

The Heavens 1251

Chapter 1251: The Wind Picks Up....

“One cultivation base in the great circle of the Ancient Realm. One mid Ancient Realm. Two early Ancient Realm. Five at the peak of the Immortal Realm.... A group like this would be taken seriously wherever they went. They could be overlords. In fact, in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, they could occupy an entire asteroid bazaar.

“They might even be able to start a sect. It wouldn’t be impossible.” Meng Hao looked them over a bit more closely.

“The most important thing to find out is whether or not they’re rogue cultivators. That’s the first thing. Second, are they from the Meng Clan? Third... are they concealing their faces because they’re worried about people using magic to see what happened here? Or do they simply not plan to kill anyone? Do they... not dare to kill anyone?!” Meng Hao’s expression was calm and thoughtful. He was definitely not the young scholar he had been years ago, who knew nothing of the world beyond the Imperial examinations.

The path of cultivation was a brutal one. Back in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, he had the Fang Clan backing him up. But in the Eighth Mountain and Sea, he was on his own. Add in the fact that his grandfather’s bloodline needed his care, and his help to rise to prominence, it resulted in his heart growing colder and more vicious than ever.

The parrot was perched on his shoulder, apparently savoring some wonderful memory. Occasionally it would look at Meng Hao out of the corner of its eye. It could sense the changes in him, faint as they were, and knew that the pressures of the world were altering him.

The meat jelly was flopped in front of him, stretching lazily. The mastiff, who was back to being tiny again, would occasionally bat the meat jelly around with its paws. Overall, the two of them were having a great time playing around.

After a long moment passed, the nine black-robed men gave each other knowing looks and then began to perform incantation gestures. Instantly, a shield spread out, cutting off the entire area from communication with the outside world. Killing intent then flickered in their eyes as they transformed into nine beams of light that shot toward the Meng Clan ship. Meng Hao closed his eyes.

A few breaths of time passed, after which Meng De's Dao Protector, who was sitting there cross-legged, suddenly opened his eyes. Looking very nervous, he suddenly burst out of his cabin and looked off into the distance.

"Ambush!! Protect the Young Lord!" Although he was shouting, he kept his voice constrained so that it didn't travel beyond the ship. Immediately, all of the members of the Meng Clan on board burst into activity.

A moment later, a protective shield glittered into place, covering the ship. Meng De rushed out, trembling and ashen-faced, followed by more than a dozen other clan members. They all stood there nervously, not a single one of them bothering to notice whether Meng Hao was present or not. Everyone was looking at the nine beams of light which were streaking in their direction.

The cultivator in the lead position had a cultivation base at the great circle of the Ancient Realm, which was the same as Meng De's Dao Protector. As for the cultivators following him, those with Immortal Realm cultivation bases were less impressive, but the two early Ancient Realm experts caused the Meng Clan cultivators' faces to fall.

Other than Meng De's Dao Protector, who was in the great circle of the Ancient Realm, everyone else was in the Immortal Realm, except for two who happened to be in the early Ancient Realm. That put the number of ancient realm cultivators on their side at one less than the enemy.

The one they were missing... was someone to counter the mid Ancient Realm enemy!!

One person could sometimes have a huge effect on a battle like this, and even determine the final outcome.

"Are they just passing by?" Meng De asked in a low voice, trembling in obvious fear. "They must be. How could they possibly have the gall to attack the Meng Clan?"

"Young Lord, these people are not just passing by," the old Dao Protector said, frowning. He looked at Meng De and sighed inwardly.

"That's impossible!" Meng De screeched. "How dare they! How dare they show such disrespect to the Meng Clan. When I get back I'm definitely going to report this to the Grand Elder, and he'll exterminate their entire clan!!"

“Oh, shut up!” the old Dao Protector said, clearly annoyed. He had already attempted to make contact with the Meng Clan several times, unsuccessfully. He knew that communications had been interfered with, and was inwardly feeling quite bitter. Waving his sleeve, he caused the ship to send shining lights up into the air, forming an enormous ‘meng’ character 孟!

“Greetings, friends,” the old Dao Protector called out, sounding quite tough. “This ship belongs to the Meng Clan. Please clear the way!” He knew the consequences that could result from showing weakness, so he bolstered his words with his cultivation base, causing them to echo out with the power of the great circle of the Ancient Realm.

The nine incoming figures didn’t even pause. Their eyes flickered with killing intent as they closed in on the ship. As they did, they performed incantations, then waved their fingers, causing the void around them to distort as a huge battle-axe materialized.

The battle-axe radiated a bloody, murderous aura that filled the entire area. It suddenly slashed down toward the Meng Clan ship, causing a boom to ring out when it slammed into the shield.

Cracking sounds could be heard from the shield as fissures spread out, cracking sounds which echoed like death knells into the ears of the members of the Meng Clan.

Meng De was shaking, and his face was the picture of terror. The other clan members behind them had looks of despair on their faces, and even his Dao Protector was shaken by how terrifying this combined attack was.

A huge boom rang out as the ship’s shield exploded into fragments that swept over everything.

Several Meng Clan cultivators screamed out in agony as the shrapnel from the shield shredded them to bits.

At the same time, the black-robed men gazed down with killing intent as their leader charged toward the old Dao Protector. In the blink of an eye, the two were engaged in deadly combat, causing booms to ring out, along with the ripples of magical combat.

The two early Ancient Realm cultivators immediately attacked their counterparts among the Meng Clan, who had no choice but to fight back. Soon, all four were locked in deadly fighting, blasting out with magical techniques, causing booms to ring out.

The five enemy cultivators at the peak of the Immortal Realm immediately attacked the rest of the Meng Clan cultivators. Instantly, a slaughter was underway, and miserable shrieks rang out all over the ship.

As for the final black-robed man, the one in the mid Ancient Realm, he hovered above the ship, looking coldly at the shivering, terrified Meng De.

“What are you doing!?” Meng De shrieked. “I’ll give you anything you want! You can’t kill me, I’m a Young Lord of the Meng Clan. If anything bad happens here, it won’t matter where you run to in the Eighth Mountain and Sea, you’ll be dead!”

“The Meng Clan might be in decline, but we still have our prestige. If it’s money you’re after, you can have it!” Meng De quickly produced a bag of holding, which he tossed out. The decisiveness with which he did so caused Meng Hao’s expression to flicker, and he suddenly started paying a bit closer attention to Meng De.

“So, he’s not completely useless after all,” he murmured. Looking back at the black-robed men, his eyes flickered. By this point, he could tell that the nine of them... were no rogue cultivators!

Rogue cultivators couldn’t attack with such fluid unity, or have this kind of combination divine ability. Furthermore, the magical techniques and items they were using all seemed similar.

“If they’re not rogue cultivators, that means the Meng Clan is still powerful enough to be threatening. However, if there are sects willing to try to rob the Meng Clan, it shows that however threatening they are, it’s beginning to be insufficient.” Meng Hao frowned. The more he learned about the Meng Clan, the more he realized how difficult of a task faced him.

It was at this point that the bloodcurdling screams ringing out on the ship began to fade away. Other than Meng De, everyone else was dead.

Out in the starry sky, the Meng Clan’s two early Ancient Realm cultivators exchanged ashen glances, then began to flee.

Before they could get very far, though, the mid Ancient Realm cultivator in the black robes let out a cold snort, then stepped out in pursuit. Moments later, two screams rang out into the void. Shortly

thereafter, the black-robed man returned, a head held in each hand, which he then tossed down onto the ship.

The battle between the two cultivators in the great circle of the Ancient Realm was reaching a head. Meng De's Dao protector suddenly roared, "Haven't you people done enough killing!? Look, the treasure is right there, just take it! Why are you actually killing us?!?!"

Almost as soon as the words left his mouth, the black-robed man up above performed an incantation gesture, once again summoning the battle-axe.

The Dao Protector's face fell and, despite his injuries, he began to retreat. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and he transformed into a beam of light as he attempted to escape. His mission was to protect Meng De, but when it came down to his own survival, he would always place himself first.

However, before he could even move, someone flickered into being behind him, someone that not even Meng Hao had noticed until the moment before he made his entrance.

The Dao Protector, on the other hand, hadn't noticed at all. As soon as the person appeared, his finger slashed out, stabbing into the back of the Dao Protector's head. A pop could be heard, and a tremor ran through the old man. Then his head exploded, and his Nascent Divinity was shattered. Black flames engulfed his body, rapidly burning him up. Within the space of a few breaths of time, he was completely transformed into ash.

The other black-robed men immediately stopped what they were doing and clasped hands in respect.

This new figure was fully three meters tall, clad in a voluminous black robe. A white mask covered his face, a mask that was decorated with countless eyes and was terrifying in appearance.

He looked coldly at the other nine black-robed men, and then stepped forward onto the ship without saying another word.

Meng Hao still sat in his cabin, watching everything that was happening. Now, his face looked very serious. He got a strange feeling from these people, especially the cloaking techniques they used, which were something he had never encountered before. However, he was still confident that he could crush them in a fight.

“From the look of it, they aren’t here to plunder...” he thought. Looking at the black-robed men, his eyes suddenly began to shine.

As for Meng De, he was trembling visibly, backing up and panting at the same time. It was at this point that the black-robed man in the great circle of the Ancient Realm slowly lowered his cowl to reveal his face. Shockingly... his face looked exactly like the dead Dao Protector’s!

One by one, the other black-robed men began to reveal their faces, which looked exactly like the various dead members of the Meng Clan!

“You...” Meng De’s face was ashen. Even if he were more of an idiot than he already was, he would be able to tell what was going on. He continued to back up, shaken, terrified as he continued to try to make contact with the Meng Clan. However, his efforts were in vain.

Chapter 1252: Attack!

Meng Hao remained seated in his cabin, watching what was happening through narrowed eyes. Frowning, he turned his attention to the man in the mask.

“Well now, how much do we want to bet that this guy has Meng De’s face?” he murmured.

In almost exactly the same moment, the man with the mask of eyes slowly reached up and removed his mask. Just as Meng Hao guessed, his face... down to the tiniest detail, looked exactly like... Meng De’s!

They were exactly the same!!

Meng De’s eyes went wide, and he stopped in place, pointing a quivering finger at the black-robed man. His expression was one of intense fear, and then he began to laugh bitterly with the realization that he was going to die!

“Kill him,” said the man with Meng De’s face, his voice cool. “Clean everything up. We’re going... back to the Meng Clan.” Even the man’s voice sounded exactly like Meng De’s.

As the words left his mouth, one of the other cultivators who had changed his appearance to look like one of Meng De’s retinue smiled and reached out to end Meng De’s life.

However, it was in that very moment that a sigh rang out, filling the starry sky. The man with Meng De's face looked shocked, as did the other cultivators, who immediately began looking around vigilantly.

"Whoever's out there with these parlor tricks, show your face!" said the fake Meng De. His divine sense spread out, and the aura of the Dao Realm suddenly exploded out. Although he only had one Essence, to Meng De, that was thoroughly terrifying.

That sigh came from Meng Hao, of course. He had no choice but to act. If he allowed these people to kill Meng De, infiltrating the Meng Clan would become vastly more difficult. Obviously, they wouldn't just let him join up with them, and if he killed them all and went back to the Meng Clan alone, it would be very difficult to explain. Obviously, people would suspect him of being complicit in the events.

Meng Hao's main goal was to free his grandfather's bloodline, which first entailed getting into the Meng Clan, then understanding the situation as a whole before finally making a decision on what to do.

"This is so annoying," Meng Hao thought, shaking his head. He took a step out, eyes flashing, and as he did, his face transformed. When he appeared out in the starry sky outside, no one could tell that he had just emerged from within the ship. It was as if he had materialized out of thin air, right in front of the black-robed men.

The man with Meng De's face backed up, eyes widening.

