globe.

It held an enormous cudgel in its hand, which it waved about as it roared, “Hungry... so hungry....”

Its left hand suddenly reached out and grabbed a cultivator, then popped him into its mouth. Blood oozed out as the giant chewed the man up and then swallowed him down. All the while, the other cultivators surrounding the giant were looking on.

Meng Hao heard the miserable scream, and then watched as the man was swallowed down. Next, one of the giant’s tentacles suddenly began to glow brightly as if there were some sort of crystalline liquid flowing inside of it. Immediately, the other surrounding cultivators, even the Dao Realm experts, began to attack that very tentacle.

Booms rang out, and the tentacle shattered, causing numerous drops of crystalline fluid to scatter about, which the cultivators then snatched up.

It was at this point that a cold voice suddenly rang out in Meng Hao’s ear.

“Did you see that? Now it’s time for you to do me a favor. We’re going to use your body to trade for some of that moon elixir!” It was none other than the middle-aged man, whose hand shot out like lightning to grab Meng Hao. Meng Hao didn’t even look back at him. He simply pointed his right index finger behind him and caused him to lurch to a stop, despite not even touching him. The man’s eyes went wide with disbelief as he suddenly lost all control of his body, and was rooted in place behind Meng Hao.

Astonishment filled his eyes, and waves of shock filled his heart.

Meng Hao looked back thoughtfully at the giant. Suddenly, massive rumbling filled the air as a powerful force of expulsion rose up from within the world, filling the lands.

That force of expulsion began to push the cultivators up into the air. Simultaneously, the roiling mists formed into numerous vicious faces, which roared as they shot toward the crowds of cultivators up above.

It was as if they were going to drive these people away!

Most shocking of all was that the exit up above began to shrink, as if it were closing.

Immediately, the cultivators began to shout and fly up into the air.

“Let’s go, the exit’s closing! Get out of here!”

“The 33 Hells are only open for a limited time. They have an initial opening, a major opening, and a final opening. Each opening last longer than the last. Let’s go, we’ll have more chances later. From ancient times until now, anyone who has stayed behind after the exit closes has never been heard from again!”

“It’s too bad this gravesite is so barren. There was no mountain of weapons, and only one cultivator was buried here alongside the one who was suppressed....” The voices of the crowd echoed as everyone flew up toward the exit.

The giant was still roaring and attacking the crowds. The expulsion power grew more intense, and Meng Hao flashed toward the exit, dragging the middle-aged man along with him.

As the crowds neared the exit and were about to leave, the giant all of a sudden looked at all of them, opened its mouth, and roared a Heaven-shaking, Earth-shattering roar. Its body swelled rapidly, and its tentacles extended rapidly. In the blink of an eye, you couldn’t see its head or its limbs; it looked like a giant, 30,000-meter sphere.

The shocked cultivators watched as over 10,000 tentacles shot up into the air like lightning. Many of the cultivators were too slow, and were caught by them, after which rift-like mouths opened up on the tentacles and swallowed them down.

Everyone was in a pandemonium; by now, the exit was only about thirty percent of its original size. Everyone shot toward it as fast as possible, speeding out of the exit; as for the tentacles, they didn’t dare to follow, and instead began to attack other people who hadn’t escaped yet.

One tentacle shot toward Meng Hao, but as it neared, his hand made a grasping motion. Instantly, the middle-aged cultivator’s face flickered with fear and despair as Meng Hao tossed him out to the tentacle. It immediately consumed him, after which Meng Hao calmly stepped through the exit. As

he did, he looked back at the huge 30,000-meter spheroid giant and its writhing tentacles, as well as the ferocious visages formed by the mist.

Then, he left.

Chapter 1249: I'm Meng Chen!

Outside the exit, the starry sky was pitch black and stretched out in all directions. When Meng Hao emerged, he could see the other brightly shining rifts, out of which other cultivators were emerging.

Quite a number of cultivators of the Heavengod Alliance had entered the 33 Hells. Of the few remaining who were emerging now, some looked alarmed, whereas others looked delighted. Obviously, those were the people who had acquired something valuable inside. As for those cultivators, their fellow sect members quickly converged around them and escorted them away.

Other people didn't look very happy about that, but after considering the matter, decided not to fight over the spoils.

Meng Hao mixed in with the crowds as they left the area of the 33 Hells, eavesdropping on their conversations as he did.

"It's shut now, so the initial opening is over. The next time they open, more of the grave sites will be available...."

"The 33 Hells will open three times in a row, and the period between the openings isn't that long.... Soon it will be time for the second opening, and in the end... the third!"

