

The Heavens 1421

Chapter 1421: Provocation!

When Shangguan Hong and the others learned of what Meng Hao was doing, they did nothing to stop him. The Sect Leader contemplated the matter briefly, then chose to ignore it.

As long as Meng Hao's actions didn't affect them or their plans, then he could do as he pleased. As long as he didn't do something to endanger the entire Vast Expanse School... then they didn't care what he did.

Furthermore, Meng Hao was careful in his actions. He only used his own forces, and he only expanded into areas that the Vast Expanse School didn't already control.

As his forces began operations, he chose to go into secluded meditation in Ninth Paragon City, and would only receive sporadic updates regarding affairs on the outside.

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, ten years had gone by.

During that time, Meng Hao left Ninth Paragon City on only one occasion. The rest of the time, he remained in secluded meditation while his forces focused on expanding via war and other methods.

Soon, the Ninth Paragon's fame grew in the Vast Expanse as a whole. Eventually, open recruitment began, and vast amounts of new disciples swelled the ranks.

During the ten years that passed, the Paragons under Meng Hao's command were like sharp blades that cut down anyone in their path. As for the 100,000 cultivators who made up his main force, any time they fought in battle, they would overwhelm the opposing force.

Although there were no Paragons among the 100,000 cultivators, they were all elite experts, and could also form together into a huge spell formation.

As for the three female Imperial Lords and seven Dao Sovereigns, the ten years passed for them in relative comfort. Originally, they had been under the impression that being selected as guards for the Ninth Paragon meant that they were fated to become vessels to be drained in his cultivation

practice. The truth was that throughout the ten years, the number of times they actually saw Meng Hao could be counted on a single hand.

A few other important events occurred during that time.

On one occasion, something like a sandstorm sprang up around Meng Hao's location of secluded meditation. A figure appeared within that sandstorm, who spoke in an ancient, raspy voice.

"You're not the Ninth Paragon."

Even as the words echoed out, a burst of peak 9-Essences power could be detected. Meng Hao opened his eyes, his expression calm as he faced the power of the peak 9-Essences level. At that point, the Dao eye on his forehead opened up, and the Essence power of his eight Hexing magics arose. It was with three eyes that he looked out into the sandstorm.

Massive rumbling echoed out into the rest of the half-planet, after which the owner of the raspy voice laughed.

"But I happen to like your personality and hostility. Even more so, your focus and determination." As his words echoed out, the sandstorm faded away, and the figure left the inner planet. When he reappeared, he was back in the desert on the surface of Planet Vast Expanse. His face was a bit pale, but his eyes glittered brightly.

"Mid 9-Essences," the old man murmured. "And yet he can face me directly, and even leave me shaken.... His control over the Dao eye is at a level of perfection!"

A voice suddenly spoke out in front of him. "Many thanks."

That voice belonged to none other than the Sect Leader of the Vast Expanse School!

On that one occasion in which Meng Hao left Planet Vast Expanse, he went to visit a battlefield upon which his forces fought. They were fighting a fierce group whose most powerful expert was a fierce beast at the peak of the 8-Essences level, a vicious Black Dragon. Because of it, this division of the Ninth Paragon cultivator army had been fought to an impasse.

Among Meng Hao's subordinates there was an 8-Essences Paragon, who had been so seriously injured that he had been left with no option other than to send word back to Planet Vast Expanse asking for assistance.

When Meng Hao appeared, he extended his right hand and waved a finger, causing the starry sky to be crushed, and the Vast Expanse to fill with rumbling sounds. All life forms in the area trembled, including his own cultivators and the enemy horde. One by one, they dropped to their knees, as though massive weights had landed onto their shoulders. Any who refused to kneel were crushed to death in body and spirit.

As for the Black Dragon, it let out a powerful shriek as its flesh and blood was flayed into a mass of blood and flesh. Terror appeared in its eyes as it prostrated itself in submission.

Meng Hao turned and left. The cultivators under his command watched him leave, and their eyes began to glow with unprecedented fanaticism. That was especially true of the 8-Essences Paragon, who let out a gasp. He had seen 9-Essences experts fight before, but the terrifying display put on by Meng Hao just then made him realize that the Ninth Paragon was no ordinary 9-Essences cultivator!

On the final day of the ten year period, Meng Hao sat cross-legged in secluded meditation in Ninth Paragon City. Suddenly, his eyes snapped open, and a glow like starlight could be seen. Anyone who was able to look into his eyes in that moment would feel lost, as though they were sinking eternally into the boundless starry sky.

Floating outside the door of his secluded meditation facility was a white jade slip that emanated a soft light. It was that very jade slip which had awoken Meng Hao from his secluded meditation.

"Has the day finally come?" he murmured. He reached out with his right hand and made a grasping gesture. Outside of the building, the white jade slip vanished.

In the moment that it reappeared in his palm, his mind filled with the archaic voice of the Sect Leader's peak 9-Essences voice.

"Old Ninth... the time has come. We must head to the necropolis!"

Meng Hao's fingers closed around the jade slip. His expression was the same as ever, but a glint of light passed through his eyes. Ever since the sandstorm rose up around his secluded meditation facilities and the figure appeared with its raspy voice, Meng Hao knew that the plan the Vast Expanse School had been working on for so many years had finally reached a critical moment.

As for Patriarch Vast Expanse's necropolis, Meng Hao very much anticipated exploring it. He was curious about this supposed method left behind by the Patriarch... to Transcend from the 9-Essences level.

By now, he had been the Ninth Paragon for ten years. Perhaps the Sect Leader had intentionally waited ten years so as to be able to observe him. Although Meng Hao wasn't sure of the conclusion the Sect Leader had come to after such observation, it appeared as if Meng Hao had gained approval.

"Let's go see what this Patriarch Vast Expanse's necropolis is like. He founded the Vast Expanse School, and was himself a Transcendent cultivator, one of only a few within this starry sky.

"Based on the ancient records of the Vast Expanse School, it seems... that Patriarch Vast Expanse was... the first person to ever Transcend, even before the Immortal God Continent and the Devil Realm Continent existed!" A profound gleam appeared in Meng Hao's eyes as he thought back to many years ago, when the Mountain and Sea Butterfly was speeding through the Vast Expanse, and he had encountered that old fisherman.

"He was the beginning, and I am the end. Was the beginning he referred to... Patriarch Vast Expanse?"

"And was that entity within the Green Coffin Vortex also connected to Patriarch Vast Expanse somehow?"

"During the past ten years, I have studied the histories available within the Vast Expanse School, and apparently, Patriarch Vast Expanse existed countless, countless years ago. It seems... that he could very well be from the same era as that old fisherman.

"Regardless of all that, there's still the mysterious origin of this bronze lamp. It wasn't until after I entered the Vast Expanse School that it began to change. That indicates there's some sort of relationship between them.

"Patriarch Vast Expanse...." After some more thought, Meng Hao unhesitatingly stepped forward and then vanished. When he reappeared, he was in midair above Ninth Paragon City.

This was only his second time emerging, and even as he began to head toward the location of the main temple, he looked down at the city below and said, "Summon Su Yi and Xin Yue from Ninth Paragon City. Immediately."

As his voice echoed out, the people below trembled and kowtowed respectfully. The three female Imperial Lords hurried out and offered respectful greetings.

These three women all had different personalities, and that hadn't changed in the ten short years which had passed. The cold woman was still cold, the scornful woman still failed to hide her scorn, and the warm woman was still just as warm. No different emotions could be seen on their faces.

As for Su Yi and Xin Yue, they were the two 8-Essences paragons under Meng Hao's command, the two most powerful cultivators among his forces, and he planned to take them with him on this trip to the necropolis.

Ignoring the three Imperial Lords, Meng Hao proceeded forward, and soon arrived in the location with nine altars. Four people had arrived ahead of him.

One was Shangguan Hong with his violet-gold robe. Upon catching sight of Meng Hao, he smiled slightly and nodded. The other three opened their eyes, and when they saw Meng Hao, they smiled. From the expressions on their faces, nothing seemed out of the ordinary at all.

Beneath those four altars could be seen various 8-Essences Paragon subordinates, sitting there cross-legged. When they saw Meng Hao, they immediately rose to their feet and offered greetings.

Meng Hao smiled, clasped hands, and then sat down cross-legged on the ninth altar to wait.

Before long, the other 9-Essences Paragons arrived, along with the powerful experts who were their subordinates. After all the formal greetings were extended, everyone sat down. Then, rumbling sounds could be heard as a powerful divine sense spread out, and a rift opened above the first altar.

An old man strolled out from within the rift; he was tall, and had long, flowing white hair. His appearance instantly caused incredible pressure to weigh down.

This was none other than the Sect Leader of the Vast Expanse School, who was at the peak of 9-Essences!

What had walked out just now was no divine sense clone, but rather, his true self.

Shangguan Hong and everyone else, including Meng Hao, quickly rose to their feet and clasped hands. "Greetings, Sect Leader!"

The 8-Essences Paragons were the most hasty of all to offer greetings. The Sect Leader nodded slightly and clasped his hands to return the greeting. Then he waved his sleeve and slowly began to speak. "The hour has arrived, ladies and gentlemen.... There is no need for me to emphasize the importance of what we are about to do. We have scouted the perimeter of the Patriarch's necropolis on numerous occasions, and know of the path that leads to the inner regions.

"Our goal is to reach the absolute center of the necropolis. Hopefully, we will be able to reach that goal. If we don't, then we will at least do our best to explore and map more regions inside!"

The eyes of all present began to shine brightly.

The Sect Leader took a deep breath and then waved his sleeve, looking very serious. Instantly, the nine altars began to vibrate as a teleportation process was initiated.

It was at this point that two beams of light shot toward the altars; it was none other than Meng Hao's subordinates, the two 8-Essences Paragons. However, the teleportation process had already begun, making it impossible for them to approach. Anxious expressions could be seen on their faces as they looked toward Meng Hao on the ninth altar.

Before Meng Hao could say a word, the Sixth Paragon on the sixth altar spoke up. He was a middle-aged man with a long, hooked nose. Voice cool, he said, "Whose people are you? You're late. Leave."