"Kill him!" he ordered. The other nine black-robed men were scared, but they immediately complied, erupting with cultivation base power. Performing incantation gestures, they caused that murderous battle-axe to appear, which then slashed down toward Meng Hao.

Meng De shrank back into a corner, watching with nervous excitement.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. Now that every aspect of his cultivation base had been raised by Greed, he didn't even attack, he just looked at the descending weapon. Then, instead of evading, he raised his finger and flicked the axe.

He did not use any divine ability or magical technique; he relied only on the power of his fleshly body. As soon as his finger touched the battle-axe, a boom rang out. The black-robed men had vicious expressions on their faces; they were completely confident in their joint attack power. When

they combined forces to use this Daoist magic, it was so powerful that it could shake the Quasi-Dao Realm. The only downside was that they could only use it a limited number of times. Even still, it had been praised by a Dao Realm expert in the past, leaving these nine men completely confident.

However, their faces were now frozen in shock, their eyes wide with disbelief and awe. Three of them even cried out in alarm.

“This....”

“Impossible!”

“He....”

To their astonishment, when Meng Hao’s finger made contact with the axe, Meng Hao wasn’t shaken at all, nor did his expression change. A rumbling boom rang out, as well as numerous cracking sounds. Those sounds all came... from the battle-axe!

The combined Daoist magic of these nine individuals, a magical battle-axe that filled them with complete confidence, was covered with cracks by its mere contact with Meng Hao’s finger. The cracks spread out, growing more dense, covering the entire battle-axe, until it shattered....

The backlash hit the nine cultivators, causing blood to spray out of their mouths. Then they looked at Meng Hao with unprecedented terror and shock. Even the man with Meng De’s face couldn’t stop his eyes from widening.

Not even a white line appeared on Meng Hao’s index finger, his fleshly body had become so powerful that this battle-axe had absolutely no chance of affecting him even a tiny bit.

Meng Hao smiled slightly, quite pleased with the power of his fleshly body. He looked up at the nine cultivators, eyes flickering with killing intent. Then he suddenly vanished, whereupon the minds of all nine men exploded with a sensation of life-or-death crisis. Without the slightest hesitation, they began to flee.

However, they were not qualified to do any such thing in front of Meng Hao. He appeared in front of the man in the great circle of the Ancient Realm and casually bumped into him with his body.

A boom rang out as his simple blow slammed into the man, causing blood to spray out of his mouth, whereupon his body exploded. His Nascent Divinity didn't even have a chance to escape, and was also destroyed.

That was from bumping into him!

The man with Meng De's face was astonished. Scalp numb, he fell back, transforming into a flickering shadow as he tried to escape. However, Meng Hao simply let out a harrumph.

The sound transformed into an explosive shockwave that rocked the starry sky. A tempest whipped up, sweeping across everything. Eight of the fleeing black-robed men were shredded to pieces, including their bones, organs, and Nascent Divinities. There was no need to mention their fleshly bodies. Popping sounds could be heard as they were transformed into a bloody mist that spread out into the starry sky.

"Dao Lord!!" cried the man with Meng De's face. Although he had already guessed at how terrifyingly powerful Meng Hao was, to see the destructive result of Meng Hao's single snort left him without any further doubts. No matter what Meng Hao actually looked like, his battle prowess... was something that only a Dao Lord could unleash.

The man's heart was trembling; he had never imagined that upon just beginning his mission, he would suddenly run into a terrifying Dao Lord. After all, in the Mountain and Sea Realm, Dao Lords were mighty figures who could affect the entire Realm with the stamp of a foot!

Dao Lords were only one step away from being Dao Sovereigns, who were qualified to vie for the position of Mountain and Sea Lord!

The black-robed man stared with wild eyes. He was already a blur as he attempted to flee; in the blink of an eye, he was gone, and the shockwave of Meng Hao's sound attack passed by the position he had just occupied.

When he reappeared, he was far off in the distance. Without even looking over his shoulder, he began to flee.

"What a strange Essence," Meng Hao thought, intrigued. He took a step forward and vanished. When he reappeared, he was right behind the fleeing man. Meng Hao reached out and made a grasping motion, using the Star Plucking Magic.

Instantly, a shocking gravitational force rumbled into being, spreading out through the starry sky as Meng Hao's hand turned into a black hole. The void distorted, countless motes of dust sped toward him, and fissures spread out.

The black-robed man's mind was rumbling, and his astonishment reached a peak as he flew back toward Meng Hao, his body completely beyond his own control. The sensation of deadly crisis in his mind caused him to hold nothing back as he unleashed all of his Essence power to break free from Meng Hao's grasp. Suddenly, ghost images sprang up around him.

A boom rang out as hundreds of black-robed figures suddenly began to pour out, all of whom fled in different directions. The only thing left behind in Meng Hao's hand was a piece of skin.

"Clones?" Meng Hao murmured, looking around at all the fleeing figures. His eyes began to shine; these were obviously clones, and the sheer number involved piqued Meng Hao's interest.

He was also shocked; given his current cultivation base, not even Dao Lords were a match for him, and yet this 1-Essence Dao Realm cultivator had eluded him twice now.

Of course, some of that was because Meng Hao had not utilized a powerful divine ability. By now, he was at the point where even a casual attack on his part was something that a 1-Essence Dao Realm cultivator couldn't easily avoid.

Although Meng Hao was surprised, the man in the black robe was already frightened to death. He had risked everything just to escape those two times, and even still, the backlash had left him seriously injured. That was especially true of his final move of splitting into hundreds of clones, which seriously damaged his Essence.

"Dammit, he's no ordinary Dao Lord! He must be at the peak of the Dao Lord Realm. We've kept track of how many Dao Lords there are in the Eighth Mountain and Sea, and he's not one of them!!" Even as the man fled in terror, Meng Hao's eyes gleamed with a gray glow.

He suddenly cried out, causing a huge wolf's head to appear behind him. This was one of Greed's magical techniques, although in Meng Hao's hands it was more wolf-like and less greed-focused. The wolf appeared in the middle of the starry sky, radiating bloody murder, completely domineering as it opened its mouth wide and began to inhale.

RUUUUUUMMMMMBLLLLLL....

The entire starry sky trembled and began to shatter, converging on Meng Hao at the center. It was as if... everything in the area, including the natural laws and the energy of Heaven and Earth, were now being sucked in by Meng Hao!

The hundreds of clones screamed as they were swept up and then began to explode. In the blink of an eye, countless showers of blood filled the starry sky.

In the end, there was only one figure that didn't explode, which then spun toward Meng Hao, who grabbed him by the neck, sealed him, and tossed him into his bag of holding.

A mighty Dao Realm cultivator was treated like a baby chicken!

Meng Hao could sense how powerful he was after being re-moulded by Greed. He was now... in a state far more powerful than a Dao Lord.

“Once I push open the Door of the Ancient Realm... I'll be even more powerful!” Meng Hao's eyes flickered, and he turned to look back at the Meng Clan ship off in the distance, and Meng De, who was gaping at him wide-eyed. Gradually, Meng Hao faded away.

The entire starry sky was completely silent. Meng De's face was ashen as he stared blankly out into the starry sky. Then he looked around at the corpses on the ship. Fear still lingered within him, and grief was now welling up. Despite his age, this was his first time experiencing anything like this. Because of the terror and confusion in his heart, he didn't notice at all that because of Meng Hao's interference, whatever had been blocking communications had already been broken, allowing connection to the outside world once again.

Meng De began to weep, but then suddenly recalled something. After looking around at the corpses, he rushed back into the ship. It had just occurred to him that apparently... there was another survivor on board.

As of this moment, anyone left alive with him on board was like a relative!

Chapter 1253: This is the Meng Clan!

Before charging into the ship, Meng De really didn't have much of a notion as to who Meng Chen was at all. The main thing he remembered was that, of all the clan members who had entered the 33 Hells, he had been the only one to come out alive.

He had also offered up an ancient magical item which had pleased Meng De quite a bit. Because of that, Meng Chen did stick out slightly within his memories.

But now, he was filled with an intense hope that nothing had happened to Meng Chen. He didn't want to be the only living person left on the ship. When he thought about the deadly ordeal he had just been through, he was left trembling. He might be an idiot, but he wasn't so stupid that he was beyond redemption. Despite being a silkpants, he was still able to think for himself.

As a cultivator, he was merely average, but because of the prestige of his bloodline, he had become a Young Lord. However, even that hadn't been his choice; he had been given no options in the matter.

Right now, he wasn't thinking about his status at all. When people have brushes with death, status is usually the last thing they think about. He just wanted someone from his clan to be there with him, someone who could share the burden of this terrifying experience.

Meng De found Meng Hao lying unconscious at the very bottom of the ship. He hurried forward, and when he confirmed that he was unconscious and not dead, Meng De was elated. He didn't spend much time considering why Meng Hao was alive when everyone else was dead; he assumed it was because his cultivation base was so low, and had thus simply been swept aside by the divine sense of the black-robed men. Either they didn't care about him, or had planned to kill him later.

Regardless of the reason, Meng Chen wasn't dead.

Meng De excitedly pulled out some medicinal pills. Normally, he was very stingy when it came to medicinal pills, but in this case he poured them all into Meng Hao's mouth.

"Don't die, Meng Chen," he said, tears streaming down his face. "There's only the two of us now, you can't die...." Picking him up in his arms, he carried him back to the main deck. There, he used the power of his own cultivation base to slowly get the boat to limp along.

He tried over and over again to make contact with the clan, but despite the barrier having been removed, his messages weren't going through for some reason.

Eventually, Meng Hao woke up.

When he did, Meng De approached excitedly, suddenly overwhelmed with feelings of familial connection. He immediately began to recount everything that had occurred, and before long, Meng De started feeling as if he and Meng Chen were friends.

Time passed. In Meng De's mind, the two of them were relying on each other to survive. They took turns steering, cautiously sending the ship in the direction of the Meng Clan, fearful of running into anyone they couldn't afford to provoke.

Meng De had never experienced any dangerous situations like this before in his life. He would frequently pull out a jade slip to try to make contact, but it never worked, so he had no choice but to spend his time with Meng Hao, fearfully flying through space.

They continued to chat to bide the time, and it eventually got to the point where Meng De didn't hold anything back. He talked with Meng Hao about the clan, and about everything else. He even began to give Meng Hao advice.

"Meng Chen, your cultivation base is too weak. That won't do...."

"Once we get back to the clan, I'll have them give you some techniques and medicinal pills. You need to get your cultivation base higher, at least to the peak of the Immortal Realm."

"Don't worry, in the future, you can count on me for everything."

"Hey, when do you think we'll get home...? Why can't we make contact with the clan? It hasn't worked this entire time...."

On one particular day as he piloted the ship, Meng De suddenly thought of something. He looked over at Meng Hao, who was sitting there cross-legged, and suddenly asked, "Oh right, Meng Chen, I just thought of something. The first time I saw you, your face was as smooth as a baby's. But the next time, your nose was busted and you had all those scars."

"You don't know what happened?" Meng Hao replied coolly. By this point, they had been drifting in space for almost a month. Because of Meng Hao's vast experience in life, the two of them had

reached a state in which Meng Hao actually occupied the superior position. Although he didn't speak much, whenever he did, Meng De paid earnest attention to whatever Meng Hao said.

Meng De was the Young Lord, but if anyone who didn't know them could watch them interact, they would assume that Meng Hao was actually the Young Lord.

"Huh? No, what happened?" Meng De replied, sounding shocked.

Meng Hao looked at him and could see that he really had no idea. From this, it was apparent that it was the butler who had arranged for Meng Chen to wait upon the Young Lord from the Han Clan, and not Meng De. The butler had clearly been acting on his own.