"I can't wait for the final opening, the third. Supposedly lots of sects acquire precious treasures and Daoist magics then."

"The level of danger always increases with each opening, though. Just now, not too many people died, but in the second opening, probably half of the people who go in won't make it out. As for the third opening... only the truly lucky can survive."

Meng Hao's eyes glittered, but his expression remained the same. He followed everyone as they flew along. His cultivation base wasn't very high at the moment, only in the Immortal Realm,

which put him at the bottom of the pack. However, he wasn't the only Immortal Realm cultivator; there were a handful of others, ensuring that he didn't stick out too much.

He went along, maintaining a certain speed that ensured that he fell behind. The group was led by Dao Realm experts, and eventually broke out from the region of the 33 Hells.

Eventually that included Meng Hao. As he emerged, bright light shone into his eyes; the starry sky here glittered resplendently, which was a stark contrast to the pitch black near the 33 Hells.

Meng Hao looked around and saw that the area surrounding the 33 Hells was packed tight with thousands of floating battleships. There were even floating palaces which had been erected, which belonged to various sects in the Heavengod Alliance. As the cultivators flew out of the 33 Hells and went in the directions of their sects, Meng Hao looked around at the various ships until he found the one belonging to the Meng Clan. The Young Lord and his Dao Protector were there, examining everyone exiting the 33 Hells, looking for the members of the Meng Clan that had gone in.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered coldly as he caused his face to grow pale, and put a look on his face that made it seem like he had just escaped with his life. Then he lurched along as if injured as he headed toward the Meng Clan ship.

At first, it was quite a chaotic scene as everyone headed toward their various sects, but things quickly started to quiet down.

Meng Hao slowly neared the Meng Clan ship, and finally, the Young Lord caught sight of him. The Young Lord immediately looked delighted, but the Dao Protector behind him frowned and looked off into the distance. Seeing that no more members of the Meng Clan had emerged, he sighed.

Soon, the ship's shields were lowered, and Meng Hao boarded. He immediately coughed up a mouthful of blood and staggered off to the side, supporting himself on a handrail before managing to stand in place.

"How come you're the only one who came back?" shouted the Dao Protector. "What happened to everyone else?" Among the other members of the Young Lord's retinue present were a few people who were his long-time servants. One was a middle-aged cultivator, a butler who had recently been berating him and now looked very surprised to see Meng Chen alive.

After all, of all the clan members who had gone into the 33 Hells, Meng Chen's cultivation base had been the weakest. And yet now, he was the only one to return.

On the other side of the ship was the young man from the Han Clan and his Dao Protector. The young man stood there looking at Meng Hao, his sinister eyes glittering with a strange light as he slowly licked his lips.

“I never thought that this guy would actually make it out alive,” the young man murmured. “Seems he’s pretty lucky....” As he looked Meng Hao up and down, his eyes gleamed.

His Dao Protector didn’t say anything. He knew what that gaze meant, and he was aware that this clan’s Young Lord had rekindled an interest in this Meng Clan cultivator....

In response to the shouting Dao Protector, Meng Hao’s face paled, and he began to tremble. Sounding very bitter, he wheezed, “Dead, all dead....”

Meng Hao wasn’t familiar with Meng Chen’s manner of speaking, so he didn’t say much, only a few words. He coughed up some more blood and swayed as if he were on the verge of toppling over unconscious. But then he looked over at the Meng Clan’s Young Lord, and his heart thumped.

“Dead?!” the Dao Protector yelled again. “How come everyone else is dead, and you came back alive? What happened in there? Tell me!”

Meng Hao ignored the old Dao Protector and then slapped his bag of holding to produce a silver trident, which he held aloft.

“Meng Chen has accomplished his mission!” Meng Hao declared. “I nearly died, but I managed to bring this treasure out. This was the magical item that everyone died to get....”

The Young Lord’s eyes gleamed. Striding forward, he grabbed the silver trident, tested it out a bit, and then an expression of delight filled his face. Then he looked at Meng Chen, grabbed his bag of holding and rifled through it, then handed it back.

“Not bad, Meng Chen. This will count as a bit of meritorious service for you.” The Young Lord held the trident in hand, looking more and more pleased, until he finally laughed out loud.

“Now that I’ve gotten my hands on a precious treasure, I can go back to the clan and be lavished with praise by the Patriarch.”

Meng Hao swayed back and forth, just barely managing to clasp hands, bow deeply and say, “This does not count as Meng Chen’s meritorious service alone; all of the clan members worked hard to get this trident. Of course, most important was that this was all part of the Young Lord’s master plan. That was the only way we successfully got our hands on the treasure.”