Chapter 1422: Leave My Mark!

As soon as the Sixth Paragon spoke, coldness spread out in all directions. It wasn't frost, but rather was something that cut off the area from the outside. Beyond that barrier, Meng Hao's two subordinates, the 8-Essences Paragons, were shocked. Moments ago, they had been speeding forward, but now they were being pushed back.

It was as if some powerful repelling force had grabbed them, and even as they attempted to push forward, was pulling them backward. The result was that they felt like they were being ripped into pieces.

Their souls and their bodies seemed to be on the verge of separating, and the void around them looked as if it were about to be torn apart. Rumbling sounds filled the air, and blood sprayed out of their mouths. Xin Yue's eyes glittered coldly, and as for Su Yi, her expression was one of anger, and she let out a roar as she attempted to force her way forward.

These two were proud women, and to be disgraced in front of the Ninth Paragon was unacceptable. If Meng Hao himself did this to them, maybe they could accept it, but from anyone other than the Ninth Paragon, it was treatment they could never put up with.

"You think a bit too much of yourselves," the Sixth Paragon said with a cold snort, raising his right hand. However, in that very moment, an aura filled with infinitely colder killing intent exploded out from Meng Hao on the ninth altar.

"Those are my people," he said as he began to stride forward. Each step caused thunderous booms to ring out. At the same time, intense power erupted out from his head, transforming into a vortex that spread out rapidly. Colors flashed and the wind screamed, and in that same moment, he appeared in front of the Sixth Paragon and unleashed a fist strike.

He didn't need any divine abilities to deal with this Sixth Paragon. He used his most direct method, punching. Everything shook as Meng Hao's fist rocketed out, seemingly a black hole that caused the starry sky inside of the half-planet to tremble, and the lands around them to quake. It was as if this fist strike were backed by the power of this starry sky itself.

The Sixth Paragon's eyes widened, and he extended his right hand to meet the fist strike.

BOOOOOOOOMMM!

As the fist strike landed, Meng Hao touched down onto the sixth altar, where he stood completely unmoving. The Sixth Paragon looked like he was standing in the middle of a violent windstorm; his hair and clothing whipped about, and he was trembling visibly. All of his skin which was visible seemed to sink into itself.

As the boom continued to echo out, the Sixth Paragon coughed up a mouthful of blood and staggered backward uncontrollably. When he came to a stop about thirty meters back, he forced himself to hold in the next mouthful of blood that he had been about to cough up, and then looked up, a vicious expression on his face. Roaring in anger, he spread his arms wide, and a massive eruption of Essence power occurred. An enormous, amorphous blade formed which seemed capable of slashing through anything and everything.

“Old Ninth,” he yelled, “are you looking to die?” The other Paragons were simply watching the events unfold, strange gleams flickering in their eyes. Meng Hao’s fist strike just now had been shocking to behold, and yet none of them had done anything to interfere. As for the Sect Leader, he frowned and then looked over at the Sixth Paragon with an expression of displeasure.

Almost as soon as the Sixth Paragon spoke again, Meng Hao waved his right hand, causing a powerful force to explode out. A windstorm formed, which smashed a hole into the tunnel being created by the teleportation power. That in turn allowed his subordinates to enter.

His two subordinates looked very shaken, although Su Yi took everything in a bit easier. This was actually her second time seeing Meng Hao fight, as she had been observing when he dealt with the Black Dragon earlier.

As for Xin Yue, this was her first time seeing Meng Hao in action, and it caused waves of shock to pound at her heart. His shocking fist strike seemed capable of destroying an entire world, and left her panting.

As for the hole he had opened to let them in, it seemed to have been made in an almost casual fashion. Both of the women could only gasp in response. Without any hesitation, they flew into the area with the altars to appear standing next to Meng Hao.

“Greetings, Paragon, we arrived late,” they said, clasped hands and bowing.

“I decide whether you’re late or not....” he said coolly. Then he strode forward to once again stand directly in front of the Sixth Paragon. “It has absolutely nothing to do with you, Sixth Paragon. Do you think I need you punishing my subordinates? Do I look like I need your help? Who the hell do you think you are?! I think I need to leave my mark on you to help you remember what happened here today.”

As Meng Hao spoke, the Sixth Paragon’s eyes flickered with killing intent. He waved his arms, sending Essence power exploding out, which transformed into a huge pitch-black head.

Seeing that the two of them were about to start fighting, Shangguan Hong stepped forward. With him were three other Paragons, who stood between Meng Hao and the Sixth Paragon.

“Old Ninth, just forget about what happened.”

“Old Sixth, you’re in the wrong here.”

“Just forget about all of this. We’re supposed to be on our way to the necropolis. Just cool down for now. If you really have so much energy to spare you can put it into getting into the necropolis.”

A flicker of hatred passed through the Sixth Paragon’s eyes, and despite the interference of the other Paragons, he pointed out with both fingers, causing the pitch-black head to roar as it closed in on Meng Hao.

Shangguan Hong and the others looked on with flickering expressions, but before they could do anything, Meng Hao suddenly stepped forward. In the blink of an eye, an azure roc appeared, which then slammed into the pitch-black head.

A boom rang out as the pitch black head of Essence collapsed. Meng Hao in azure roc-form then became a beam of azure light that shot directly toward the Sixth Paragon.

The Sixth Paragon’s face fell, and he was just about to fall back when a fist shot out from the light and slammed into his chest.

The Sixth Paragon was knocked completely off of the altar, blood spraying out of his mouth the entire time. Before he could even react, green light flickered, and Meng Hao was on him again, unleashing another fist strike.

Then a third, a fourth, and a fifth!

Booms rang out as the Sixth Paragon was shoved backward over and over again. His chest was caving in, and he screamed miserably. His three 8-Essences Paragon subordinates hesitated, but realized that they had little choice other than to fly out to try to stop Meng Hao.

But then Su Yi and Xin Yue stepped forward to stop them.

“Scram!” Before the two groups could meet up, Meng Hao snorted coldly from within the azure light. He then appeared in bodily form and waved his sleeve, causing Divine Flame to blaze out toward the Sixth Paragon’s three subordinates. Their faces fell, but they were incapable of evading, and were sent tumbling back 3,000 meters, blood spraying out of their mouths.

As for the Sixth Paragon, he was completely shaken. How could he ever have imagined that Meng Hao would be so incredibly powerful?

He was being attacked so viciously he could do nothing but retreat, and didn't even have a chance to fight back. He didn't get the feeling he wasn't a match for Meng Hao, but rather that he had lost the initiative and had no chance to actually fight back.

By now, regret was building up in his heart, and he wished hadn't made an attempt to test Meng Hao.

"Dammit!!" he roared as Meng Hao closed in again. Booming sounds rang out as he sent out divine abilities, only for them to be instantly destroyed. Next came some magical items. They didn't last any longer than the divine abilities.

The other Paragons watched what was happening with strange, thoughtful gleams in their eyes. As of this point, they were starting to gain an understanding of just how powerful Meng Hao was.

And that was exactly what Meng Hao wanted; to establish himself!

Coldness flickered in his eyes as he raised his right hand again. Shockingly, the power of space could be detected, slowly building up in power; it was none other than the Eighth Hex's Essence of space, of which he had gained enlightenment.

When the Sect Leader saw what was happening, his pupils constricted; he took a step forward and waved his sleeve.

"Enough! How far do you plan to take this fight?!"

The Sect Leader was at the peak of the 9-Essences level, so the wave of his arm caused an incredible force to build up between Meng Hao and the Sixth Paragon, shoving them apart.

The Sixth Paragon actually breathed a sigh of relief at being given a way out of the situation. He looked over at Meng Hao with killing intent flickering in his eyes.

Unfortunately for him, he was still underestimating Meng Hao!

“Like I said, I need to leave my mark on you.” Even as his cold voice rang out, the Dao eye on his forehead opened up, and a boundless will erupted out. The entire starry sky shook, and all minds began to reel.

In that instant, the power of the Dao eye caused the divine ability just unleashed by the Sect Leader to be frozen in place in front of Meng Hao. Meng Hao then shot forward at a speed far surpassing anything from before.

In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of the Sixth Paragon. The Sixth Paragon’s mind was spinning, and wanted to fall back, but felt as if he were stuck in mud; he was simply too slow. His pupils constricted as astonishment filled his eyes.

The Sect Leader’s face fell, and he bellowed, “Old Ninth, stay your hand!”

He took a step forward to appear next to Meng Hao, whereupon he flicked his sleeve. That motion blocked Meng Hao’s hands and feet, and was just about to pull him away, when Meng Hao grinned. His aura changed, and a brutal air erupted out of him. Although his hands and feet had been immobilized, his head had not!

He stretched his head out and bit down viciously onto the Sixth Paragon’s neck, ripping out a huge chunk of bloody flesh.

Blood sprayed out of the Sixth Paragon’s neck, and he screamed. He clamped his hand down onto his neck and shot backward. By now, there was no killing intent in his eyes toward Meng Hao, only intense astonishment.

Of all the people he had fought in his life, this was the most brutal person he had ever encountered. He actually bit a chunk of flesh out of him! As far as he was concerned, this Ninth Paragon was completely mad.

Meng Hao calmly swallowed the chunk of flesh and then said, “That’s my mark.”

Then he wiped his mouth and walked back to the ninth altar. As he did, the surrounding cultivators watched him, their minds reeling. Even Su Yi and Xin Yue were left gasping.

They would never be able to forget the brutal display put on by Meng Hao this day.

“This guy... should never be provoked!”

“Crazy! He’s completely insane....” The Paragons were left gasping, looks of intense vigilance on their faces.

The Sect Leader’s face was extremely unsightly, and his mind was being battered by waves of shock. He stared at Meng Hao, and then looked over angrily at the Sixth Paragon. Finally, he headed back to the first altar, his face very grim.

The Sixth Paragon silently returned to his altar, his face pale, terror gleaming in his eyes as he looked over at Meng Hao.

He wasn’t afraid of cultivators with a higher cultivation base, but rather those who were completely insane. And Meng Hao was the most insane person he had ever encountered among 9-Essences cultivators.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever as he stood there, hands clasped behind his back as if nothing had happened. Behind him, Su Yi and Xin Yue looked at him with awe in their eyes.