Meng Hao shook his head and didn't say anything more. Meng De scratched his head and thought for a while, but really couldn't think of anything that had happened on the ship. However, he could also sense that Meng Hao had perhaps been on the receiving end of some sort of abuse.

"Meng Chen, uh... you know, I used to be kind of a... nasty person. Well, back then we didn't know each other. Don't worry, from now on, whatever Meng De has also belongs to you!" Meng De slapped his chest and looked proudly at Meng Hao. For some reason, Meng De had come to care a lot about what Meng Hao thought of him.

Meng Hao smiled slightly. His view of things had changed a bit too in recent days. He could see that although Meng De was a silkpants and occasionally acted like an idiot, he wasn't completely beyond redemption.

Two months later, Meng De's continued efforts to contact the clan finally paid off. Meng De was suddenly very excited, as he was finally able to report back and explain everything that had occurred.

A day later, Meng Hao could see five beams of light approaching from off in the distance. In the lead position was an old man with white hair. He looked threatening without being angry, and his cultivation base was in the Dao Realm. Although he only had one Essence, it was still the Dao Realm.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he stood there next to Meng De.

Behind the old man were three men and a woman. The woman was middle-aged, but had maintained her appearance well and was pretty. However, her brow was furrowed as she flew along, and when she caught sight of Meng De and the terrible condition he was in, she began to cry. Immediately, she rushed forward and hugged him.

“Mom... I’m fine,” he said, although he was also weeping. Everything that had happened recently had far exceeded his capacity to accept. Without Meng Hao there to help him, he wasn’t sure how he would have coped.

“De’er, you poor thing....” his mother said, tousling his hair. There was something different about this version of Meng De. He had lost some of that boisterous silkpants air, and gained a bit of maturity. Although his mother was happy about that, her heart still hurt.

Of the three men who had come with the old Dao Realm expert, one was in the late Ancient Realm, just a hair away from the great circle. He and Meng De looked quite alike, and after looking Meng De over, he embraced him.

“Dad....” Meng De said, sobbing.

The other two men fanned out and began to inspect the ship, occasionally taking note of the things they observed. As for the old Dao Realm expert, he looked softly at Meng De, then glanced over at Meng Hao, his gaze quite intimidating.

“When the master is humiliated, the servants are executed,” the old man said coolly. “Considering you managed to successfully keep him alive, you’ll be permitted to say some final words.” One of the cultivators inspecting the ship turned toward Meng Hao and began to walk in his direction, face stony.

Meng Hao frowned and sighed inwardly. He had overlooked the matter of face. The more people who learned about what had occurred on the ship, the worse it would be for the Meng Clan. He might be a member of the clan, but in this situation, the simplest way to handle the situation would be to eliminate him as a witness.

However, it was at this point that Meng De struggled out of his father’s embrace and leaped in front of Meng Hao. Looking pleadingly toward the old Dao Realm cultivator, he said, “Grandpa, this is my Brother!”

The old man looked at Meng Hao silently. As far as the other cultivator, he didn't stop walking, and in fact reached out to grab Meng Hao.

Seeing what was happening, Meng De urgently cried out, "He saved my life! If you kill him, I'll kill myself!" With that, he placed his hand threateningly on top of his own head and glared decisively at his grandfather.

Meng Hao stared in shock, as did Meng De's grandfather. The cultivator reaching out toward Meng Hao stopped in his tracks. As for Meng De's parents, they were equally astonished.

As far as they could remember, Meng De usually acted like a silkpants in public, but was always very compliant around them. Although they weren't too happy about that, there was little to be done about it. But now, Meng De suddenly was losing his temper in front of their Patriarch, and even uttering threats. This actually caused his parents to be very happy.

The old man looked closely at Meng De and the decisiveness in his eyes. He knew his grandson well, and was aware that he had always had a weak personality. In fact, this was the first time he had ever acted like this. After a moment passed, the old man suddenly laughed.

"Alright, it seems you've learned that you should protect your followers, even standing up to me to do it. De'er, you've grown up." The old man swished his sleeve, sending away the cultivator who had been advancing on Meng Hao.

Next, the old man looked at Meng Hao and said, "De'er has a lot of weaknesses, but he also has unique strengths. He was willing to defy me for your sake, so in the future, take good care of yourself." With a final look at Meng Hao, the old man turned and took control of the ship, sending it flying through the starry sky toward the Meng Clan.

Rumbling could be heard as it transformed into a beam of light that shot forward at a speed far beyond what it had been traveling at before. Soon, it vanished.

Two days later, the ship pierced through the starry sky into the area controlled by the Meng Clan.

From a distance, the Meng Clan looked like a huge continent floating out in the middle of the sky.

There were mountains and seas visible, as well as numerous cities. It was even possible to see living creatures that had multiplied over generations and were now everywhere. It emanated brilliant light and powerful ripples, and attached to the main continent were eight smaller continents.

Each of those lands was filled with imposing buildings and structures, all of which formed an enormous spell formation.

This was the Meng Clan!

In the very middle of the central continent could be seen an enormous statue.

Strangest of all was that the statue's face had been scraped clean, and had no facial features.... Even still, it radiated intense power in all directions.

As soon as Meng Hao felt that pressure, he was inwardly shocked.

“Feels like a Dao Sovereign.... No. Wait, that's... the qi flow of the Mountains and Seas!!”

Chapter 1254: Grandma Meng!

Meng Hao was completely shocked to be able to sense the qi flow of the Mountain and Sea Realm here, and it suddenly caused him to recall the fact that the Mountain and Sea Lord of the Eighth Mountain and Sea was supposed to be from the Meng Clan....

However, after arriving in the Eighth Mountain and Sea, everything he had heard and seen seemed to indicate the contrary, as if his memories were incorrect.

Meng Hao had been confused by that from the beginning, especially after hearing that the Lord of the Eighth Mountain and Sea was called Heavengod. From then on, he had begun to speculate about the situation.

“Heavengod. Heavengod.... has no surname attached to it.” Eyes flickering, he looked at the statue, sensing the qi flow of the Mountain and Sea Realm. That was something that no one other than him could detect.

Based on the fact that the statue's face had been scraped off, Meng Hao got the feeling that there was some secret connection between Heavengod and the Meng Clan in the past.

"We're home!" Meng De shouted. "Finally... we're home!! Meng Chen, we're home!" Meng De stood next to Meng Hao, looking excitedly at the Meng Clan continent and taking in a deep breath. From the look on his face, it was as if he suddenly had a new lease on life.

"Home..." Meng Hao murmured. When he thought about the members of his grandfather's bloodline, his eyes flickered and turned to focus on one of the nine smaller continents attached to the larger one.

According to the Soulsearching he had performed on the Meng Clan cultivators on the ship, his grandfather's bloodline was on the smallest continent among the nine.

Soon, the ship landed on the central continent, in the huge city that surrounded the statue. That was also the location of the Meng Clan ancestral mansion.

Meng De flew out, to where hundreds of Meng Clan cultivators were all waiting to receive him. Once he appeared, they clasped hands, bowed, and said, "We offer respectful greetings, Ninth Young Lord!"

Of course, Meng De was the Ninth Young Lord, and almost as soon as he heard that greeting, he seemed to revert to his old silkpants self. He nodded slightly as people clustered around him to escort him off into the distance. His father and mother had long since departed, and just as Meng De was about to leave, he seemed to remember Meng Chen, and turned. He looked at Meng Hao with a smile, then waved his hand, sending a jade pendant flying out.

Meng Hao caught it, after which Meng De spoke in a loud voice: "I'll come looking for you in a few days."

Meng Hao hefted the jade pendant and smiled. At first, nobody in the area had paid the slightest attention to him, but after Meng De gave him the jade pendant, people began to take notice of him, and their eyes glittered.

Meng Hao didn't care about all of that. He disembarked from the ship, and then looked around at all the buildings. The entire place was unfamiliar, and the architecture was circular in design, much more flowing and unconstrained than the Fang Clan's orderliness and stark, angular layout. As for

the ancestral mansion, it was also constructed in a circular shape, and gave off a sophisticated, courtly air.

Numerous cultivators could be seen in the ancestral city as Meng Hao walked down the streets, and he quickly noticed that most of them were in the Spirit Realm. Immortal Realm cultivators were less common; for every hundred people he saw, only a handful were Immortals.

There were no shops in the area, nor were there any inns. In fact, it would probably be more appropriate to call this place the outskirts of the ancestral mansion, rather than a separate city. However, in size alone it was comparable to a city.

It was divided into certain districts, just like the Fang Clan was. There were the districts in the east, west, south and north, within which were huge courtyard residences where important clan members from the various bloodlines resided.

There was no Central District, nor was there a mausoleum, which might be expected. However Meng Hao could sense five unique auras inside the huge statue itself. Those auras were clearly auras of the Dao Realm!

However, of those five auras, two were very dim, almost on the point of being extinguished. The other three were much more vigorous, with one of them belonging to Meng De's grandfather.

"Five Dao Realm cultivators.... Three have flourishing auras, two of them being 1-Essence, and one 2-Essences. Of the weak auras, there's one Dao Lord and another... who I can't ascertain. However, from what I can tell, that aura is on the verge of being extinguished." Meng Hao looked away from the statue, eyes flickering as he sent his divine sense spreading out even further.

It only took a moment for his divine sense to fill the entire ancestral mansion, and for all the living beings therein to appear in his mind.

He glanced back at the statue, surprised that none of the five cultivators inside had detected his divine sense, nor activated any of the Meng Clan's defenses. Meng Hao then thoughtfully began to retract his divine sense and head in the direction of the continent where his grandfather's bloodline resided.

However, in almost the same moment that he made to leave, he suddenly stopped in place. There was a scene playing out somewhere nearby that he could see within his divine sense, which he then focused on.

An older woman could be seen in a courtyard residence, face ashen as she pleaded with a cold, arrogant middle-aged man. A younger woman lay at the man's feet, covered with bruises and wounds. Her right hand was clenched tightly around something, and her face was deathly pale as the middle-aged man kicked her viciously over and over again.

"Big bro, stop!" the older woman pleaded. "Meng Ru is just worried about her bloodline relative, that's why she stole the medicinal pill. Big bro...."

"She's only a servant," the man spat, "and she actually dared to steal a medicinal pill! It doesn't matter why she did it, she deserves to die! If I don't beat her to death, then wouldn't everyone else try to imitate her?!" The middle-aged man's eyes gleamed with killing intent as he reached down and grabbed the young woman by the hair. She was pretty, but had a red birthmark on her face, which the man seemed disgusted by. "You're not bad except for that birthmark. How nauseating!"

"Big bro, Ru'er's older cousin is in the Immortal Realm. He's one of the Ninth Young Lord's bodyguards. All she took was a medicinal pill, you... you don't have to go so far." The older woman continued to plead anxiously, occasionally glancing down at the younger woman, who lay there, blood oozing out of her mouth.

The older woman had no way to know that, even as the words left her mouth, Meng Hao was actually only a few streets away in the ancestral mansion. A tremor ran through him, and he turned, his expression icy.

He had already heard that most of the members of his grandfather's bloodline were stationed in the houses of other clan members, where they worked as servants in exchange for cultivation resources. As of this moment, Meng Hao was certain that the young woman he was seeing with his divine sense was a member of his grandfather's bloodline, a younger bloodline cousin of Meng Chen.

Meng Hao didn't hesitate for even a moment. He took a step forward and vanished, his action undetectable even by the five Patriarchs.

Back in the courtyard residence, the middle-aged man began to laugh coldly in response to the words just spoken to him.

"Her older cousin? You mean that pretty boy Meng Whatshisname? Meng Chen, right? You think a bodyguard deserves to get face from me?" The man knelt down and grabbed Meng Ru's hand.

Expression icy, he began to break her fingers one by one. She trembled from the pain, but gritted her teeth and didn't make a sound.