The Young Lord gaped at him for a moment, then clapped him on the shoulder and laughed loudly.

“Excellent, excellent,” the Young Lord said, clearly in a good mood. “Since you’ve made some contributions I’ll give you a reward too. You can get treated in the sick bay for three days. Men, take him away!” Men immediately came forward to lead Meng Hao to the sick bay.

The old Dao Protector frowned. Although he didn’t suspect Meng Hao of anything, he was considering how difficult it was going to be to explain the situation when he got back to the sect. Although he didn’t take time to think about how differently Meng Hao had been acting, the middle-aged cultivator off to the side who had had some dealings with Meng Chen seemed very surprised.

As for the young man from the Han Clan, his eyes were glued to Meng Hao, and began to shine even more brightly than before.

Time passed. After the three days were up, Meng Hao went to his cabin on the ship to practice cultivation. He posted a notice on the door that he was in healing, and nobody disturbed him; after all, few people paid attention to Meng Chen.

As far as life on the ship went, Meng Chen didn’t have any friends. During his time in the sick bay, Meng Hao had already sent his divine sense out to cover the entire ship. If he wanted to, he could kill everyone on board with a single thought, even the Dao Protector.

After observing things for a while, including conversations between the ordinary clan members, the interactions of the Young Lord Meng De with his Dao Protector, and the perverse fetishes of the young man from the Han Clan which caused Meng Hao to frown, he was gradually able to come to an understanding the type of tough life Meng Chen had experienced on the ship. He had also experienced certain humiliations. Because of all that, there was no one here he could be considered very familiar with, with the exception, perhaps... of the middle-aged butler.

That was the one person who had appeared to be surprised by Meng Hao showing up. Meng Hao could tell after observing the man throughout these three days that although he appeared to be on familiar terms with Meng Chen, he harbored ill intentions. Finally, one night when the man was in a

meditative trance, Meng Hao sent some divine will in his direction and quietly sent his mind into chaos, killing him silently.

The man's death caused a bit of a commotion among the Meng Clan, but the Dao Protector's investigations indicated that the man had passed away due to an incident during cultivation, leading to widespread sighing.

The matter was quickly forgotten, and the Meng Clan ship continued to fly through the Heavengod Alliance. It was as they neared one of the exit planets that Meng Hao left the sickbay and returned to Meng Chen's room, where he began to practice meditation.

Because of the death of Patriarch Blacksoul, and the other people Meng Hao had killed, the bounty on his head wasn't very enticing for the Heavengod Alliance any more. Add in the fact that the 33 Hells had opened, and it ensured that few people were even talking about Meng Hao any more. The only people who were searching for him were disciples from some of the sects whose Patriarchs Meng Hao had killed.

Therefore, it was much easier to get around the previously locked down Heavengod Alliance. Most of the exits and teleportation portals were unsealed, and other than inspections performed there, not much else was happening regarding the search.

Many people assumed that Meng Hao had simply died within the 33 Hells.

In fact, not even the Heavengod Society issued any orders regarding what to do about him. Because of all that, it was a simple matter for the Meng Clan's ship to pass through the exit planet and reach... the area outside the Heavengod Alliance!

When that happened, Meng Hao opened his eyes. He could sense the change in the starry sky, and walked out of his cabin onto the deck of the ship, where he stared back at the Heavengod Alliance, sighing.

He hadn't been in the Eighth Mountain and Sea for very long, but he had already experienced many, many things.

He had exterminated the Blacksoul Society, been put on the wanted list by the Heavengod Alliance, had fulfilled his long-time wish of taking the Imperial examinations again, had encountered the Daoist priest of the Righteous Noble Sect, had learned the Seal the Heavens Incantation, had

entered the 33 Hells, had killed Dao Lords, had been possessed by Greed, had acquired an entire body's worth of good fortune, and had taken the place of Meng Chen on this ship.

"After I get to the Meng Clan... I'm definitely going to do some incredible things!" Meng Hao smiled, and his eyes glittered. It was at this point that the languid voice of a man suddenly spoke out behind him.

"You're going to be spending the night with me."

Chapter 1250: The Way Back

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever; he didn't seem to be surprised at all by the voice he had just heard. He turned around slowly and found the young man from the Han Clan leaning up against the bulkhead.

The young man was looking at Meng Hao with a strange gleam in his eye, almost as if he were teasing him. It was a look of derision, and at the same time, titillation. His glittering eyes almost seemed capable of piercing through Meng Hao's garments to stare at his entire body.

In fact... as he stared, he even started to pant.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. Although he didn't have access to Meng Chen's memories, his divine sense had been enveloping the ship for days now, and he knew that this young man enjoyed back door action and had even humiliated Meng Chen in the past....