A moment later, the teleportation power was unleashed, and rumbling could be heard as a pillar of light rose into the air, and they all vanished.

Chapter 1423: Necropolis Ghost City!

In the starry sky of the Vast Expanse, there were certain extremely mysterious locations. One, for example, was the Green Coffin Vortex. In such locations, the magical laws of the Vast Expanse were different, making it difficult for cultivators to enter them, even 9-Essences experts.

Although Meng Hao hadn’t known it originally, he came to be aware that such places were said to be created by Transcendent cultivators.

Only someone who had Transcended could create a location that could cause problems for 9-Essences Paragons. Furthermore, such locations were few and far between in the Vast Expanse; there were only a few in existence.

Supposedly, some of those locations were related to the Vast Expanse Society. Others were connected to the Immortal God Continent. The rest had to do with the Devil Realm. Apparently... all the forces which had produced a Transcendent cultivator were connected to such places.

Some such places were well known, while others were kept secret by various powerful factions, and held their respective organizations' greatest secrets. They were secrets that wouldn't necessarily endanger those groups if they came to be known, but were kept hidden anyway.

Patriarch Vast Expanse's necropolis was just such a place.

The exact location of the necropolis was unknown, and the only way to enter it was via the nine altars on the half-planet of the Vast Expanse School.

In the past, people had speculated that the necropolis was not even located within the starry sky of the Vast Expanse. Some said that it was a location in some other world... where there was no Heavenly Dao.

Supposedly, the reason there was no Heavenly Dao was because magical techniques were thrown into chaos in such places. Sometimes, certain magics couldn't even be used. For example, some locations were places incompatible with the aura of the Vast Expanse, which some people cultivated.

When Meng Hao and the others appeared, he looked around and saw a starry sky stretching out.

It was a real and true starry sky, with none of the mist that was pervasive in the Vast Expanse.

There were nine land masses floating out in front of them. Upon closer examination, it was possible to see that they were connected by bridges, although the bridges were not stable; they were constantly swaying and swinging back and forth.

Surrounding the nine land masses was a seemingly infinite field of drifting asteroids. Occasionally, they would emit strange fluctuations which provoked sensations of intense danger.

There were no paths visible.

“Now that we’re here, we don’t have much time,” said the Sect Leader. “Only one month. Follow me, and be careful not to lose your way. Don’t interact with anything you see, whether it’s a painting or a person or anything else. If you do... even those of you with nine Essences will perish.” With a final look at everyone, he flickered into motion as he flew out into the starry sky.

Everyone else followed along as if they had done so before. Meng Hao was the only one who seemed more cautious than ever as he followed along.

His two subordinate Paragons followed him, looking around vigilantly.

The group was soon speeding along through the asteroids. The Sect Leader seemed to have mastered some method of travel that ensured they didn’t encounter any restrictive spells. Nor did any of the floating asteroids enter their path of travel. However, the result was that the Sect Leader’s face was a bit pale. His eyes shone with the glow of augury; clearly, leading the group in this way was not an easy task.

Time passed. Four hours later, Meng Hao noticed one of the 8-Essences Paragons up ahead suddenly stop in place and turn to the side with an expression of shock and disbelief.

This man could shake the Vast Expanse with a single stomp of a foot, and would count as the pinnacle of existence in virtually any world or Realm. And yet, before anyone could warn or remind him of the dangers of the place, his body deflated like a popped balloon. In the blink of an eye, he withered up into a pile of dessicated flesh.

His bones, flesh, and everything about him melted, and then vanished without a trace. Not even his soul had a chance to flee. He died without even making a cry of alarm....

The only thing left behind was his skin, which slowly floated away into the starry sky.

Meng Hao was completely shaken, and everyone else felt their scalps tingling in shock. No one spoke. As they watched the pile of skin float away, laughter could suddenly be heard, at which point they noticed that, unexpectedly, the pile of skin was smiling.

“If you want to stay alive, don’t randomly look around,” the Sect Leader said. “Keep your eyes on the person in front of you. We will follow this path for three days, and if all goes well, we will pass through this perimeter region into the first land of the Patriarch’s necropolis.” With that, he proceeded onward without another word.

Meng Hao said nothing, but his eyes flickered. Then, he proceeded along, keeping his eyes on the cultivator in front of him.

Time passed. A day later, and after a bit of calculation, Meng Hao came to the conclusion that they had already traveled seventy percent of the distance, and that they would soon be nearing the first land mass.

For the most part, the journey was frightening but not dangerous. However, another 8-Essences Paragon died. He wasn't transformed into a pile of flesh. Instead, he began to suddenly rot.

At first, he didn't notice. Then the person behind him cried out in alarm. The 8-Essences Paragon spun around, and when he looked down at his body, his eyes fell out of their sockets. Everyone watched as he dissolved into a mass of blood that dropped down into the depths below.

Meng Hao's vigilance grew. The surrounding asteroids would occasionally pulse with a faint light, and yet everything was absolutely silent. As silent as death.

The Sect Leader moved slower and slower, until finally it reached the point where he needed to make long calculations before each movement. After a bit of observation, Meng Hao came to the conclusion that the Sect Leader's methods of augury and calculation had to do with the movement patterns of the asteroids.

Even as he contemplated the matter, a cry of alarm could be heard behind him from Su Yi. Meng Hao spun and saw the beautiful Xin Yue, head turned to the side, expression blank as she apparently spoke to some unseen person. Her expression flickered, and then she nodded, and a rapturous look of joy appeared on her face.

Even as she nodded, her body began to wither up. Meng Hao frowned, reached out, and tapped her forehead.

A tremor ran through her, and the withering slowed but didn't cease.

Su Yi's expression flickered with anxiety, and she was about to unleash some sort of magic to provide aid, when suddenly her expression also turned blank. She turned to the side in disbelief, then reached out into the void as if to grab something. Then she also started to wither up.

Meng Hao's frown deepened, and he quickly opened his Dao eye. His aura spread out, turning into a vortex that swept out in all directions.

At the same time, the Sect Leader and the other Paragons turned to look at what was happening. The Sect Leader's face fell, and after a moment of hesitation, he gritted his teeth and made his way toward Meng Hao. The other Paragons' faces flickered with hesitation, but seeing that the Sect Leader was approaching, they did the same.

However, before anyone could get close, Meng Hao suddenly raised his hand and said, "Stay back. I should be able to handle this."

His expression was somber, and even as he spoke, a murderous aura began to rise up from him, which rapidly turned into a raging tempest.

The Sect Leader and the other Paragons were people who were no strangers to slaughter. However, after seeing Meng Hao's murderous aura, their pupils constricted. That was especially true of the Sixth Paragon, who gasped.

It was a murderous aura so intense that ordinary people couldn't compare to it. Not even this group of Paragons contained someone who came close.

"How many people has he killed...?"

"I've never met someone who has slaughtered so many!!"

"Is this Ninth Paragon some sort of jinx, or what...?" Both the 9-Essences Paragons and their 8-Essences subordinates were all completely shaken.

"So," thought the Sect Leader, "he really is... Meng Hao!" It was as if that murderous aura which surrounded Meng Hao contained innumerable screaming souls.

Moments ago....

Meng Hao's face was very serious as he looked around with his third eye, and saw a completely different world!

Within the void of the starry sky was an enormous city. The asteroids around them were actually buildings in that city, and the entire place looked incredibly ancient, as if it couldn't even exist in modern times.

What left Meng Hao even more shaken was that, unexpectedly... they were surrounded by countless figures. There were men and women, old and young, and all of them were cultivators. They were everywhere, and although most of them were simply walking to and fro, some would occasionally turn to look curiously at Meng Hao and the others.

The figures were blurry, their faces pale, their bodies devoid of life force. In fact, what filled the entire area was a boundless aura of death.

Several women were standing next to Xin Yue, smiling as they tugged at her garments. It was as if they were trying to get her to become one of them. The same thing was happening to Su Yi.

Shockingly, there were even some figures next to Meng Hao who were reaching out to grab him!

He took a deep breath as he realized that this place... was actually a Ghost City!!

Considering the level of his cultivation base, he was able to tell that all of these figures were ghosts, and there were so many of them that it would be impossible to count their number.

A brief moment after Meng Hao's third eye opened and he looked around, all of the ghosts in the entire city stopped what they were doing and turned to look at him. Countless gazes came to be fixed on Meng Hao, whereupon strange glows rose up in their eyes. Only a brief moment passed before they began to scream noiselessly, and then rush madly toward Meng Hao.

To be surrounded by so many ghosts left even Meng Hao feeling like he had fallen victim to a curse; his life force was fading, and an aura of death was threatening to engulf him.

That was the moment in which his murderous aura suddenly erupted out fully, creating a vortex which swept out in all directions.

Chapter 1424: The Ghost Masses Offer Worship!

“Vast Expanse... Dao Body...” No one could hear the murmuring voice except for Meng Hao. Even as the voice brushed against him, his murderous aura exploded out into a vortex which swept the ghosts away from Su Yi and Xin Yue.

However, there were simply too many of the ghosts, so many that Meng Hao’s scalp was numb. As they closed in on him, he reached out, grabbed Su Yi and Xin Yue, and shot toward the Sect Leader.

Even as he sped into motion, he looked around and saw that more figures were appearing in the countless buildings which made up the city, figures which were even more powerful than those he had already seen. There was one path that had no ghosts on it at all, and further off in the distance, far far away, Meng Hao spotted an enormous altar which rose high up into the sky!

The altar was so enormous that it was clearly visible despite being a huge distance away. Looking at it more closely, it appeared to be hovering in the void above the first land mass.

The number of ghosts on the first land mass was so large it was impossible to count. Further off, the other eight land masses were difficult to make out clearly.

Gradually, Meng Hao realized that on the ninth land mass, the land mass furthest away from him, there was a huge throne, upon which sat a person!

That person’s gaze pierced through the boundless starry sky to fall upon him. Apparently... this was the person who had spoken the words ‘Vast Expanse Dao Body’ moments ago. Now, it began to speak again.