Soon, the medicinal pill in her hand was revealed, which was already dissolving because of the blood that had oozed onto it. The middle-aged man grabbed it and threw into a nearby pond.

Meng Ru's eyes went wide. She hadn't shed a single tear before this moment, not even when her fingers were being broken. But now that she saw the medicinal pill dissolving in the pond water, tears began to flow down her face.

"Aww, what's this? Crying?" The man laughed and reached down as if to wipe away the tears. Before he could touch her face, though, a hand appeared out of nowhere and grabbed his own hand.

The man stared in shock, then let out a shriek as he saw Meng Hao standing there next to the young Meng Ru. Without even thinking about it, he took a step backward.

"Meng Chen! How dare you!!" Although the man had been frightened, after realizing who it was, he seemed to regain his courage. With a shout, he unleashed his cultivation base, which was only in the Dao Seeking stage.

"Big bro...." Meng Ru said, slowly looking up. When she laid eyes on Meng Hao, she began to weep and shake from the humiliation she had just endured.

"Get your hands off me, Meng Chen," the middle-aged man said. "Dammit, what gall you have! If you dare to hurt me, I'll tell my big bro, and he'll wipe out your entire bloodline."

"Apparently you've forgotten that I'm also surnamed Meng. Or is that you don't consider us to be part of the Meng Clan any more?" Meng Hao had put some thought into the current miserable state of his grandfather's bloodline, but to see what was actually happening made him feel like a knife was slicing away at his heart.

Meng Hao suddenly clenched his hand down, causing cracking and popping sounds to ring out. The middle-aged man screamed as Meng Hao crushed his hand into a bloody pulp. Terror and pain washed through him, but even as the scream left his mouth, Meng Hao patted his back.

That motion caused more cracking sounds to echo out as each and every last bone in the man's body was shattered into powder. Without a skeleton to hold him up, the man collapsed into a pile of twitching flesh.

No more sounds came out of his mouth as he lay there, no longer in the shape of a human. His current state was one of pain that far exceeded that of death. The woman standing off to the side was so frightened that her jaw dropped. The suddenness of what had occurred left her in a state of disbelief.

As for Meng Ru, she was also staring in shock.

"Big bro...." she murmured as Meng Hao helped her to her feet. He placed his hand over hers, healing her broken fingers and injured internal organs. As she regained lucidity, she began to pant as she suddenly recalled something. Grasping Meng Hao's forearm, she said, "Big bro, hurry, we have to get back. It's grandmother, she's... dying...."

"Grandmother.... Grandma Meng!!!" A tremor ran through Meng Hao. Without the slightest hesitation, he picked Meng Ru up in his arms and flew off into the distance.

When he left, the older woman who remained behind in the courtyard finally screamed, which attracted the attention of other clan members. When they arrived, they saw the bone-less middle-aged man lying there, and they gasped.

"Who did this? This... is a cruelty worse than death!"

Chapter 1255: I'm Here To Defend You!

Meng Hao was enraged, but Meng Ru's words caused his heart to tremble. It was impossible to describe what they meant to him; after all, Meng Chen's grandmother was his Grandma Meng as well!

His Grandpa Fang and Grandpa Meng had gone missing, and his Grandma Fang had long since passed away. To suddenly find out that his Grandma Meng was still alive caused his heart to begin to pound, and he wished he could be at her side instantly.

However, he hadn't lost his ability to think straight, so although he sped as fast as possible in her direction, he also concealed himself so that no one could detect his presence. He soon appeared in the air outside of the ancestral mansion, and then sped off into the distance with Meng Ru.

Meng Ru was in the Nascent Soul stage, so to her, her older cousin Meng Chen, who was in the Immortal Realm, was the most promising and important person in the bloodline. He had an incredible cultivation base, and was in fact the hope of the entire bloodline. Although Meng Ru didn't understand the vast gap between the Immortal Realm and the Ancient Realm, in her mind, the speed with which they were traveling was something that should come naturally to someone like her cousin.

In fact... to her, Meng Chen was the Heaven of their bloodline!

If anyone could have observed what was happening, they would be shocked. In the space of a few breaths of time, he took Meng Ru across the starry sky to appear... directly on the continent where his grandfather's bloodline resided.

He didn't need any directions from Meng Ru to know where to go. He flew across the continent, sending his divine sense spreading out until he found a village on the border which almost seemed like a city of mortals. There, he identified a mansion which appeared to be filled with quite a few grieving people. In the instant that his divine sense touched the place, he noticed one room... in which he sensed an aura that had to be a blood relative.

"Grandma Meng..." he thought, trembling. He had never even imagined that his grandmother would still be alive, so at the moment, his heart was pounding in the same way that Meng Chen's would have were he here. With Meng Ru in tow, he shot toward the village and then appeared inside the mansion.

Almost immediately, cries of astonishment could be heard in response to his arrival. As he looked around he noticed that, of the dozens of people in the residence, all were women. Not a single man was present!

"It's Chen'er! Chen'er's back!"

"Big bro..." Almost immediately, everyone began to get excited, and their eyes turned red as tears welled up.

Meng Hao glanced at everyone, but there was no time to examine them closely. He instantly walked toward the room where his grandmother was located. The other clan members stepped back, making a path for him as he sped forward like the wind. As soon as he entered the room, he saw an old woman lying on a wooden pallet.

Next to the old woman sat two old men, who seemed to be wheezing and in pain, as if it were difficult to even just be sitting up straight. They were very old, as if they had lived for countless years, and their auras were very weak. It even seemed a struggle for them to keep their eyes open, as if they were staying alive by sheer force of willpower.

There were also three middle-aged women in the room. They had clearly been beauties when they were young, but had been ravaged by the passing of years, and were also very weak. They also seemed to be hanging on by sheer force of willpower.

As for the woman on the pallet, she was completely covered with wrinkles, and seemed profoundly ancient. She radiated the stench of decay, and was withered to the point of being little more than skin and bones. Her aura was so weak that it seemed as if she might die at any moment.

However, despite that frail aura, the old woman had a certain strength to her. The wrinkles on her forehead seemed to bear testimony to all of the pressure she had lived with throughout the years. As soon as Meng Hao laid eyes on her, he trembled and walked forward.

This was his Grandma Meng... and the mere sight of her caused tears to spill down his cheeks. His heart hurt as he examined her body, finding more than a dozen internal injuries. Furthermore, her qi passageways were completely withered.

As soon as he entered the room, the three middle-aged women turned to look at him. "Chen'er, you're back..." one of them said. Their gazes were kind, and they did their best to hide the grief in their expressions, but Meng Hao wasn't Meng Chen, and as such, he could see it.

As for the two old men in the seats, they struggled to keep their eyes open as they looked at Meng Hao with kind gazes.

Meng Hao wasn't sure who all these people were, but after laying eyes on the old men, he could guess. He also had his speculations about who the three middle-aged women were.

He immediately dropped to his knees and kowtowed, knocking his head onto the ground. Then he got back to his feet and approached his Grandma Meng, who lay there with her eyes closed. Meng Hao reached out and placed his hand onto her arm, then sent some of his life force surging into her. However, almost as soon as it entered her, it immediately dispersed. That caused a gleam of shock and anger to flicker deep in his eyes.

He quickly sent some divine sense into his grandmother, and was shocked to find that hidden inside her body were nine black spikes. They were buried deep within her flesh, and even stabbed into her soul.

Those nine nails were preventing Meng Hao's life force from entering his grandmother's body. Even more infuriating to Meng Hao was that inside his grandmother, he could detect... poison!

It was a unique poison designed to corrode the cultivation base and eat away at her life force. Any other person would probably be dead already, but Meng Hao's grandmother was hanging on tenaciously, presumably because her cultivation base had been so profound.

Meng Hao pulled his hand back, eyes flashing. Next, his right hand performed an incantation gesture, and then he rapidly pushed down on her body nine times. Each time he pushed down, he did so in the location of one of the black spikes.

When he was finished, his grandmother shivered, after which he performed another incantation gesture and then pushed his hand down onto the pressure point beneath her nose, pouring more life force into her.

When the three middle-aged women saw what was happening, their eyes began to shine brightly, and they seemed surprised. However, they didn't seem to be suspicious about what was happening. In contrast, the two old men who were sitting there in seeming discomfort suddenly trembled, and they stared at Meng Hao with wide, disbelieving eyes.

As Meng Hao's life force slowly flowed into his grandmother, the aura of death and rot that had previously filled her suddenly dissipated a bit. Before, her soul fire had been on the brink of being extinguished, but now it burned a bit more brightly than before. Even her complexion looked a bit better.

Meng Hao pulled his hand back. He didn't dare to pour in too much life force. His grandmother was already on the verge of dying, so if he wasn't careful, he could easily push her over that edge.

However, he was still confident that with a bit of care, she would be able to recover fully. After he pulled his hand back, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a medicinal pill, which he then placed in her mouth. Finally, he stood up and looked over at the two old men, who were clearly very shocked.

If he wasn't mistaken, these two old men would be the blood brothers of his Grandpa Meng, making them his granduncles. Apparently, they and his Grandma Meng were the only surviving members of the Senior generation.

As for the three middle-aged women, the fact that they were here in this room and not outside indicated to Meng Hao that they were the beloved partners of his uncles, the blood brothers of his mother.

It was at this point that Meng Hao was shocked to find that the three women, as well as his two granduncles, all had nine spikes buried inside their bodies. The main difference was that the spikes inside the women were silver and not black.

Meng Hao quietly produced some medicinal pills, which he respectfully handed to his two granduncles. The two old men looked at him. Although they were so weak that it seemed even a mortal could kill them, it was possible to see the power and dignity that still existed in their eyes as they looked at Meng Hao.

Gradually, their gazes turned kind. Opening their mouths, they consumed the medicinal pills and then closed their eyes.

Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed, then turned to leave. As he did, the three middle-aged women watched him with puzzled looks.

After leaving the room, Meng Hao's face darkened. He looked over the dozen or so younger women outside, which included Meng Ru.

"What happened here?" he asked in a gravelly voice. His words almost immediately seemed to calm the surrounding bloodline clan members.

"It was the Xu Clan

They pushed things too far. They kidnapped Meng Han, and then sent people here to say that we had to send them grandmother's corpse to get her back."

"The Xu Clan has gone too far. They've bullied us for years, but we're surnamed Meng! We're actual members of the Meng Clan! They're just a vassal clan who was given land on this continent by the clan. What right do they have to bully us like this!?"

“It wasn’t even the direct bloodline of the Xu Clan that did this, just one of their auxiliary branches....”

“Just what are they thinking? Twenty-seven members of our bloodline have already died at their hands over the years, and all in vain! Nobody speaks up for us at all... and this time, they actually threatened grandmother, who has protected us for all these years!!”

“I’m here to help Grandma Meng, and defend the clan on Meng Chen’s behalf,” Meng Hao murmured to himself. “I’ll continue to do the protecting around here.” He sent his divine will out, and then began to walk forward, quickly vanishing. When he reappeared, he was in midair, looking down at the continent below. It only took a moment for his divine sense to locate the auxiliary branch of the Xu Clan that had just been mentioned.

It wasn’t too far away, located in a good-sized city that resembled the Meng Clan ancestral mansion, meaning that it wasn’t a true city, but rather a clan stronghold.

At the main gate of the city was a sign with one large character.

Xu!

Quite a few clan members inhabited the city, and most were mortal. There appeared to be only a dozen or so cultivators, virtually all of them in the Spirit Realm. There was only one old man who was in the Immortal Realm. Even counting him, no one in the city counted as anything more than ants to Meng Hao.