"I love that look in your eye!" the young man said, panting. "I'm not waiting until tonight!" He began walking toward Meng Hao, lifting his hand up as if to grab him.

At the same time, the young man's Dao Protector could just barely be seen behind him. Apparently, he was used to turning a blind eye to the young man's behavior. Currently, he simply closed his eyes.

Meng Hao smiled, and although it was an icy smile, to the young man from the Han Clan, it was the most beautiful and enchanting smile he had ever seen.

"You should be happy," the young man growled. "I usually only take people once, but you... I want you a second time!" As his hand latched onto Meng Hao's shoulder, he licked his lips. He was just

about to stick his hand into his robe when Meng Hao's own hand shot up like lightning and grabbed the young man by the neck.

He squeezed softly, and the young man began to shake. Gaping, his face began to turn purple, and his eyes bulged, filled with an expression of disbelief and shock.

As soon as the Dao Protector saw what was happening, his face flickered. Before he could even move though, Meng Hao looked at him.

One look.

One gaze.

The man felt as if the Heavens were crushing down on him through that gaze. It was like the bright glow of a precious treasure, and it stabbed all the way into the man's mind, where it became crashing lightning.

The Dao Protector didn't even have the time to scream. He shook violently, and blood sprayed out of his mouth. He was instantly blinded, and then blood began to ooze out of his orifices. His qi passageways were shattered and his bones crushed. Then, he flopped over, twitched a few times, and rapidly withered up into ash, which then faded away. It all happened in the blink of an eye.

The only thing that remained of him was some white mist, which Meng Hao quickly absorbed.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He had subconsciously drawn on the power of the fourth Nirvana Fruit with that single glance, and had not expected it to be so powerful.

The young man from the Han Clan was gaping in shock and trembling. The look in his eyes as he stared at Meng Hao was one of complete terror and astonishment, and were it not for the fact that Meng Hao's hand was clamped onto his throat, he would be screaming.

He had always thought of himself as being quite resourceful, but in this moment of hopelessness, no amount of plans or scheming could do anything about the incredible power of the person he was facing. He simply had no way out.

If by this point he didn't realize that the person in front of him wasn't Meng Chen, then he didn't deserve to think of himself as being resourceful. In fact, because of the murderous aura coming off of Meng Hao, he was actually able to guess at who he was.

The fear in the young man's eyes betrayed his feelings, and within his eyes, a pleading look could be seen.

"There is no enmity between us, and I'm not a murderer," Meng Hao said coolly. "I wouldn't kill you just because you said something that offended me." However, Meng Hao's words didn't make the young man feel any better, and in fact, he was even more incredibly terrified than before, and the look in his eye grew more pleading.

"You seem to be an intelligent person, so presumably you know a bit about Karma," Meng Hao continued. "Meng Chen hated you, and I'm here to help him. Since you like back door action..." Meng Hao smiled. His hand turned into a gray blur which passed into the young man's body. Suddenly, the young man began to sprout fur...

The fur grew thick and luxuriant... and eventually covered his entire body. In the end, he didn't even look human any longer, but rather, more like a trembling animal. Finally, Meng Hao put him into his bag of holding... next to the parrot.

With that, Meng Hao waved his sleeve, causing all the evidence to vanish. As for the young man's background and identity in the Han Clan, Meng Hao knew all about it but didn't care.

He could exterminate the Heavengod Alliance's Blacksoul Society, and then cause chaos within their borders. Why would he possibly care about some Young Lord of the Han Clan?

Actually, in terms of status, the young Han Clan cultivator didn't come close to being as high as Meng Hao.

Waving his sleeve, Meng Hao walked back into the ship, where he sat down cross-legged in his cabin. Soon, the Young Lord of the Meng Clan discovered that the young man from the Han Clan had gone missing. However, no one worried that he was in any sort of danger; they assumed he had simply left of his own volition.

Time passed. Eventually, Meng Hao came to find out that Meng De was one of nine Young Lords of the Meng Clan, and that he was ranked toward the bottom. Although the position itself was high, the chances of him inheriting the leadership of the clan were relatively remote.

His reason for going out traveling on his own had not been because of orders from the clan. No, it had been Meng De's idea all along. In his opinion, the cultivation resources available in the clan were insufficient. Therefore, he decided to travel to the Heavengod Alliance, purchase some goods that were restricted and not easy to find outside, then take them to some of the trading outposts in the Eighth Mountain and Sea.

He planned to use the subsequent profits to support his extravagant lifestyle.