“The catastrophe comes. Peak of the Vast Expanse. You are the end...”

“Allheaven fears the Immortal...”

“You... have finally come...” As the voice echoed out, the ghosts seemed to go even crazier. At the same time, the bronze lamp within him began to flicker.

It all happened in the briefest of instants. As Meng Hao retreated from the ghosts, he could sense madness within them, and yet, they didn’t seem malevolent. Somehow, they seemed anxious. Now was not the time to ponder the matter. As his murderous aura shoved the ghosts away, he closed his third eye. In that moment, everything vanished, although he could still sense an incredible coldness building up in the area.

“Let’s go!” said the Sect Leader. Everyone began to move, although things were so chaotic, it was impossible to tell exactly which direction they were going. As they sped along, the cold aura behind them continued to grow.

However, because Meng Hao had closed his third eye, the ghosts apparently couldn’t detect their presence. After an hour, they emerged from the coldness, their expressions grim. As for Su Yi and Xin Yue, they looked guilty as they followed along silently behind Meng Hao.

Other Paragons immediately gave voice to their fury.

“Dammit, what were you doing? Do you know how much danger we were in just now!?”

“How reckless! You nearly scared us to death!!” Although they couldn’t actually see the ghosts, they understood that they had all just experienced a brush with death. Had the cold aura overwhelmed them, they would never have escaped, and would have remained within it forever.

Meng Hao didn’t offer any explanation, but he did clasp hands and bow to everyone.

Considering his cold disposition up to this point, the fact that Meng Hao made such a gesture caused the faces of most of the other Paragons to soften. However, their expressions were still somewhat grim; the group was now on an unknown and incorrect path.

All of them knew the potential consequences of taking an incorrect path.

Meng Hao’s apologetic clasping of hands was enough to silence most of the other Paragons. However, the Sixth Paragon let out a cold harrumph. “All brawn and no brains! You should have let those two subordinates of yours just die! Saving them got us lost. They deserved to die!”

Normally speaking, he would never have spoken in such a way after the battle he had just experienced with Meng Hao. But now that Meng Hao had earned the ire of the entire group, it was like throwing fuel onto the fire.

“That’s right, Old Ninth,” chimed in the Eight Paragon, his voice cold. “Simply clasping hands in apology isn’t enough. This is a big matter! You got us all lost, and you know what a dangerous position that puts us in!”

The words uttered by these two caused the other Paragons to frown.

The Sect Leader looked over at Meng Hao with furrowed brow.

Meng Hao looked back at him and said, “Many thanks for your assistance back there, Sect Leader.”

Actually, the Sect Leader hadn’t provided him with much assistance at all, but Meng Hao could tell his attitude in the matter. The fact that he had turned back at all spoke volumes. Furthermore, the other Paragons, with the exception of the Sixth, had all been moving to help him. He wouldn’t forget that, and it served to increase his good will toward the Vast Expanse School in general.

“What did you see just now?” the Sect Leader asked.

“A Ghost City,” Meng Hao replied. “This entire place is a city, with the asteroids being buildings. We were surrounded by endless hordes of ghosts. This place... is a Ghost City that is invisible to the eyes of the living.”

Having heard this, the Sect Leader suddenly reached out and made a grasping motion. A rift opened up, and a profoundly ancient jade slip appeared, which he handed over to Meng Hao.

“Take a look. Is that the city you saw?!”

Meng Hao took the jade slip and scanned it. An image appeared in his mind, the vague image of a city that he instantly recognized as the Ghost City he had seen!

“None other.”

When the Sect Leader heard that, a strange expression could be seen on his face. Looking somewhat excited, he asked, “Did you happen to notice a path...?”

Meng Hao thought back to everything he had seen, and recalled that one particular path which was devoid of ghosts. He nodded.

The Sect Leader looked around quietly for a moment at the asteroids, mixed emotions on his face. Finally, he spoke to the group as a whole, his voice little more than a murmur.

“The legends say that long, long ago, this place was a city, a city so huge that the nine land masses were only the central part of the city itself.

“Back then, it was known as the City of Saints.

“One day, the city disappeared overnight. Virtually everyone died.... Countless lives, countless cultivators, countless beings, all dead.... Their deaths were very bizarre and mysterious, and happened in complete silence.

“Only Patriarch Vast Expanse and a few other people survived. They left together, after which the Vast Expanse Society came to exist outside of the Vast Expanse.

“Years later, Patriarch Vast Expanse returned, and chose to turn this place into his necropolis.

“According to most legends, he eventually perished here. Of course, other rumors state that he didn't die, but rather, stayed behind alive to accompany the bones of his companions from the past. Supposedly, countless years passed, after which he departed, leaving behind the method for Transcendence.

“In all the legends, the starry sky looked different back then. Supposedly, when the grieving Patriarch Vast Expanse buried his companions, he transformed the starry sky into the Vast Expanse, for the purpose of accompanying his friends in death.

“The city you saw was the former City of Saints.... Old Ninth, please lead us along the path you saw. That is the way to get to the necropolis.” He sighed after recounting the story to the group. Most of the people present had heard the stories before, but this was Meng Hao's first time. After a moment of silence, he thought of the world of the Ghost City, and of the figure he had seen on the ninth land mass.

Finally, he nodded and turned to look off into the distance. Then, he led the way, with everyone following as he headed off into the void.

At first, he had to choose his way carefully and with much thought. But about two hours later, he began to pick up speed. No more strange incidents or deaths occurred, making it seem certain that no ghosts were on the path they traveled.

The Sixth and Eighth Paragons didn't look very happy, but as for all of the other Paragons, their eyes glowed with excitement. Soon, they were getting very close to the first land mass.

However, it was at this point that, all of a sudden, a cold aura suddenly appeared. Everyone could sense it, and before anyone could even react, it increased in intensity by a hundredfold, then a thousandfold, then ten-thousandfold and even more.

As boundless, icy coldness surrounded them, several aura streams appeared that struck fear into the heart of even Meng Hao, and caused the Sect Leader's face to fall.

Meng Hao stopped in place, as did everyone behind him.

"Nice job, Meng Hao!!" yelled the Sixth Paragon. Not bothering with matters of face, he directly spoke Meng Hao's name.

The Eighth Paragon frowned and glared at Meng Hao, eyes flickering with killing intent. "Dammit, you're not leading the way, you're sending us to our deaths!"

The other Paragons' faces were grim and icy, and they began to rotate their cultivation bases.

"Enough!" the Sect Leader roared. Inwardly, he was sighing; the mission was a failure. Furthermore, even retreating would likely result in injury and loss, especially to the 8-Essences Paragons, who would survive only if they were lucky.

The coldness which had risen up caused everyone's hearts to thump. The Sect Leader sighed bitterly.

"The plan is cancelled. Let's fight our way out. We'll recover and rebuild resources to come back another time." With that, he prepared to leave. The Sixth and Eighth Paragons glared spitefully at Meng Hao, and Shangguan Hong and the other Paragons sighed.

But then, Meng Hao's eyes gleamed, and he suddenly said, "Hold on a moment!"

The Sixth Paragon spun in place, glared at Meng Hao, and smiled coldly. “What are you going to do? Don’t tell me you want to stop us from leaving. What, you want us to stick around here to be killed? Meng Hao, your heart is twisted and evil. Do you really think we weren’t aware that you consumed the Ninth Paragon?”

“Shut your mouth,” the Sect Leader barked. “Old Ninth, forget about the matter. I should have explained things in more detail ahead of time. We can come back again another time.” Although the Sect Leader was irritated at this turn of events, he still tried to keep things civil.

Meng Hao ignored the Sixth Paragon. “No, listen, I have the feeling... that these ghost harbor no ill will toward me.”

Even as he spoke, his third eyes opened.

At the same time, the Sixth Paragon howled, “I can’t believe you still dare to open your Dao-- wait, what...?”

Before he could even get through half of his sentence, the rest of his words stuck in his throat. His eyes went wide as he looked around.

He could sense that, as of this moment, the coldness... was actually emanating a sensation of... subservience!! The powerful entities therein that filled him with such fear, were actually... acknowledging allegiance!!

He wasn’t the only one who realized this. All of the Paragons could pick up on the clues. Expressions of disbelief appeared on their faces. As for Meng Hao, when he looked around at the world, he saw innumerable ghosts, all of them dropping to their knees to kowtow!

And they were kowtowing to him!

It was like watching a wave run across the surface of the sea as countless ghosts dropped down onto their knees....

What a shocking turn of events!

Their previous madness had contained no killing intent, and their rush toward Meng Hao had not been because they wished him harm. Instead, they could sense on him... the aura of their grand leader.

Chapter 1425: Allheaven Fears the Immortal!

“Uh....” Although the Sixth Paragon couldn’t actually see what was happening, considering the level of his cultivation base, he had a keen ability to detect and sense auras. As of this moment, all of the cultivators near Meng Hao could sense that the freezing aura... was acknowledging allegiance!

The Sixth Paragon’s eyes went wide. Despite his strength and willpower, he was still shaken, and gasped. The Eighth Paragon had the same reaction, and stared around in complete disbelief at what was happening.

The other Paragons all had similar reactions. Strange glows could be seen in their eyes as they looked over at Meng Hao. What was happening now left them more shaken than when Meng Hao had fought with the Sixth Paragon.

The Sect Leader sucked in a deep breath, glanced at the surroundings, and then looked back at Meng Hao. Suddenly, he had the feeling that all of the decisions he had made about Meng Hao, both earlier and just now, had been correct!

“Not even the real Ninth Paragon would have been able to do this,” he thought. “This is something that exceeds the powers of the Dao eye!” As of this moment, the Sect Leader had absolutely no question at all about Meng Hao’s true identity. At the same time, he completely approved of him.

The Sixth Paragon began to speak without even thinking about it: “If you could have done this before, then why did you wait until just now? You--” The other Paragons nearby him began to edge away and put as much space between them and him as possible.

Before he could even finish speaking, Meng Hao snorted coldly and said: “Shut the hell up!”

He glared at the Sixth Paragon, and although the words he had spoken were not filled with much force, they were infinitely cold. The Sixth Paragon’s mind spun, and he was about to say something else, when his face fell. Off to the side, the Eighth Paragon took a deep breath.