Fury burning in his heart, he stepped forward and was inside the Xu Clan’s ancestral mansion. No one detected his presence, and as he went along, he didn’t hurt the mortals, but he crippled the spirit meridians that would allow them to practice cultivation. As for the cultivators... it didn’t matter what they were doing at the moment, they simply exploded into clouds of gore.

As for the old man in the Immortal Realm, his head exploded even as he sat cross-legged in meditation. All of the cultivators died.

Meng Hao left, taking an unconscious youth with him, a young man who was covered with wounds as if from torture. Despite the injuries, his jaw was clenched shut, as if to indicate that he hadn’t begged for mercy even once.

Killing only this handful of people didn't abate Meng Hao's fury in the least. Sending his divine sense out, he found another of the Xu Clan's auxiliary branches, and headed in that direction next.

One, two, three... Meng Hao went to a total of sixteen auxiliary branches. Not a single cultivator saw his face there; all of them exploded.

With that, Meng Hao eyed the Xu Clan ancestral mansion in the center of the entire continent. He snorted coldly and was preparing to go exterminate the entire clan when, all of a sudden, his expression flickered, and he looked back in the direction of his grandfather's bloodline.

He could sense that his Grandma Meng had awakened.

Chapter 1256: Make a Name!

Meng Hao silently turned and headed back to the clan residence. When he arrived, he handed over the unconscious youth he had just rescued, then straightened his clothes and headed toward his grandmother's room.

He didn't immediately enter, but instead clasped hands and bowed deeply, then stood there with his head lowered.

After a long moment, the door opened, and the three middle-aged women filed out, glancing at him with curious expressions as they walked past. Then, an ancient voice spoke from within the room.

"Come."

Meng Hao bowed once more, then entered, closing the door behind him.

When he looked up, he saw his Grandma Meng sitting in a chair, her complexion much improved. She seemed weaker than a mortal, but at the same time, solemn and filled with an indescribable dignity. Her eyes were dim, but when her gaze settled on someone it seemed to be filled with a certain might.

On either side of her sat the two old men, who were also much improved. They were staring at Meng Hao without the slightest expressions on their faces.

The first person to speak was his grandmother. She looked at him and slowly asked, “Who are you?!”

Her voice was not backed by the power of her cultivation base, but seemed to inherently contain something that caused the natural laws in the area to fluctuate. Anyone who heard her voice would be affected by the mysterious pressure it contained.

“Greetings, Grandma Meng. Greetings, granduncles, I am Meng Hao....” Meng Hao then dropped to his knees and began to kowtow.

The oldtimers were visibly moved when they realized that he had used the forms of address for maternal relatives....

“You...” Meng Hao’s grandmother gaped in shock. Something clicked in her mind, and an expression of disbelief could then be seen. Meng Hao rose to his feet, and as he did, his facial features transformed from Meng Chen’s into his own.

Then he produced a jade slip from his bag of holding, which he respectfully handed over to his grandmother. Next, he sent some cultivation base power into the jade slip, which then projected a screen into the air. On that screen was the face of a woman, none other than... Meng Hao’s mother.

Then, as the three oldtimers looked on, he bit the tip of his finger and dropped a bit of blood onto the jade slip. The jade slip absorbed it, turning blood-red in the process.

This jade slip had been given to Meng Hao before parting ways with his mother. She had told him that if he ever encountered any relatives from her side of the family, he could use it to prove his identity.

Meng Hao’s grandmother began shaking, and the two old men on either side of her looked incredibly excited. In fact, there had been few times in their entire lives in which they had been this excited.

“Li’er... you’re... you’re Li’er’s son. Fang-Meng Hao....” His grandmother stared at him, breath coming in ragged pants. Suddenly, a tremor ran through her, as if something had just occurred to her. “Is your mother well...?”

Meng Hao immediately stepped forward and offered his arm to his grandmother to support her. “Grandma Meng, my mother is in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, safe and healthy.”

“As long as she’s safe and healthy, that’s what’s important....” his grandmother murmured, tears rolling down her cheeks. She raised a trembling hand to stroke Meng Hao’s cheek, her eyes shining with kindness. “You’re such a good kid. Why are you here? Where’s Meng Chen?”

Meng Hao sighed and then gave a simple recounting of how he had come to the Eighth Mountain and Sea, and then the circumstances in which he met Meng Chen.

When his grandmother and grand-uncles heard about how he had exterminated the Blacksoul Society and then slaughtered Dao Lords and other such powerful experts, their eyes went wide.

Then they heard about Meng Chen’s final words, and their eyes dimmed.

“Chen’er was also such a good kid....”

After a moment of silence, Meng Hao looked at the oldtimers and asked, “Grandma Meng, granduncles, I very much want to know what happened here? Why is our bloodline in such decline. What are those black spikes inside of you? And also... who poisoned you? Where is everyone else of the Senior generation?”

They exchanged silent glances for a moment, and then one of Meng Hao’s granduncles sighed and began to explain.

“After your Grandpa Meng went to the Ninth Mountain and Sea, he never returned. All the news we got was that it had to do with you, and that he went missing along with your Grandpa Fang.

“Your grandfather’s disappearance affected the clan a bit, but not fatally. Back then, there were seven of us brothers including your grandfather, plus many sons and grandsons. Although none of us were in the Dao Realm, there were many in the Ancient Realm. We decided not to contend for the place of Clan Chief, assuming that doing so would prevent conflict within the clan. How could we have ever imagined that everything would change overnight?

“Although news about what happened in the clan that night never spread, that was the moment the Meng Clan fell from the height of their power....

“Mysterious cultivators invaded, and were joined by traitors within the clan. A huge battle was fought, and two of our Dao Realm Patriarchs were killed. Two others were seriously injured and still haven’t recovered.

“Vast numbers of Ancient Realm cultivators died, and virtually all of the Immortal Realm clan members were slaughtered....

“Our bloodline narrowly managed to escape to this place. However, when we got here, there were nine mysterious experts waiting, apparently specifically for us. All of our other brothers died, and most of your uncles were killed. The only people left were the women and children....

“Those nine mysterious experts wanted to completely wipe out our bloodline, and the slaughter they carried out on us was far more severe than towards any of the auxiliary bloodlines. It almost seemed like their attack on the Meng Clan was targeting us specifically.

“In the critical moment, just when it seemed we would be exterminated, the ancestral statue began to glow, and emanated a powerful pressure. It turned into a voice which shouted at the nine mysterious experts, telling them to begone. Before they could be driven away, they didn’t hesitate for even a moment to kill themselves in order to transform into nine spikes. The spikes multiplied and then stabbed into our bodies, sealing our cultivation bases.

“From that day on, the Meng Clan in general was in decline, and our bloodline lost all of its cultivators. We wanted to return to the ancestral mansion, but it had already been occupied by other bloodlines, none other than the current nine bloodlines of the Meng Clan.

“We were forced to settle down here and try to restore our cultivation bases. However, the only result was that we got weaker day by day. More people died, and soon, we were barely able to hold on to life, not willing to even close our eyes lest we die. The two uncles of yours who survived could only look on in misery as the older generation was bullied, humiliated, and left gasping for life.”

After listening to the story, Meng Hao stood there silently for a moment. The explanation given was simple, and he could easily imagine how tragic the entire affair had been.

“Grandma Meng, I think I can heal your injuries, but I need some time.” Suddenly, he thought of something, and continued, “Those nine mysterious men, did they by any chance happen to have a combined magical technique that summoned a battle-axe?”

Almost immediately, his grandmother and grand-uncles looked at him with a start, shivering.

“They did use such a magical technique,” his grandmother replied. “However, they didn’t summon one battle-axe, they summoned three! You’ve seen such a thing before?”

Meng Hao then recounted what had happened en route back to the Meng Clan, which resulted in the three oldtimers’ faces flickering.

“So, they’re coming back, huh...?” he grandmother said.

Seeing the expressions on their faces, Meng Hao couldn’t hold back from asking, “Grandma Meng, those mysterious black-robed men, is there any chance... you know where they come from?”

The three old-timers didn’t respond at first. Finally, his grandmother sighed and said, “The Seventh Mountain and Sea!”

As soon as the words entered Meng Hao’s ears, a tremor ran through him. He looked at his grandmother, and the serious expression on her face, and his thoughts raced. Finally, everything turned into four words...

“Mountain and Sea War...” he said slowly.

The three oldtimers maintained their silence.

Meng Hao’s mind trembled. As soon as he thought about the prospect of war between the various Mountains and Seas, he said, “Grandma Meng, granduncles, the Fang Clan in the Ninth Mountain and Sea has become very powerful. Seniors, I can take all of you to the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and give you a chance to rise to prominence there.”

“Hao’er,” his grandmother said, “your intentions are good, but the Meng Clan is our home. We won’t give up on it.”

As for his two granduncles, their voices were filled with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron as they said, “We were born here, and we’ll die here!”

Meng Hao said nothing more. Clasp hands and bowing, he once again transformed into Meng Chen. Just before leaving, he calmly said, "Grandma Meng, if there really is a Mountain and Sea War, I'll do my best to protect you. But if I can't, please take my advice. Leave this place, and wait for the right opportunity to stage a comeback."

Meng Hao then walked out of the room and looked around at the various bloodline clan members in the mansion. Then he waved his hand, and massive rumbling echoed out as the entire bloodline ancestral mansion and the land around it were carved away from the land mass within which it sat.

Meng Hao cut away a vast, 30,000-meter area, after which he slapped his bag of holding, causing one piece of Immortal jade after another to fly out. Organizing them in midair, Meng Hao performed an incantation gesture and pointed out, causing the vast quantity of Immortal jade to shoot down toward the land.

Each piece that touched the ground shattered, causing boundless Immortal qi to spill out like rain. In the blink of an eye, the entire area was filled with a shocking amount of dense Immortal qi.

Meng Hao then raised his hand and made a grasping motion. Rumbling could be heard as the entire vast area was sealed, ensuring that none of the Immortal qi could dissipate.

This also made the entire area occupied by his bloodline become like a paradise for Immortals!

To cultivators, practicing cultivation in places like this had vast, indescribable benefits. Meditating here for a day was like spending a month in the outside world. However, Meng Hao still wasn't satisfied. He smacked his bag of holding again, producing even more Immortal jade. As that jade shattered, the quality of the Immortal qi grew even more profound.

Now, meditating here for a day was like spending two months outside!

The surrounding bloodline clan members were completely shocked. The three old-timers in the room, plus the three middle-aged women, all gasped and looked at Meng Hao in astonishment. Then Meng Hao's grandmother and granduncles recalled what he had said about exterminating Patriarch Blacksoul and killing the other Dao Realm experts, and were completely convinced of the truth of the matter.

There were two other nearby rooms that suddenly opened, and two men walked out. Although they didn't seem very old, their skin was withered and sallow, and their eyes were dim, making them seem very ancient. They were skinny and weak, and even smelled of alcohol, as if they hadn't seen the light of day for many days. Currently, they were staring dumbfounded at the Immortal qi.

These two men were Meng Hao's uncles... the only surviving second-generation members of the bloodline.

"Meng Ru," Meng Hao said calmly, a cold gleam in his eyes, "go find all of the members of our bloodline who serve in other households. Tell them... to come home. If anyone tries to stop you, tell me immediately!" The appearance of cultivators from the Seventh Mountain and Sea indicated that a Mountain and Sea War was brewing. That completely changed Meng Hao's plans. He would no longer lead his grandfather's bloodline to prominence from the shadows. There simply wasn't time for that.

His new decision was to take center stage, to make a loud proclamation that no one could dare to provoke this bloodline. The time had come to make a name!

Chapter 1257: Sermon on the Dao!

Meng Ru nodded excitedly in response to Meng Hao's words. Meng Hao then smacked his bag of holding, and the mastiff flew out. It threw its head back and roared, transforming into a beam of red light that carried Meng Ru off into the distance.