That was why he was on this merchant ship. As for his bodyguards, like Meng Chen, they were all clan members who nobody else really cared about, who had been forced into service to Meng De.

From Meng Hao's perspective, he was nothing more than a brainless idiot born into power. Even Fang Xi back in the Fang Clan outclassed him in all aspects. Meng Hao almost couldn't believe that with his position as a Young Lord he was relying on these kinds of methods to try to make money.

Were Meng Hao in his situation, with status like that, he could think of countless ways to turn a profit without having to go on some trading journey.

At the same time, Meng Hao couldn't help but feel sorry for Meng De in his idiocy.

Meng Hao had also taken advantage of his time on board to carefully Soulsearch some of the members of the Meng Clan.

He learned that his grandfather's bloodline truly was extremely down and out; it was so bad that they had been driven out of the Meng Clan ancestral mansion, and were forced to live on the borders of the clan. Even some vassals had higher statuses than them.

Virtually everyone in the bloodline was mortal. Of the few dozen cultivators they did have, most were in the Spirit Realm. Meng Chen had been the only one with latent talent outstanding enough to make a cultivation base breakthrough. By offering worship to an ancestral object, he had been able to acquire the power of a false Immortal.

As for the rest of the Spirit Realm cultivators in the bloodline, they didn't get picked on too much in the clan, but that was because... despite their names being on the clan genealogies, they were on the verge of being completely disowned.

To many other members of the Meng Clan, they were nothing more than servants. Actually, there was some truth to that. The several dozen Spirit Realm members of the bloodline had become very low-ranking retainers to the clan's Young Lords and Ladies.

As for why such a powerful bloodline could fall so far in less than a thousand years, that was a question that Meng Hao could not find an answer to in the memories that he had searched. However, there was one thing he became certain of....

His grandfather's bloodline really was nothing more than orphans and widows now. All of the Senior members of the clan were either dead, or had crippled cultivation bases, making them useless. Furthermore, when it came to males... there were very few.

If Meng Hao didn't take Meng Chen's place, then in another hundred years, his grandfather's bloodline might be fully wiped out, and then... there would be no more bloodline.

The mere thought of that caused Meng Hao's heart to twinge with pain. Even more so, it made him wonder how exactly it came to be that all the powerful experts were wiped out.

Who did such a thing!?!?

It would be very, very difficult for a bloodline like that to rise to prominence. Even Meng Hao wasn't sure exactly how to go about it. He might be able to personally intervene to support the bloodline, and could even prop this branch of the Meng Clan up by using his Hexes to manipulate a large number of clan members to serve under this branch. However, he would surely meet resistance, and given the strength of the rest of the clan he would be forced to enact a purge by blood. If a blood purge occurred, and then another clan came along to fight the weakened Meng Clan, then it wouldn't be impossible for the entire clan to be wiped out.

Of course, all of that was mere supposition....

Most importantly of all, Meng Hao knew that true war was coming, and that was no internal conflict within the Mountain and Sea Realm, but rather the 33 Heavens and the other two powers that were crushing down over them.

Because of that, he couldn't stay in the Meng Clan for long. Therefore, he was now considering taking his grandfather's bloodline away to the Fang Clan.

All of these thoughts swirled about in his mind, but as he was mulling it over he continued to observe the situation.

The ship went from one bazaar to another, selling all the goods from the Heavengod Alliance. After each transaction, Meng De excitedly squandered the profits by purchasing all sorts of things that Meng Hao felt to be completely useless.

Meng Hao watched it all coldly. His main interest at the moment was finding out whether or not the Meng Clan had been weakened so much in the Eighth Mountain and Sea that people existed who would dare to lift a hand to one of their nine Young Lords, Meng De.

If no one did, it would show that the Meng Clan was still threatening despite their fall from power. In that case, Meng Hao might be willing to resort to a blood purge to restore the position of his grandfather's bloodline.

However, if someone did make a move... then it would show that the Meng Clan was a wilting flower. In that case, a blood purge... would only ensure the eventual destruction of his grandfather's bloodline.

Therefore, he decided to perform a little test. In one of the bazaars, he personally walked around and flaunted some wealth. After ensuring that he had attracted some attention, he made sure everyone realized that he was with Meng De.

A few days passed, and the ship finally finished its trading route, and began to head back toward the Meng Clan. Meng Hao was in his cabin, sitting there cross-legged, when suddenly he opened his eyes. Off the distance, he saw nine black-robed men. Their faces were covered, but their eyes flickered with greed and malice.

"They're covering their faces, which means they're scared..." he thought. "However, they still dare to commit robbery. It seems that their fear doesn't run too deep!"