Rumbling sounds accompanied Meng Hao's voice. When an emperor is furious, the officials will likewise be enraged. In much the same way, the surrounding ghosts seemed to lift their heads and emit enraged howls as they turned to stare at the Sixth Paragon!

Although the Sixth Paragon couldn't see that, the intense feeling he was experiencing caused him to bite back his own words. Without even thinking about it, he stepped back a few paces, his face pale. An intense sensation of deadly crisis was currently raging inside of him.

He had the clear and distinct sensation that Meng Hao could control his very life and death with a single thought.

"How could this be happening!?!? He... he can force the ghosts to acknowledge allegiance, and can also control them!?!? This... this is impossible!"

Even as the Sixth Paragon was shaking and panting, the Sect Leader took a step forward and looked at Meng Hao.

"Old Ninth, some light punishment is in order. After all, we're all on the same side. There's no need to allow internal strife to ferment."

After a moment of silence, Meng Hao looked coldly at the Sixth Paragon. "In the future, keep your mouth shut when I'm talking. If you don't, I'm perfectly fine with having someone replace you as Sixth Paragon!"

The Sixth Paragon's face drained of blood, and although a look of venomous hatred appeared in his eyes, he said nothing in response. However, the killing intent within him grew even more intense than before.

"And then there's you!" Meng Hao said, turning to look at the Eighth Paragon.

The Eighth Paragon took a deep breath. Forcing a smile onto his face, he clasped hands and bowed, declining to offer any words in accompaniment.

Seeing such a reaction caused Meng Hao to frown. The meaning behind the words he had just spoken had been clear, and the fact that the previously aggressive Sixth Paragon suddenly acted in this way was very telling.

“To be chided by me like that,” he thought, “and refrain from saying anything in response indicates there is someone backing them who exceeds their power level. But who...?” Meng Hao thought back to everything that had happened so far, and also recalled that the Vast Expanse School had a total of four experts at the peak of the 9-Essences Level. The Sect Leader was one, but there were three others in addition to him.

One of them was the man with the raspy voice who had spoken to him when he was in secluded meditation. As for the other two, Meng Hao had never met them.

His eyes flickered, and then his expression returned to normal. He looked around at the ghosts and waved his hands, experimentally sending out a stream of will. Instantly, the ghosts up ahead parted ways to reveal a path!

Meng Hao could tell that this path... was the same path he had seen earlier, which had been devoid of ghosts!

Without any further delay, he led the group onward. The Sect Leader went along right behind him, and the other Paragons followed along. They proceeded for about half a day, during which time they made more progress than the Sect Leader could have made in two days, and those would have been two days fraught with danger.

Eventually, they reached the end of the path. A huge, shocking land mass spread out in front of them, deathly quiet and filled with ruins.

There were no living beings. Everything was as silent as a graveyard.

The ghosts had also been following Meng Hao, but having reached this location, they stopped and looked off into the distance. Apparently, none of them were willing to enter the land mass.

Meng Hao turned back and looked at them. Although his Dao eye was now shut, he could still sense their presence. For some reason, he had the strange sensation that the bronze lamp, which was part of him now, was experiencing a feeling of sorrow.

“They must have been kowtowing to the previous owner of the bronze lamp.... Now that I think about it, perhaps this bronze lamp once belonged to... Patriarch Vast Expanse.” After a moment, Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply to the ghosts.

The other Paragons watched what was happening, and various thoughts ran through their minds.

Between the end of the path and the land mass itself was a bridge, swaying there in the starry sky. One end was attached to the land mass, and the other connected to an enormous asteroid, which was fixed unmoving within the starry sky.

There was a cold wind blowing that smelled of rot and decay. It was impossible to tell where it came from or where it was going; it was as if it existed eternally, and was the reason the bridge was swaying back and forth. It was very strange.

Meng Hao stood there in front of the bridge for a moment, and then turned to the Sect Leader. Further behind were Su Yi and Xin Yue, who were completely on guard. Even they could sense that the bridge contained a strange and bizarre aura, which left them unsettled.

“So we’ve made it back to the bridge again....” the Sect Leader said. “We saw this same bridge twice before. This is the third time....”

“The last two times, we took a different path, a more dangerous path, to get here.” The Sect Leader looked at the bridge with both excitement and determination.

“The previous two times we tried to cross it, we were blocked in the middle. The last time, we only made it about seventy percent of the way across. Many of our subordinates died, as did most of the clones we had created.

“Old Ninth, the entire reason we requested your presence was because of your Dao eye.... Please, use it to take a look at the bridge, and you’ll understand.”

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed with decisiveness as his third eye opened up on his forehead.

In that instant, the world changed. The bridge was still a bridge, but on the other side, the land mass bustled with cultivators.

There were countless buildings, and innumerable cultivators....

Now, the figure which Meng Hao had seen on the distant ninth land mass was much more clearly visible. It was a man sitting on a huge throne. He was looking directly at Meng Hao, and his voice was even clearer than before.

“Allheaven... fears the Immortal....

“... Does not want the Immortal to appear... wants the Demon to arrive....

“The variations of the Demon are like the variations of Heaven....

“The appearance of the Demon requires grief.... If you die, everything will be over....”

Meng Hao was shaken mentally by this voice which only he could hear, and when he heard the word ‘Demon’ uttered, his mind reeled.

After a moment, his eyes glittered, and he looked away from the vague figure, allowing his gaze to come to rest on the bridge. Shockingly... he saw unending gore, masses upon masses of it formed into the shape of a bridge that dripped with blood. It was a shocking sight.

He saw countless arms stretching out, which occasionally performed incantation gestures, filling the bridge with the fluctuations of restrictive spells, some powerful, some weak.

Surrounding the bridge was a blood-colored mist. Occasionally, eyes would appear briefly within the mist, and they stared greedily at Meng Hao and the rest of the party.

Most shocking of all was that beneath the bridge was no void, but rather an abyss. Down within that abyss was a three-headed giant, currently climbing up from the depths below. It occasionally bellowed in rage, the sound of which transformed into a tempest that caused the bridge to sway back and forth.

Almost in the same moment that Meng Hao caught sight of the three-headed giant, its three heads looked up, and six pairs of eyes came to rest on Meng Hao. Their gazes locked, and Meng Hao felt his mind reeling as an intimidating will swept through him.

His eyes glittered with cold light, and he snorted, stamping his foot down and sending his divine sense crushing down. The entire bridge swayed, and the three-headed giant let out an enraged roar that only Meng Hao could hear, before looking away.

“This bridge is made from flesh and blood. It’s surrounded by a mist, and below is a three-headed giant, eyeing us the way a tiger eyes its prey.” As the words left Meng Hao’s mouth, very serious expressions could be seen on the faces of the group behind him.

The Sect Leader nodded and said, “This bridge is the only way onto the first land mass. Once you begin to tread it, it is possible to step off of the bridge onto either side. But if you do so, and remain off the bridge for too long, you will most certainly die.

“There are restrictive spells on the bridge, and a false step could potentially lead to eternal destruction. A single misstep might be harmless, but as more and more false steps are accumulated, increasing levels of spell power will build up which will explode out at certain spell nodes. If that happens, we will never make it to the land mass.

“That is why we need your Dao eye, Old Ninth, to see through everything hidden in the void. Help point out the way to avoid the powerful restrictive spells. In those places where we must pass through the spells, please help us select the weakest ones.” With that, the Sect Leader clasped hands and bowed deeply to Meng Hao.

“This is what we request of you, Fellow Daoist. If we succeed, then I will guarantee you a place in the lineup to gain Transcendence enlightenment.”

Chapter 1426: Bombardment of Killing Intent!

Meng Hao could sense the Sect Leader’s sincerity. As his words echoed out, the ripples of a Dao oath could be seen, indicating that he was swearing upon his own Dao that his statements were true.

With the exception of the Sixth and Eighth Paragons, the other Paragons had no enmity with him. Although none of them were friends either, they still clasped hands and bowed.

Meng Hao studied the bridge for a time, then nodded. By this point, his interest in the necropolis was no less than that of the Sect Leader’s.

“Many thanks!” the Sect Leader said in response. He took a deep breath and waved his hand, whereupon one of his 8-Essences subordinates stepped forward. After clasping hands to the group, he walked up to the edge of the bridge, and then looked over at Meng Hao.

After a bit of study, Meng Hao identified a place on the bridge that had weak fluctuations. “Nine meters in is a weak restrictive spell that can’t be avoided.”

Further observation revealed numerous similar locations on the bridge. However, there were other areas with fluctuations so powerful he was left shaken.

The bridge was not an inanimate object; it was alive, and the fluctuations of the restrictive spells grew more intense the further one went along the bridge. Apparently the fluctuations were like flowing water that could provoke transformations amongst each other.

The source of all of the restrictive spells... were the arms that stretched out from the flesh and blood that made up the bridge, which were constantly performing incantation gestures and unleashing magical sealing marks!

The 8-Essences cultivator stepped forward and alighted onto the nine-meter position that Meng Hao had pointed to. A faint shattering sound echoed out, and the cultivator shivered. However, after a moment, he regained his composure.

At the same time, Meng Hao could sense that the footfalls of the 8-Essences cultivator caused the red eyes within the mist to lurch toward him. However, before they could get close, they were sent spinning away with unyielding howls.

“Ahead, twenty-seven meters!” Meng Hao said. The 8-Essences cultivator immediately advanced to the second location indicated by Meng Hao. At the same time, Meng Hao moved forward, becoming the second person to actually step onto the bridge. That was the best way for him to be able to see the situation most clearly.

In the instant he stepped onto the bridge, his third eye revealed that all of the countless arms suddenly paused, then resumed their incantation gestures with increased speed.

Other than that, there was no change. Meng Hao looked around, then began to speak.

“Up ahead, twenty-one meters. Then another thirty-three meters. Then twelve meters. Twenty-four meters. Ninety meters. Fifty-one meters....”

Behind him came another 8-Essences Paragon, and then more of the group. By the time that first 8-Essences cultivator reached the final location indicated by Meng Hao, there were already several people on the bridge.