With the mastiff to protect her, no one would be able to cause trouble for Meng Ru as she went about accomplishing her task. Meng Hao looked around the bloodline mansion, at his excited relatives, and then took a deep breath. A brilliant gleam then appeared in his eyes; time was of the essence, and since he was going to help the bloodline rise to prominence... he would do it in spectacular fashion.

Meng Ru and the mastiff flew to the central continent of the Meng Clan and called back the bloodline members who had had no other choice but to follow the orders of the other nine bloodlines.

Meanwhile, the shocking deaths of all of the cultivators in the Xu Clan's various auxiliary headquarters had caused quite a stir among the Xu Clan's powerful experts in their ancestral mansion.

Everyone was in a rage, and finally, an ancient voice echoed out from within the Xu Clan ancestral mansion.

“The bedraggled bloodline thinks it can recover its former glory? Find the culprit and execute him! If anyone gets in your way, execute them too! Don’t forget that the old cripples there can’t do anything to you!”

The voice crashed like lightning, causing colors to flash in the sky and the lands to quake. Instantly, dozens of beams of light shot out, followed by hundreds of other figures, all of which headed toward the location of Grandpa Meng’s bloodline.

The Xu Clan was so enraged with the bloodline that there was no need to speak words. They decided to attack immediately, and the murderous aura they emanated was incredibly intense.

At the same time, back in the central ancestral mansion of the Meng Clan, another enraged shout could be heard coming from the courtyard where Meng Hao had crushed the Dao Seeking cultivator’s bones, turning him into a pile of mush. Three old men could be seen there, their faces grim and their eyes burning with fury. Behind them were ten other clan members, all radiating intense killing intent.

“What gall!” said one of the three old men. “Their bloodline is weak to the point of dissipating. Who needs them? Now they’re just intentionally provoking calamity. Men, come with me, we’re going to crush this rebellion immediately!” With that, the old man flicked his sleeve and then flew up into the air, followed by numerous fellow clan members. All of them transformed into beams of colorful light that shot off in the direction of Grandpa Meng’s bloodline.

It took only a moment for vast proverbial winds to surge, giving rise to waves in the dead brackish water that was the declining Meng Clan. And it was all because of Meng Hao.

As those things occurred, Meng Hao sat cross-legged on a boulder in the bloodline mansion, surrounded by other members of the bloodline. They all looked very excited, and were in the middle of practicing various breathing exercises. The vast majority were female, and as they practiced cultivation, their cultivation bases slowly improved.

The person sitting closest to Meng Hao was a young man, the very same one he had just saved, Meng Han. He occasionally looked over at Meng Hao, his eyes filled with adoration and zeal.

The truth was that he wasn't the only one; virtually everyone in the mansion looked at Meng Hao in the same way. The zeal they felt burned in their eyes; they finally had hope. This person that they were looking at had a cultivation base vastly greater than theirs. After years and years, he was the first person... to ever successfully enter the Immortal Realm.

“In the practice of cultivation, you must pass through the four Realms. Spirit, Immortal, Ancient, Dao. Each Realm bestows you with different types of power, and are all subdivided into smaller stages.

“It might seem complicated, but you must proceed forward one step at a time. The further along the path you tread, the more and more powerful you will become!

“The Spirit Realm is divided into the stages of Qi Condensation, Foundation Establishment, Core Formation, Nascent Soul, Spirit Severing, Dao Seeking, and Immortal Ascension!

“I can see that most of you are in the Core Formation stage. Not many of you are in the Nascent Soul stage, and it seems you have no Spirit Severing cultivators....” Meng Hao spoke quietly, but his voice seemed to be filled with a strange power. As it echoed about the bloodline mansion, all of his bloodline relatives listened attentively.

Some of his bloodline relatives couldn't hold back from pointing out, “Big bro Meng Chen, don't forget that big sis Qiao'er is in the Spirit Severing stage. And big sis Yun is too....”

“Big sis Hong is in Dao Seeking....”

Meng Hao nodded and continued.

“Core Formation focuses on forming an inner core. You can use that core to coalesce your own pure qi, which can be used to conceive your Nascent Soul.... When I was in the Core Formation stage, I used the five elements as my foundation, making a five elements Gold Core, which then became my five elements Nascent Soul....

“... the true meaning of Spirit Severing lies, not in the Spirit, but in the Severing....

“There are three Severings, which are also Daos. Three Severings, three Daos. Afterward, you must seek answers inwardly to take the next step, Dao Seeking!

“As far as Immortal Ascension is concerned, it is actually simple; none of you really need to worry about it. You can simply imitate your ancestors and become false Immortals!” Meng Hao’s voice echoed out as he expounded upon the meaning of the Spirit Realm, explaining it in detail to his bloodline clan members.

They listened as if intoxicated; many areas which they had formerly found very confusing were now explained clearly. Furthermore, Meng Hao’s explanation was far deeper and more profound than any explanation they had received in the past.

Meng Hao’s voice also contained that strange power, something that gradually caused a type of seed to appear within the bodies of his bloodline relatives. It was a Dao Seed, not the bloodline of an Allheaven Dao Immortal, but rather... Meng Hao’s accumulated enlightenment regarding cultivation, his experiences within the Spirit Realm. It was... a Spirit Seed!

Meng Hao had a foundation in the Spirit Realm that was as rare as a phoenix feather or a qilin horn in the Mountain and Sea Realm. It would be no exaggeration to say that his understanding of the Spirit Realm exceeded that of any other person. No one had accumulated so much in that Realm, and no one had prepared more thoroughly to become a true Immortal. He had shaken the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Because of that, his understanding, and his explanation, carried profound, indescribable meaning for all of his fellow clan members.

In addition to all that, the rich Immortal qi in the area vastly exceeded normal spiritual energy. The result was that the majority of his bloodline relatives were all sinking deeper and deeper into enlightenment.

Meng Hao’s grandmother and grand-uncles stared in shock at what was happening, and then excitement began to build up on their faces. Meng Hao’s two uncles had faces flushed with excitement, not only because of what was happening to all the members of the Junior generation, but also because the Immortal qi was helping them to revert from their crippled states.

The three middle-aged women were experiencing something similar.

Apparently, all of the bloodline relatives around Meng Hao were... slowly transforming!!

Meng Hao looked around at everyone in their states of enlightenment, until finally his gaze came to fall upon the young man Meng Han, whom he had rescued from the Xu Clan.

From what Meng Hao could tell, he had better latent talent than anyone else present, and although his cultivation base was merely in the Core Formation stage, he was clearly on the verge of a breakthrough.

A smile broke out on Meng Hao's face. He was now confident that within a few short years, his grandfather's bloodline should be able to achieve grandeur once again, which caused excitement to stir within his heart. It was at this point that he suddenly looked up into the sky, and a cold gleam flickered in his eyes.

He waved his right hand, causing a cloud of black pods to fly out from within his bag of holding. They immediately flew off into the distance radiating murderous auras. As they flew along, popping sounds could be heard as they transformed into black imps, whose gaping maws were filled with razor-sharp teeth.

"EEEEEEEEEE...." screamed the blackpod imps as they shot off into the distance.

Currently, outside of the 30,000-meter area Meng Hao had already set aside, hundreds of cultivators were flying around, radiating murderous auras and killing intent. The dozen or so in the lead had cultivation bases in the Ancient Realm, although the strongest of the bunch was only in the mid Ancient Realm. However, a group like this was not something to be underestimated, and comprised about half of the entire power base of the Xu Clan.

About thirty percent of the group was in the Immortal Realm, and the rest... were in the Spirit Realm. After all, the Xu Clan was one of eight subsidiary clans within the Meng Clan, which meant that it would be impossible for them to reach a terrifyingly powerful level. Even still, they had many powerful cultivators.

What they could see was a huge area filled with dense mist, and they could sense that within that mist was some invisible barrier. That barrier caused the eyes of the mid Ancient Realm cultivator from the Xu Clan to widen. He gasped, and his heart began to pound.

He had to ask himself if even he could breach that barrier, and as he looked closer, he realized that the mist inside was...

“Immortal qi... so much Immortal qi. It’s... it’s so dense it’s manifested physically. It’s like this area is another world, like an Immortal world!

“But... who could possibly do this!?!?” Although he was shocked, few of his fellow clan members noticed any of these clues, and their murderous aura boiled just as strongly as before.

Tempers provoked, some of the Xu Clan cultivators began to shout out in rage. “Anyone from the Meng Clan in the area had better get out here right now!”

It all happened too quickly for the mid Ancient Realm cultivator to stop, and his face flickered as, all of a sudden, a grating sound rang out from the mist.

“EEEEEEEEEE....” Following the sound was a huge group of black-colored imps, moving as fast as lightning. Each one of those imps was radiating pressure equivalent to the mid Ancient Realm.

“It’s... run! Get out of here!!” The mid Ancient Realm cultivator’s scalp was numb. Although he had never encountered these blackpod imps before, he could tell how terrifying they were, and it filled his heart with an indescribable sense of deadly crisis.

He immediately fell back, to the shock of his fellow clan members. Unfortunately for them, they didn’t react quickly enough, and were quickly pounced upon by the blackpod imps.

Apparently, the imps had no inclination to possess any of these people. They simply bored into their bodies and began to chew them up. Miserable screams instantly began to ring out from the mouths of the Xu Clan cultivators.

A huge commotion was underway as more than a hundred out of the group of hundreds began to scream. Then their bodies exploded into clouds of gore and blood. As for the others present, their faces drained of blood, and they immediately began to flee.

In the blink of an eye, the blackpod imps shot out from within the gore, vicious expressions on their faces as they went on the attack again. Miserable shrieks rang out as another hundred or so cultivators were slaughtered. The blackpod imps were like Yamas from hell, out to collect lives.

Not even the Xu Clan cultivators in the Ancient Realm were capable of fleeing. No matter how they tried to fight back, they ended up screaming, and their bodies withered rapidly as the blackpod imps scraped them clean from the inside out.

The strongest of their number, the mid Ancient Realm old man, bellowed in rage as he unleashed divine abilities and magical items to defend himself. However, it did no good. Soon, one of the blackpod imps bored into him. He screamed miserably and then... exploded.

The gory scene lasted for some time. Hundreds of cultivators died, and the air was awash with the reek of blood. As for the blackpod imps, they grinned cruelly and let out fearsome howls.

Finally, they formed back together into a black cloud that vanished back into the mist.

“EEEEEEEEEE....”

Chapter 1258: Exterminating the Xu Clan!

“Nascent Soul, Nascent Soul. The Soul aspect is physical, and as for the Nascent part of the term, it relates to the spiritual. Therefore, because what you are currently absorbing via breathing techniques is Immortal qi, which far exceeds ordinary spiritual energy... theoretically speaking, you should be able to pass through the Nascent Soul stage much more quickly!” Meng Hao’s voice was quiet as he continued to expound upon his understanding of the Spirit Realm.

He had just used a vast quantity of Immortal jade to create a huge area for the exclusive purpose of allowing these several dozen people to absorb Immortal qi. In the entire Mountain and Sea Realm, few people could accomplish such a thing. In fact, the only ones who could would be the Mountain and Sea Lords.

Even large sects who could afford it would not, primarily because... it wouldn’t be worth it. Sects always had numerous competing factions who were generally concerned with their own interests and thus wouldn’t agree to such a huge expenditure.

Meng Hao might love money, and had always dreamed of being rich. However, sentiment and honor were important things to him, and no amount of money could be more valuable to him than family.

Therefore, he didn’t think twice about the pain that usually came with spending money. As long as his grandfather’s bloodline could rise to prominence again, it would all be worth it.