In addition to Meng Hao, there were even two 9-Essences Paragons among the group.

Clearly, these people didn't place a lot of trust in Meng Hao, and thus chose to stagger the 8-Essences and 9-Essences Paragons. Doing so ensured that, even if Meng Hao did have some evil designs, he would only be able to take action once or twice before people caught on.

As far as the subordinates were concerned, the hope of Transcendence made it worth the risk!

To 7-Essences Paragons, Transcendence was something far removed from their current level. But for 8-Essences experts, it was far more meaningful. Although they couldn't actually Transcend, gaining enlightenment of the method would help them advance by leaps and bounds, and maybe even break through to the 9-Essences level.

Time passed. Meng Hao's third eye was gradually growing bloodshot, and the mental strain was increasing. The restrictive spells on the bridge were constantly changing, which in turn required constant adjustments on Meng Hao's part. At first, things went quickly, but the process eventually went slower and slower. By this point, the first cultivator to have stepped onto the bridge was about thirty percent across.

On several occasions, the surrounding mist would surge toward the cultivators, but before it could get close, was rebuffed. The roars from within the mist grew more intense, and Meng Hao's third eye more bloodshot. The 8-Essences Paragon up ahead of him was proceeding with an ashen face. Suddenly, he stepped a bit out of line, whereupon he coughed up a mouthful of blood and began to wither up. The mist around him cackled with joy, and surged toward him. In the blink of an eye, he was on the verge of being consumed.

In that moment, Meng Hao reached out with his right hand and made a grasping motion, grabbing the 8-Essences cultivator and sending him back in the line. Another of the subordinate Paragons gritted his teeth and flew forward to take the vanguard position.

The 8-Essences Paragon who Meng Hao had just saved cast an appreciative glance in Meng Hao's direction. Meng Hao nodded and proceeded to make more observations. Then, the group continued on their way across the bridge.

Thirty percent. Forty percent. Fifty percent. Sixty percent.... Several days later, they were seventy percent across the bridge. The Vast Expanse School had never gotten past this point in their previous efforts.

By this point, one 8-Essences Paragon after another had been sent to the vanguard position. Eventually, it reached the point where that position was occupied by the clones of the Sect Leader and the other most powerful experts.

Those clones were even more powerful than the 8-Essences Paragons, enabling them to stay in the vanguard position for longer periods of time. Soon they crossed the eighty percent mark, and a few days after that, had reached the ninety percent mark!

The first land mass was no longer a distant sight; it now stretched out in front of them in all its grandeur.

Excitement could be seen on the Sect Leader's face, and it was the same with everyone else. They yearned to cross the entire bridge... and enter the necropolis of Patriarch Vast Expanse, there on the first land mass.

More time passed. The howling within the mist grew more intense, and it often surged toward the cultivators. But because they had Meng Hao leading the way, and were both bypassing the most powerful of the restrictive spells and suppressing the weak ones, the mist never had an opportunity to touch them.

After passing the ninety-nine percent point, the person in the lead position was less than 30,000 meters from the end of the bridge. To a mortal, it would be a vast distance, but to cultivators like this, it was a distance that could be spanned in a single step, if not for the restrictive spells in the way.

"We're almost there!"

"The necropolis of the first land mass is right up ahead!!"

“We’ve been waiting years for this day, and now it’s upon us!” Everyone was very excited. As for Meng Hao, his third eye was in significant pain. Using it for such an extended period of time was apparently a serious drain on his cultivation base, and he had even been taking opportunities to rest along the way.

Now that there were only about 30,000 meters left, Meng Hao began to close his third eye for some rest and recovery, when all of a sudden, an intense sensation of imminent danger exploded up within him. The source of that danger was a shadowy figure within the depths of the abyss below.

It was none other than the three-headed giant!

Throughout the entire trip, Meng Hao had not been able to catch a single glimpse of the giant he had seen at the outset. He had looked for it, but found no trace. But now, here it was again.

No one else could see it, but they could sense an unprecedentedly cold air rising up. Meng Hao’s third eye snapped back open, and the exhaustion which had been visible therein was now gone.

Meng Hao was profoundly observant and insightful, and had long since come to the conclusion that the three-headed giant was simply waiting for the right moment to make a move. During the journey so far, the occasions on which Meng Hao rested because of exhaustion had actually all been an act. During the entire time, he had kept himself at peak battle readiness.

The three-headed giant roared, and the cold wind grew even more icy than before, transforming into a wild tempest that knocked Meng Hao off the bridge.

He ground to a halt out in the void, then snorted coldly, performing an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waving his finger toward the three-headed giant. A powerful force slammed into the giant, sending it flying back down into the abyss.

Meng Hao didn’t pursue it. Instead, he turned back toward the bridge. However, it was in that moment that something very unexpected happened!

The Sixth and Eighth Paragons suddenly joined forces to unleash an Essence divine ability that rocketed directly toward Meng Hao.

This sudden turn of events caused the Sect Leader’s face to fall. He was about to step forward and intervene when a shadowy figure appeared next to him and reached a hand out to block his path. It

was none other than the man in the sandstorm who had visited Meng Hao when he was in secluded meditation.

“Sha Jiudong, what are you doing?!” Even as a grim expression overtook the Sect Leader’s face, the other Paragons’ faces flickered. Meng Hao had offered incredible assistance to them on their journey, and that was especially so for the 8-Essences Paragons. Meng Hao had saved all of their lives, and as such, the current development left them enraged. However, there was little time for them to put thought into the matter.

Just when they were about to take action, a figure materialized behind the Sixth and Eighth Paragons, a young man in a golden robe, who radiated golden light.

He was another of the four peak 9-Essences experts from Planet Vast Expanse!

Killing intent swirled in his eyes as he glared at Meng Hao and extended his right hand. Golden light surged around him, and rumbling sounds could be heard as an invisible power erupted out. That was the power of the peak 9-Essences level, and when it combined with the divine ability unleashed by the Sixth and Eighth Paragons, it created a force that could crush anything in its path.

Even as killing intent flickered in Meng Hao’s eyes, the roar of the three-headed giant once again echoed out from below as it shot upward, reaching out to grab Meng Hao.

Descending from above was the combined attack of three Paragons. Below was a seemingly invincible three-headed giant. Surrounding him was the mist, which thanks to his third eye, he could now see was surging toward him.

By this point, the entities in the mist hated Meng Hao with a vengeance. If he weren’t around, they would have been able to consume any number of cultivators from the bridge, and would have eaten to their hearts’ content. But now, they hadn’t succeeded even once. Roaring, they shot through the starry sky toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s face darkened. Although he had been prepared, the plot against him was excellently laid. Even still, he didn’t panic. The truth was that from the moment the Sixth Paragon had begun to provoke him, he had guessed that there was some other powerful figure backing him.

Snorting coldly, eyes swirling with killing intent, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and unleashed Demon Sealing Hexing magic. He was confident that doing so could reverse the

setback. Although he might not be able to fight his opponents directly, he could at least get back onto the bridge and into a position where he could be aided by the Sect Leader and the others.

However, it was at this very moment that intense fluctuations began to emanate out from the bronze lamp. At the same time, Meng Hao could sense something calling to him from deep within the abyss, something that wanted to him to come down!

“Allheaven fears the Immortal.... Come... come... come....”

Chapter 1427: All Ye Shall Call Me Allheaven!

Meng Hao's mind was reeling. The fluctuations emanating from the bronze lamp grew stronger, and it reached the point where he knew that if he missed this opportunity, it could have grave ramifications in the future.

Even more shocking to Meng Hao was that in his moment of hesitation, it almost felt as if the bronze lamp were going to burst out of him and fly down into the abyss of its own accord.

He didn't hesitate for even a moment longer. Casting a cold glance at the intense golden light shooting toward him from the golden-robed young man and the Sixth and Eighth Paragons, and looking around at the greedy, brutal figures within the mist, he suddenly shot downward. The light and the mist passed over the spot he had just occupied, and at the same time, he slammed into the giant.

A huge boom rang out, and the three-headed giant screamed miserably. Blood oozed out of Meng Hao's mouth as he shot downward into the abyss, ignoring the bridge completely.

Of course, to all of the other cultivators on the bridge, it didn't look like Meng Hao was intentionally heading down into the dark void below. Instead, it seemed as if the golden-robed young man and the other Paragons were forcing him to do so.

“Sha Jiudong! Jin Yunshan!” roared the Sect Leader, enraged. His cultivation base surged as if he were preparing to fight with the other two.

However, Sha Jiudong and Jin Yunshan didn't seem willing to engage in fighting. They immediately fell back, whereupon the three of them began to confer via a method only they could participate in. Eventually, the Sect Leader's face flickered with disbelief and other mixed emotions.

“Impossible,” he murmured.

As for what happened after that, Meng Hao didn't care enough to pay attention. As he whistled through the void down into the depths of the abyss, he recalled what the Sect Leader had said about the ramifications of being off of the bridge for an extended length of time. Death would be the result, and as of now, Meng Hao was already seeing evidence of why that was the case.

Astonishingly, the mists around him were growing thicker and thicker, and they were growing ever closer to him. Lurking within those mists was an aura that left his heart pounding.

However, as the mists neared, the bronze lamp within Meng Hao suddenly let out a soft glow. It passed outside of Meng Hao's body, surrounding him, and when the mists touched it, countless screaming voices could be heard, as if their owners were being melted away by the light.

Meng Hao settled himself. Following the tug of the bronze lamp, he continued downward. Behind him, the three-headed giant roared, apparently not frightened of the lamp at all as it pursued him relentlessly.

The further down he went, the more intense the fluctuations of the bronze lamp became. Before long, Meng Hao caught sight of land down below.

Most accurately speaking, it was a strip of land jutting out from the larger first land mass. Visible there was a statue which had apparently been standing, tucked away, for countless years.

It was tens of thousands of meters tall, and at first glance it almost looked like a mountain.

It depicted a young man clad in a long robe, who was gazing upward. A vicious expression twisted his face, and a brutal air radiated out from him. It almost seems as if he were roaring in rage, and there were even blue veins visible, bulging out all over his face. Upon further examination, Meng Hao realized that he actually resembled the figure he had seen via his third eye, the person sitting on the throne on the ninth land mass.

However, this statue had a stubborn, unyielding expression, as well as an intense focus in his eyes that seemed to be boundless resentment.

Faint tendrils of mist seeped out from him, which was in fact the source of the shocking mist which filled the abyss.

Visible on the statue's forehead was a rift, into which someone had stabbed a sword.

Whatever force was causing the bronze lamp to be stirred into action was coming from within that rift.

Next to the statue was a cliff, although closer examination revealed that it was no simple cliff. It was actually an enormous... gravestone.

Written on the gravestone was a single line of text.

"My first clone, felled by Allheaven."

Beneath the line of text was the name of the person who had written it. Unexpectedly, it was... Patriarch Vast Expanse.

Meng Hao felt shaken as he looked at the statue. Although the statue seemed to have been carved out of rock, when he looked closer, it actually seemed to have been formed from flesh and blood.

Before he could study the statue any further, the three-headed giant appeared. Roaring, it launched itself at Meng Hao, its eyes glowing with turbid red light.

Meng Hao frowned and rotated his cultivation base. A vortex appeared around him, which rapidly transformed into a wild tempest. He stepped forward, punching out with the God-Slaying Fist.

A boom rang out. Based on the current level of Meng Hao's battle prowess, that fist strike would cause an ordinary 9-Essences expert to cough up blood. However, all it did to the three-headed giant was send it staggering backward by a few hundred meters. Roaring, it attacked again.

"That's some thick skin," Meng Hao thought, frowning. Killing intent swirled in his eyes as he unleashed another attack. One punch, two punches, three punches. In the blink of an eye, he unleashed dozens of fist strikes. Intense booms rang out, until finally, the three-headed giant coughed up some blood. However, the brutal gleam in its eyes was even more evident than before.

“Looking to die?” Meng Hao growled, waving his sleeve. Numerous mountains appeared out of nowhere, each one of which exuded shocking power as it crushed down onto the three-headed giant. Even as blood spurted out of various wounds, the giant’s three heads let out piercing cries which became an indescribably powerful sound wave that battered against Meng Hao.

A tremor ran through him, and his face paled. And yet, he took a step forward, then another. He took a total of seven steps, each of which caused his energy to rise. Then, when the entire abyss seemed to be shaking violently, his finger slashed out like lightning.

That finger swipe slammed into one of the giant’s heads, causing it to instantly explode. The giant let out a bloodcurdling scream, and the other two heads suddenly seemed to be struggling. For a moment, the giant’s eyes became clear, but then a moment later, a turbid red glow took over. The giant stopped moving, looked at Meng Hao, then launched another attack.

A boom rang out as massive power blasted toward Meng Hao. He fell back several paces, simultaneously performing an incantation gesture with his right hand. Then he waved his finger, unleashing the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex.

Instantly, the Essence of space descended. The now two-headed giant trembled, and then began to struggle against the effects, but that was when Meng Hao closed in and waved his finger again.

A huge boom rang out as another of the giant’s heads exploded. There was only one head left, but now, the turbid glow in its eyes was gone. Instead, they glowed brightly, without a trace of red, and its pupils were now visible.

“Allheaven...” the giant suddenly said. “Allheaven...” Then it howled, and a pained expression twisted its face. It grabbed its remaining head with its hand as if it were slipping into insanity.

“If you think you can control me, well stop dreaming!” the giant screamed. “I’m the subordinate of Vast Expanse, the God Titan!”

As the giant roared, an air of brutality and infinite madness radiated out, accompanied by a feeling of profound ancientness.

A moment later, his clear eyes once again stirred with a turbid glow. He looked down at Meng Hao almost as if for the first time, and an expression of disbelief appeared in his eyes.

“Master... is that... is that you...?” he said. Trembling, he began to charge once again in attack. “Kill me! I’m your God Titan, and I’d rather die than be controlled by Allheaven. Kill me, Master!”

Roaring, the giant headed directly toward Meng Hao, apparently making no defensive preparations whatsoever.

Meng Hao was taken aback. As the giant closed in, its attack built in intensity until a windstorm raged around it. By now, the turbid redness had completely retaken its eyes.

Meng Hao didn’t hesitate at all. His finger shot out again, tapping the giant’s forehead a third time.

A boom rang out, and a massive wound pierced through the giant’s head. As it spread out, filling his body, he trembled. And yet, the turbid glow was now gone, and his eyes were completely clear.

He looked at Meng Hao, his expression one of pain and reminiscence. “So you’re not my Master...?” he murmured. “Well, thank you anyway....

“Allheaven. Allheaven.” Laughing loudly, he closed his eyes, and his body collapsed.

Everything went silent. Meng Hao hovered there quietly for a moment, frowning. The giant’s actions had been odd to say the least, and had become even more odd once the turbid glow left its eyes.

“Who is Allheaven? Allheaven fears the Immortal?” Something seemed off. After looking at the rift in the statue’s forehead again, he approached it to examine it further.

“Killed... by a single sword strike,” he murmured. The statue itself was enormous, so naturally, the rift was as well. It appeared to be at least thirty meters tall.

“The fact that the clone of Patriarch Vast Expanse was interred here by the Patriarch himself... The city and the land masses that became the Ghost City.... The Sect Leader’s description of the legends.... And then this three-headed giant’s words. What mystery is at work here?”

“Obviously, it has something to do with the bronze lamp inside of me.” Numerous speculations ran through Meng Hao’s mind. After some more thought, his eyes began to glow, and he flickered into

motion. Following the stirrings of the bronze lamp, he entered the rift, and thus, the interior of the statue.

There was no flesh and blood, only a stone tunnel. At first, the tunnel sloped downward, but soon it changed direction and headed upward. As Meng Hao sped along, he felt the fluctuations in the bronze lamp growing ever stronger, and the call from earlier, ever closer.

Several hours later, he came to a stop. Up ahead, the tunnel led into a stone cavern, on either side of which could be seen frescoes carved into the wall. The frescoes themselves were what immediately caught Meng Hao's attention.

They depicted scenes from countless ages past. Innumerable living beings were depicted, and even wild beasts. All of them were prostrating themselves in worship toward the sky, toward a figure who was approaching, bathed in light.

That figure looked down on all creation.... His upraised right hand held within it a stretch of starry sky, within which could be seen countless heavenly bodies....

As he stared at the frescoes, Meng Hao's mind and soul, everything about him, seemed drawn to the images. He almost seemed to sink into the world depicted in the frescoes.

It was as if he had become one of those prostrating figures. He could sense how ancient the world around him was, and could detect the boundless nature of Heaven and Earth. Within his ears rang the voice of that figure which looked down upon all creation.

“All ye living beings shall call me... Allheaven.

“Because of mine existence, there is the universe, and thus the starry sky, and thus the heavenly bodies, and thus all of ye people...”

Chapter 1428: The Passing of Ages in Frescoes

Time passed, and soon Meng Hao began to tremble. His eyes grew clear, and he backed up a few steps, panting, waves of shock pounding his heart as he looked at the visions from the frescoes.

“Allheaven....” he murmured. Countless questions bubbled up in his heart, but after some thought, his eyes glittered as he left the stone chamber and proceeded along down the tunnel.

Even as he shot through the tunnel, on the bridge connecting to the first land mass up above, several figures were speeding along. With Meng Hao present, that final 30,000-meter stretch would not have taken long for the cultivators of the Vast Expanse School to pass, and would have been quite safe.

But with Meng Hao gone, the group finally experienced the true danger of passing through that region. After only traveling 15,000 meters, they had already experienced several casualties.

Even the 9-Essences Paragons had experienced losses; all of their clones had been destroyed, and their true selves were in bad condition. In the final 15,000-meter journey, everyone drew fully on their most powerful abilities and trump cards to stay alive.

With all of that, they eventually managed to reach the very end, although by that time, three more people had perished.

Even that was only because the Sect Leader and the other two peak 9-Essences cultivators had gone all out. Otherwise, there would have been even more casualties. In the end, all three peak 9-Essences cultivators ended up ashen-faced from the effort expended.

Although no words were exchanged, fury built up in the hearts of many. The stark difference between Meng Hao's presence, and the lack thereof, caused many in the group, including the Sect Leader, to feel increasing rage toward the two other peak 9-Essences experts, as well as the Sixth and Eighth Paragons.

When they finally stepped off of the bridge and onto the land mass, grim expressions could be seen everywhere.

After a moment of silence, the Sect Leader glanced around, then looked icily at the other peak 9-Essences experts, and the Sixth and Eighth Paragons. "We walk different paths. I won't be traveling with the four of you."

The others snorted coldly, then followed after him.

"Very well, that's fine," said Jin Yunshan, smiling. "Our mutual goal is the Transcendence Dais, which means they will also head there eventually. However, there must be other good fortune to be had in this place besides the Transcendence Dais."

“Since that’s the case, we can split up here and meet back up again at the Transcendence Dais.” With that, he waved his sleeve, sending a jade slip flying out to both the Sixth and Eighth Paragons. Then, he turned and left.

Sha Jiudong shook his head and headed off in a different direction.

The Sixth and Eighth Paragons exchanged a glance, then left with their subordinates.

Meanwhile, back in the tunnel deep below the surface of the land mass, Meng Hao was speeding along. A few days later, he arrived at a second stone chamber.

As soon as he entered, he looked around and found that this place also had frescoes on the walls.

The frescoes depicted numerous starry skies, each of which was filled with one Realm after another.... There were countless heavenly bodies, countless worlds, countless forms of life.

The living beings were born and died in a ceaseless cycle of reincarnation. It was almost as if time were passing in some unique way within these frescoes. There were no written words to explain what was happening, but Meng Hao could tell that what was being depicted was the passage of endless time.

The figure known as Allheaven gradually began to glow with light. The light grew more and more intense, until eventually, his entire person was a shining beacon. Then, unexpectedly... he began to fade away.

The first things to disappear were his legs, then his body, and then his head. Soon, the only part of him remaining behind to prop up the boundless starry sky was his right hand. Everything else was gone.