As he continued to deliver his sermon, there were some in the audience who experienced cultivation base breakthroughs. At the same time, rumbling sounds could be heard. A strange gleam could be

seen in Meng Hao's eyes, and he wore a slight smile as the blackpod imps came flying back. After circling around in the air a few times, they began to drop bags of holding down toward the ground. Soon, there were so many it seemed like it was raining..

The women in the bloodline mansion stared with wide eyes as all of this happened.

Meng Hao's expression was very somber as he looked back at all the women and continued to speak.

“You must all remember that we cultivators must never waste cultivation resources. If you venture out and see something, but don't pick it up, then it's the same as losing it. That's our maxim, and the most important principle we must keep in our hearts!

“Don't waste money, don't live luxuriously! If you have a chance to profit, then don't miss out on a single spirit stone!” The entire audience was completely focused on Meng Hao, eyes burning with zealous adoration. As soon as the women heard his words, they fixed them in their minds. Apparently, their personalities were even affected, and gradually... their eyes began to shine brightly.

Meng Hao was pleased with the look he saw in their eyes, although he didn't take the time to think of what the consequences would be of having an entire group of people molded after himself.... In any case, he truly felt that this group was becoming much more to his liking.

As for the three old timers, they were watching with wide eyes, as were Meng Hao's two Uncles.

“This....” said one of Meng Hao's grand-uncles.

“He's so much like little Lili....” Meng Hao's grandmother said with a wry smile. After a moment of thought, she allowed things to continue on as they were. “With him here, the Meng Clan... we'll definitely need to change things up a bit.”

Outside in the courtyard, Meng Hao waved his hand, sending the bags of holding flying out to hover in front of the other clan members, until each one had several.

“Alright, you hang on to these bags of holding. I'm heading out for a bit to get you some more cultivation resources.” With that, Meng Hao rose to his feet, took a step forward, and vanished. When he reappeared, he was out in the mists. The blackpod imps flew around him, looking very

friendly. Meng Hao waved his sleeve to collect them up, then took another step, vanishing and reappearing high up in the sky. A cold gleam flickered in his eyes as he looked toward the center of the continent, and... the Xu Clan!

He had originally planned to exterminate the entire clan, but then his grandmother had woken up, which had caused a slight delay. However, moments ago when the blackpod imps wiped out the cultivators outside the mist, Meng Hao had been watching closely.

“Anyone who has a beef with my grandfather’s bloodline also has a beef with me,” he said coolly. Then he transformed into a beam of light which shot rumbling off toward the Xu Clan.

Deep in the heart of the Xu Clan’s ancestral mansion, within a hidden chamber, a red-haired old man sat there cross-legged. Suddenly, his eyes opened, and he shivered. A terrible feeling had just risen up in his heart, as if a huge disaster were heading his way.

His cultivation base was far beyond the great circle of the Ancient Realm, and was already half a step into the Dao Realm. In fact, he could make his attempt to complete that step at any time. However, he was very similar to Guru Heavencloud, who Meng Hao had encountered in the asteroid field back in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and didn’t have the confidence to try to make the attempt.

Therefore, it would really be less accurate to say that he could break through to the Dao Realm whenever he wished, and more accurate to say that he could force his way into the Quasi-Dao Realm at any moment!

This man was Xu Yushan, leader of the Xu Clan. His cultivation base was why he was the clan leader, and also the reason why the Xu Clan had been able to become a vassal clan and occupy one of the continents in the Meng Clan.

“What’s going on... could it be... THAT bloodline of the Meng Clan?” The red-haired old man’s eyes flickered, and he frowned.

“Impossible. That bloodline has declined to the point where it’s almost gone. In fact, that’s why I was stationed here, to keep an eye on them and to make sure that instead of being wiped out in an instant, they slowly fade away into nothing. In a few hundred years, that mission will be accomplished.”

After sitting there in thought for a moment, his face suddenly flickered. Without the slightest hesitation or forethought, the man crushed a jade slip and then vanished.

The moment he vanished was the exact same moment that a Heaven-shaking, Earth-shattering boom caused everything to shake violently.

An enormous hand was descending from above, fully 30,000 meters wide, so realistic you could see the palm lines on it. It descended with such incredible speed that flames burst out all over it, racing down to scorch the earth.

As it descended, it caused numerous pagodas within the Xu Clan ancestral mansion to crumble under the pressure. Buildings collapsed, bursting into flames, and the cultivators in the Xu Clan ancestral mansion looked up in shock. It was as if doomsday had arrived for them.

“What is that?!?!”

“An ambush!!”

“Th-that hand, who does it belong to? Heavens....” The cultivators in the Xu Clan ancestral mansion were completely shocked, and began to tremble from the explosive will of extermination which weighed down on them.

In the blink of an eye, the hand slammed down onto the ancestral mansion, crushing countless buildings and sending a huge shockwave out in all directions. The lands quaked as if they were being struck by lightning, and the entire Xu Clan was instantly transformed into ruins, replaced by the image of an enormous handprint!

Flames raged everywhere, burning everything to a pitch-black crisp....

Despite all of that, there actually weren't very many cultivators who died. Meng Hao wasn't a cold-blooded killer, and based on the level of his cultivation base, the divine sense laced within the palm enabled him to detect exactly who within the Xu Clan harbored evil designs toward his grandfather's bloodline.

Those hostile cultivators were all killed, causing bloodcurdling screams to ring out from within the sea of flames. As for the other cultivators, the flames merely sealed their cultivation bases, but didn't harm them physically.

The lands still shook violently, though, and the enormous handprint in the ground was shocking to the extreme.

Within the ruins that filled the palm print, the Xu Clan Patriarch blurred back into existence. As soon as he did, he coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. Face ashen, he looked around at the surviving clan members, and then at the ruins. Then he threw his head back and howled viciously.

As he looked up, he could see Meng Hao floating there in the air, radiating intense coldness. Considering what he had done with a single palm strike, he was clearly a terrifying individual. The Xu Clan Patriarch chuckled bitterly and asked, “Who are you?!?!”

At the same time, he didn’t hesitate to begin a cultivation base breakthrough.

“I’m Meng Chen!” Meng Hao replied coldly. Meng Hao didn’t want to drag the Meng Clan into his problems with the Heavengod Alliance, and therefore, he chose not to use his identity as Meng Hao.

The Xu Clan Patriarch laughed bitterly. He didn’t believe Meng Hao at all, but that didn’t matter. His cultivation base shot up explosively, and clouds began to form in the air as Dao Realm Heavenly Tribulation began to descend.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered in the face of the descending Dao Realm Heavenly Tribulation. He then waved his right index finger, which caused the air to distort, and wave-like ripples to spread out. Gradually the ripples transformed into an enormous wolf, completely domineering, which howled as it charged the Xu Clan Patriarch.

It was on him in the blink of an eye, before the Heavenly Tribulation could arrive. The Xu Clan Patriarch fought back viciously, but couldn’t stop himself from being swallowed up in a single gulp by the gigantic wolf.

The Heavenly Tribulation, having lost its target, immediately began to fade away, and the path which had appeared vanished.

Meng Hao waved his sleeve. Ignoring everything down below, he turned and vanished.

Time passed. Around evening, more beams of light appeared above the lands near Meng Hao's grandfather's bloodline. These people looked different than the Xu Clan cultivators, and were in fact from the Meng Clan.

They were from the seventh of the nine bloodlines of the Meng Clan, which was a powerful group. However, only a few of their number had come; one was in the great circle of the Ancient Realm, one in the late Ancient Realm, two in the mid Ancient Realm, four in the early Ancient Realm, and several dozen were Immortals.

A force like that was a powerful one indeed. Unless a Dao Realm expert showed up, they could wage an entire war on their own. Currently, the old man in the lead was flying along, enraged and bursting with killing intent.

As the group flew along, colors flashed in the sky and the winds screamed. Suddenly, the old man's furious voice could be heard ringing out.

“Xu Yushan, get out here right now!”

The booming voice echoed back and forth, making it sound almost like numerous voices were shouting. A huge wind blasted across the lands, sweeping away the clouds in the sky and shaking everything.

The old man hovered in midair arrogantly. In his view, the ideal way of handling this situation was to call out the leader of the vassal clan that was guarding this place and have him extinguish the rebellious bloodline that was on its last legs.

Chapter 1259: Imposing Grandma Meng!

The old man's voice rang out in all directions and yet no response could be heard, causing him to frown. He sent his divine sense out, and when it reached the Xu Clan ancestral mansion at the center of the continent, a tremor ran through him, and he gasped, an expression of intense disbelief filling his face.

“This....” He immediately shot off through the air. Behind him, the other members of the Meng Clan slowly began to reveal their own shock as the Ancient Realm cultivators sent their divine sense out and realized what had happened.

Dozens of them shot through the air toward the Xu Clan, where the old man in the leadership position was hovering in midair above the ancestral mansion, looking down at the enormous palm print, and the ruins that filled it. After a moment, he closed his eyes as he focused on sensing the area. Then his eyes snapped open.

“The aura of Dao Tribulation appeared here.... But I didn’t sense any tribulation earlier. That indicates... that the tribulation vanished before it even started. It also means that Xu Yushan was killed before his cultivation base broke through!

“Other than a Dao Realm expert, the only other person who could do something like that would be a Quasi-Dao cultivator!” The old man took a deep breath and scanned the ruins. Then he waved his hand, causing one of the living Xu Clan cultivators to fly up into the air. The old man didn’t ask any questions. He was the type of person who didn’t trust what people told him with regard to important matters like this. He only trusted his own Soulsearcing. It took but a brief moment before he saw Meng Hao, and the enormous palm destroying the Xu Clan. Then... he heard Meng Hao call himself... Meng Chen!

“Meng... Chen!?!?” The old man’s eyes went wide, and he began to breathe heavily. Actually, the reason he had rushed over here in such domineering fashion was because of Meng Chen. Now that he understood the terrifying nature of the person he had come for, the old man began to shiver. Knowing that he had narrowly avoided certain calamity, the old man immediately turned to leave.

The other members of the Meng Clan were looking around in shock. Then they noticed the old man leaving, and they began to ask questions.

“Elder, where are we going now...?”

“Where else?” replied the flustered old man. “Home! We’re going home immediately!” The old man couldn’t help but look back at the palm-shaped crater once more. He shivered, already petrified of Meng Chen, even though he had never even seen him face-to-face.

Based on what he knew about Meng Chen, he was sure that this terrifying cultivation base could not belong to him. In his judgement, Meng Chen had most likely been possessed or replaced, or something of the like. In either case, he himself didn’t qualify to tangle with whoever Meng Chen really was.

A person with a cultivation base like that could kill him as easily as flipping over his hand. Someone such as that was a person he couldn’t afford to provoke, and thus, it was without any further hesitation that he sped off as fast as possible.

The other cultivators exchanged dismayed glances, then hurried to leave. The old man's sudden flight was just now beginning to fill their hearts with fear. Feeling as if some hidden force were behind them about to attack, they started going faster and faster until they were fleeing at top speed.

The group had burst onto the scene with a towering murderous aura, and yet before they had even seen Meng Hao with their own eyes, they fled, crestfallen and terrified.

As they left, Meng Hao was sitting cross-legged in the bloodline mansion, watching them hurry off, a cold smile on his face. Their quick reaction had saved them; had they dared show any evil designs, he wouldn't have hesitated to wipe out their entire bloodline.

Regarding the matter of wiping out bloodlines, Meng Hao had already consulted with his grandmother and granduncles. According to them, the third, fourth, and fifth bloodlines were important, but as for the other five, they could be done away with at will.

Seeing the complicated expressions in the old-timers' eyes, Meng Hao had simply said, "I'll handle things, but let's wait until your cultivation bases are recovered before deciding exactly how."

Time passed. Meng Hao gave sermons on the Dao, but spent most of his time using his own cultivation base to assist his grandmother and the others in their recovery. The more he understood about the framework created by the nine needles, the more he realized that they couldn't be removed casually, not without risking the lives of the people who were affected.

He needed more time to fully understand them, and his grandmother and the others also needed more time to strengthen their bodies. Only then could further action be taken.

One afternoon a few days later, as Meng Hao was giving a sermon on the Dao, he suddenly stopped talking and looked up. A blood-colored light could be seen up in the air, which was the mastiff. On its back could be seen Meng Ru, as well as about ten other young women. Some of those women looked excited, others appeared to be torn, and some were confused.

Their return instantly caused a big commotion in the mansion. As for the young women, when they sensed the Immortal qi, they were astonished.

Meng Ru immediately found Meng Hao, clasped hands, and bowed. She looked a bit sad, and even hesitant, as if she weren't sure of how to express herself. After a long moment, she gritted her teeth and began to speak.

“Big bro Meng Chen, I wasn't able to bring everyone back. There were, um... three sisters who chose to stay with their masters. There were also two whose masters refused to free them. I... I was worried about making a mistake, so I didn't dare to ask big bro mastiff to attack....” Apparently, Meng Ru felt a lot of respect toward the mastiff, and actually viewed it as a cultivator and not an animal.

“Three of them refused to return?” Meng Hao asked calmly. He wasn't too surprised about this. There weren't many people left in his grandfather's bloodline, so it was only natural that there would be some people who didn't wish to remain, and would try to strike out on their own.

It was at this point that the door suddenly opened, and Grandma Meng walked out without a single person supporting her. “Since they chose not to return, then they shall remain cut off for all eternity.”

All of the bloodline clan members present immediately bowed their heads respectfully. Meng Hao quickly rose to his feet and clasped hands.

“Chen'er,” Grandma Meng said calmly, “go bring back the final two who were prevented from returning.” After her recent days of recuperation, she was in much better spirits than before, and her eyes glittered with determination. She had long since become the pillar of the bloodline, and it had only been when her body had begun to weaken that she had begun to lose control. Now that she had recovered, she once again radiated the air of a family leader.

Furthermore, she was aware of the situation between Meng Hao and the Heavengod Alliance, and was also wary of getting the clan involved. Therefore, she declined to address him as Hao'er, and instead used Meng Chen's name.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. Seeing his grandmother like this left him feeling quite relieved. At the very least, with her back in control of the bloodline, the task of helping it rise to prominence didn't fall on his shoulders alone.

“What if I meet opposition?” Meng Hao asked.

“Kill them!” Grandma Meng replied immediately. Although her words were not spoken loudly, they resounded like thunder in the ears of all present. At the same time, a murderous aura began to radiate from her, something which had remained buried inside of her for too long.

“We’ve been away for too long,” said another voice. “It’s time to remind the Meng Clan who exactly we are!” Meng Hao’s two granduncles emerged from the room. They were no longer confined to their chairs, and although they looked very weak, they were clearly in much better condition than before.

All of the surrounding bloodline clan members were now looking excitedly at Grandma Meng.

“Your command shall be carried out,” Meng Hao said, clasping hands and bowing. Then he turned, leaving the mastiff to protect the bloodline clan members, but taking Meng Ru with him.

A moment later, the two of them had vanished. Grandma Meng and Meng Hao’s two granduncles watched them leave, and their eyes burned with faith and anticipation for the future.

Even as Meng Hao was working hard to help his grandfather’s bloodline rise to prominence, someone appeared in the starry sky of the Eighth Mountain and Sea. It was a handsome young man who strolled along wearing a violet robe. He was currently looking off into the distance at... the Meng Clan.

“I can sense that you’re there....” the young man said, smiling. He was none other than Ji Dongyang!

Meanwhile, a huge turtle was floating in another part of the starry sky of the Eighth Mountain and Sea, snoring as he napped. On his back was a huge continent, filled with all forms of life.

Suddenly, the turtle’s eyes snapped open as he awoke from slumber. His eyes shone like bright lanterns as he looked out into the darkness of the starry sky.

“Dammit, I just had a nightmare,” the turtle muttered. “I dreamed about that little bastard Meng Hao tracking me down in the Eighth Mountain and Sea. Hahaha. What a hilarious dream! It’s totally impossible!

“There’s no way that little punk could find me here. Dammit! Why would I have a dream like that? It’s a bad sign, an ill omen. I can’t believe I dreamed about being his mount!” That huge turtle was

none other than Patriarch Reliance, who truly was frightened of Meng Hao. He let out a roar, then glanced around shiftily for a moment. Then he closed his eyes and went back to sleep.

Strangely, there appeared to be mysterious figures nearby Patriarch Reliance, figures he didn't notice, who were apparently keeping track of his current location.

Something else was happening at around this same time in the Seventh Mountain and Sea.... All of the sects there, as well as all the clans, were mobilizing. Gradually, an enormous military force was being organized, virtually without number. In the lead position of that enormous army floated a sizeable mountain peak, the very tip of which emanated powerful ripples. Just barely visible on that mountain peak was a person sitting cross-legged, looking toward the Eighth Mountain, eyes gleaming.

The figure then began to speak softly in an ancient voice: "I don't really want this war, but... there's no choice in the matter. It is my mission.... Perhaps I'm not the only one either.... It's not a betrayal; after all, there is nothing to betray. And yet... why do I feel so much pain in my heart...."

The terrifying army was filled with millions upon millions of cultivators, organized in formation so that they resembled an ancient, enormous dragon. They radiated intense murderous auras as they began to march closer and closer to the Eighth Mountain and Sea.

Chapter 1260: What Is The Point... Of Leaving Any Behind!?

As the army from the Seventh Mountain and Sea was picking up speed, Meng Hao was back in the Eighth Mountain and Sea. He was also being tracked by shadowy figures who occasionally materialized and then vanished. Apparently, they were watching him and keeping track of his location.

There had not been any wars between the Mountains and Seas for many years, but it seemed one was about to break out now. There were even various entities above in the 33 Heavens who were using special techniques to observe the Mountain and Sea Realm without being detected. They were looking down at the Eighth Mountain and Sea, their eyes gleaming with anticipation....

Meanwhile, outside of the 33 Heavens, out in the boundless expanse, two forces were approaching from different directions, and they were growing inexorably closer.

Apparently, war... was nigh!

Meng Hao and Meng Ru were speeding along through midair when all of a sudden, an intense feeling of alarm rose up inside Meng Hao, causing his face to flicker. Before he could react, the parrot's shrill voice could suddenly be heard in his mind.

"They're coming. Coming, I tell you! They're close, I can sense them. Dammit, they're moving a lot faster than I anticipated.... Meng Hao, they're almost here!!" The parrot sounded anxious, even terrified.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He knew exactly who the parrot was talking about, and it caused him to slowly lift his head up to look up into the sky. It was almost as if he could see out into the vast expanse beyond the 33 Heavens.

"Well then, I guess I need to hurry up," he said softly.

Off to the side, Meng Ru gaped in shock. "Big bro Meng Chen, what did you say?"

"Oh, nothing," he replied, shaking his head as he continued to lead Meng Ru through the starry sky toward the Meng Clan's central continent.

He passed through the protective spell formations without triggering any of them, and proceeded directly toward the ancestral mansion.

"The two sisters we're going after are big sis Qiu'er and big sis Meng Fei," Meng Ru said quietly. "Their latent talent is better than mine, and their cultivation bases are higher.... I managed to meet them and pass the news about what was happening, but I was prevented from taking them away. If it weren't for big bro mastiff, I might have been detained as well.

"They're both in the hands of cultivators from the first bloodline...." When she looked at Meng Hao, it was almost worshipfully. In her mind, once Meng Chen arrived on the scene, all their problems would be solved.

Meanwhile, in the East District of the Meng Clan's ancestral mansion, there was a huge temple surrounded by nine pillars. Beneath each of those pillars was a furnace.

Those burning furnaces were causing the nine pillars to slowly heat up.

Bound to the pillars were nine young women, all of whom had ashen faces and were trembling. They looked terrified and were pleading for their lives, except for two who, although they were not spectacularly beautiful, were charming and pretty. Those two had their jaws clenched; despite the increasing temperature of the pillars they were tied to, they refused to utter any pleading words.

Sitting in the middle of the pillars and furnaces was an old man, who was currently performing double-handed incantation gestures and sending sealing marks out toward the furnaces, which were causing the furnaces to burn even more fiercely.

Surrounding the entire area was an audience of young men. The audience was clearly split into two groups, one of which clustered around a young man in a green robe, and the second group around another young man in a yellow robe. Clearly, the two of them had very high statuses, and currently, their eyes were fixed upon the old man in the middle of all the columns. They were also turning deaf ears to the pleading cries of the young women.

After a moment passed, the young man in the green robe suddenly asked, “What are we betting on this time?!”

“I bet that this time, Grandmaster Song’s pill refining will result in... her, her and her all becoming Young Beauty Pills!” As the young man in the yellow robe spoke, his eyes glittered as he singled out three young women among the nine. Two of those young women were those who refused to plead for their lives.

After a moment of thought, the young man in the green robe replied, “You made your choice pretty quickly. Well, in that case, I say that those three will fail to become pills!”

Then the two young men exchanged an icy glance.

It was at about this time that rumbling sounds could be heard as Grandmaster Song’s eyes suddenly flared with light. He waved both hands forcefully out into the air, causing the nine furnaces to blaze with fire. The pillars instantly grew hotter, and in the blink of an eye, nine flaming threads shot out of the fires toward the nine young women.

Terrified screams of desperation rang out from the mouths of seven of the young women. As for the other two, they were trembling, and clearly terrified, but still refused to make even a single sound. However, their hearts were clearly filled with regret.

When Meng Ru had told them about what was happening back in their bloodline mansion, they had instantly wanted to return, but now, it seemed that would be impossible.

Sighing inwardly, they exchanged glances, then slowly closed their eyes as the flaming threads closed in on them.

“Become pills!” Grandmaster Song threw his head back and roared, rising to his feet and throwing his hands into the air. Strange light shone out from his eyes, and yet, even as the words left his mouth, an enraged snort suddenly echoed through the air like thunder.

Cold words also rang out. “You’re the one who should become a pill!”

As the icy words reverberated back and forth, cracking sounds could be heard as the ground froze over. The nine furnaces trembled, and their flames winked out. Next, the furnaces actually exploded, and cracks began to spread out across the pillars, which then shattered.

The nine young women could now move. As soon as their feet touched the ground, they began to flee, except for the two who had refused to beg for their lives, who looked up into the air, excited expressions on their faces.

The crimson threads attached to the columns almost seemed to be self-aware, and were trying to flee in fear. However, before they could get very far, a powerful force sucked them back, twisting them together into what looked like a white medicinal pill, which came to rest in the hand of a young man who had suddenly appeared in the air up above.

He waved his arm, sending the white medicinal pill flying toward Grandmaster Song’s forehead. As it flew through the air, it crumbled, then fused into Grandmaster Song, who trembled and let out a miserable shriek. His body instantly burst into flames, and was burned into ash, all the way to the bone. What was left behind was a red medicinal pill.

The young man who had just arrived was none other than Meng Hao, followed by Meng Ru. Meng Ru was staring at the two steadfast young women, tears pouring down her cheeks. She quickly flew over and stood in front of them protectively.

This sudden development left all the bystanders completely shocked. As they edged backward, the two young men’s faces darkened.

“What gall! How dare you kill Grandmaster Song! Men, kill these people!”

“Bring me his head!” In response to their orders, the crowd of cultivators surrounding them flew into the air toward Meng Hao.

“What kind of clan are you?” Meng Hao said quietly, his eyes blazing with icy killing intent.

“Refining people into pills for pleasure? You completely lack any humanity whatsoever. What is the point... of leaving any of you behind?!”