Eventually, his palm and thumb vanished, leaving behind only four fingers encircling the starry sky. Gradually, all the light was absorbed into those fingers, ensuring that they... didn’t fade away, but rather, began to thrum with life force. Four unique auras began to stream out of them, indescribable auras that actually seemed more powerful than the figure itself when it was whole!

When Meng Hao saw what was happening, waves of shock battered at his heart.

“How could this be happening....?” he murmured.

“This... this....” Despite Meng Hao’s level of willpower, he was panting. Of those four fingers, the second had an aura that he realized was familiar.... It was a God-like aura. After a moment of confirmation, he was certain that this aura was the same as that of the statue on the Immortal God Continent.

Furthermore, the third finger of the statue radiated the same sensation as the wild and barbaric Devil Realm Continent. A Devil-like aura!

And then there was the first finger. Its aura was like an Immortal’s, and yet was not. It was rife with death, with the same aura as that in the necropolis of Patriarch Vast Expanse! It contained the same fluctuations as those in the Ghost City!

And the final finger... had a Demonic aura, which was exactly the same as Meng Hao’s!

“Ghost, God, Devil, Demon!!” he thought, his mind reeling as he returned from the vision he had experienced when looking at the world in the frescoes. He began to pant as he looked at the images once again, and yet couldn’t enter that special vision he had just been in.

His face was pale white as he stood there for a long period of time, regaining his composure. Finally, he looked up, and his eyes were shining.

“That figure was Allheaven. Perhaps he is not a living being, but... some unique entity. Because of him, the starry sky exists, the heavenly bodies exist, all life exists.... Allheaven, Allheaven....

“Clearly, he died, and was not a being that could last for all eternity. In the end, everything about him became four fingers, which are distinguished by the Ghost, God, Devil and Demon. But what about the Immortal...?”

“Where is the Immortal...?” After a long moment of silence, Meng Hao flickered into motion, flashing down the tunnel, burning with the desire to lay eyes on the third set of frescoes.

A few days later, he was still speeding through the ancient tunnel. It almost felt as if he were passing through years of time until finally, there up ahead... was the third stone chamber.

His pupils constricted, and his heart began to beat faster and faster. Almost as soon as he burst into the third stone chamber, he looked around for the frescoes.

As expected, there was a third set of frescoes!

When he laid eyes on them, his mind spun, and he sank into the world depicted therein.

This time, the world within the frescoes depicted a place Meng Hao had seen before. It was a city, in the very middle of which were nine land masses.... This fresco depicted... the necropolis of Patriarch Vast Expanse.

However, this was before it had become a Ghost City, back when it was still a thriving place of the living. There were countless buildings and structures, as well as innumerable cultivators. It was a bustling and flourishing place, clearly in its golden age.

He saw a young man who looked very much like the statue of Patriarch Vast Expanse's clone that he had seen. Perhaps this young man... was Patriarch Vast Expanse himself!

He was sitting cross-legged in the air as countless lightning bolts struck down. Apparently, he was in the middle of facing Tribulation. Down below in the city, countless cultivators were looking on, faces filled with anticipation.

Powerful fluctuations emanated off of the young man, and when Meng Hao sensed them, he was visibly shaken. Those fluctuations exceeded the 9-Essences level, and were half a step into Transcendence. Even more shocking was that this young man's aura... contained Immortal qi!

Absolutely pure Immortal qi!

He was attempting to Transcend, to pass this tribulation as the Immortal!

Meng Hao was panting as he looked at the city and the young man. It was then that he realized that the starry sky of the Vast Expanse that was depicted in this fresco had no mist in it. Instead, it was filled with countless bolts of Tribulation Lightning, seemingly endless amounts that crashed down toward the young man.

As of this moment, Heaven and Earth, the starry sky, and the entire fresco seemed to flash with blinding lightning. Apparently it was completely unwilling to let this person Transcend as the Immortal!

As the destructive Tribulation Lightning descended toward the young man to wipe him out, he rose to his feet and extended his hand as if to blot out the Heavens.

In that moment, a beam of light fell from above, ripping the starry sky apart. A finger descended, a finger that Meng Hao recognized as... one of the four fingers he had seen in the second set of frescoes!

That finger overtook the starry sky, and its descent caused everyone in the city, regardless of the level of their cultivation bases... to begin to tremble violently. Then, they were destroyed in body and soul, completely eradicated! The only ones who survived were the young man and a handful of other people!

One finger exterminated all of the life in that huge city.

One finger took a thriving world and transformed it into a place of death and corpses.

One finger caused a Realm that was bursting with life force to, in the blink of an eye, be filled with nothing but an aura of death!

The next thing that Meng Hao saw was that young man hovering there amidst the boundless aura of death, letting out a cry filled with the most profound anguish.

Then, the fresco changed. Unexpectedly, the corpses... all began to come to life again. However, their faces were twisted with bizarre smiles, as if they weren't themselves any more. Then, they began to fly up into the air toward the young man, as if to kill him.

The young man's bitter laughter began to transform into wretched wailing.

The vision ended there. It took Meng Hao a long moment to recover. When he did, he took a deep breath, and proceeded along. He wanted to see the fourth set of frescoes. He had the intense premonition that whatever was depicted on them would be... something profoundly shocking and mysterious.

Whatever secret was locked therein might even have something to do with him!

He thought back to the destruction of the Mountain and Sea Realm, to the Demonic qi which had appeared on him, and how it had been said that the Immortal God Continent and the Devil Realm Continent didn't want the Immortal to appear in the Mountain and Sea Realm.

“Similar. Very similar. The only difference is that Patriarch Vast Expanse tried to Transcend as the Immortal, whereas in the Mountain and Sea Realm, the Immortal had only just appeared....

“Was it really the Immortal God and Devil Realm Continents who wanted to destroy the Mountains and Seas, or was it... someone else!?!?”

“Why is there no text description, and why is it only possible to view the images in the fresco once...?”

“What is being guarded against?”

“Allheaven destroyed that whole world....” As Meng Hao flew along toward the fourth stone chamber, his mind spun with countless ideas and thoughts. At the same time, his face grew more and more grim.

By now, he was getting the feeling that the destruction of the Mountain and Sea Realm... might not have been such a simple affair. Apparently... there was some profound secret at play!

And Meng Hao was uncovering a bit of that secret from these wall frescoes!

Chapter 1429: A Deep Look at the Vast Expanse!

Meng Hao's face was grim as he shot through the tunnel at top speed. If there were someone capable of seeing everything beneath the surface of that first land mass, they would see that within the long tunnel, there were four stone chambers.

Meng Hao was currently heading upward through the tunnel toward the surface of the lands, and at the same time, he was rapidly approaching the fourth stone chamber, which was also the final chamber.

His eyes were bloodshot, and he moved at incredible speed. Countless thoughts and ideas ran through his head, and they grew increasingly disorderly. He was getting even more anxious.

Some days later, the fourth stone chamber appeared up ahead of him. He slowed down, coming to a stop just outside the chamber. He stood there quietly for a long moment, taking the time to calm his mind and heart. Then, he stepped into the chamber, eyes glittering.

He absolutely had to see what the frescoes in this fourth chamber depicted.

As soon as he stepped into the chamber and looked at the frescoes, his vision swam. When things became clear, he was looking at pitch blackness.

Everything was completely and utterly black, without even a glimmer of light. It didn't feel like an infinite blackness that stretched out endlessly. Rather, it was like an obstacle, blocking the way ahead, almost like... the end of the starry sky.

Within that darkness, he saw four pillars that seemed to prop up the world. Emanating out from the pillars to spread out in all directions were shocking fluctuations.

When he saw the pillars, he suddenly realized something, and began to pant. He spun, and was shocked to find that behind him was... an enormous maelstrom.

The maelstrom was so gargantuan that at first glance it looked like a huge sphere. However, closer examination revealed that the maelstrom was actually made up of endless clouds and mist.

As he looked at the spherical maelstrom, he even noticed some places which looked familiar.

"I'm outside... the Vast Expanse...." he murmured.

Suddenly, a desire rose up within him. He focused on one particular area of the maelstrom, and his vision zoomed in, passing through layers upon layers of mist before coming to rest on an area within the Vast Expanse that was rife with an aura of death.

A vortex could be seen there, spinning slowly. As Meng Hao looked at it, he saw... an area that was tattered and torn, filled with corpses, ruin, wreckage, and ash.

“The Mountain and Sea Realm...” he thought, heart stabbing with pain. It was the former location of the Mountain and Sea Realm. But everything that had happened there was nothing more than the past.

After a long moment passed, Meng Hao looked away. Following the tuggings of his heart, his gaze passed in another direction, to a location where a powerful sealing magic was located. A monkey sat cross-legged outside of it, completely oblivious to Meng Hao’s gaze.

Beneath the monkey were... numerous land masses, thirty-three in total. They were the 33 Heavens, like thirty-three walls, beneath which was a vortex. Inside the vortex was a green coffin, upon which rested a butterfly, whose wings floated gently up and down.

The instant he laid eyes on the butterfly, his heart thumped. He could just barely make out his father and mother there, nestled in each other’s arms. His vision zoomed in again, and next he saw a world.

There were many familiar faces in that world. His sister, Sun Hai, and Fatty....

On one particular mountain, he saw a thin woman who was Xu Qing.

He wanted to see more, but inwardly, exhaustion was taking root. His vision swam, and then zoomed back out, as if he were being expelled from the starry sky of the Vast Expanse.

In the last moments before his vision completely faded away, he suddenly looked over at the Vast Expanse School. There, outside of Planet Vast Expanse, was an area where the starry sky was damaged and in ruins. There was no Vast Expanse mist there, only a rift. After looking into that rift, he saw nine land masses that formed into a necropolis!

He was unable to see himself in the stone chamber in the first land mass, but he was able to see a scattered group of people. There was the Sect Leader, the golden-robed young man, the sand-wreathed figure, the Sixth and Eighth Paragons, and all the others....

He could see that in the very center of the first land mass, where the Sect Leader was currently located, was an altar which emanated a unique aura that resembled Transcendence!

Meng Hao was left reeling as his consciousness and sight returned to their original location.

He took a deep breath as he looked at the spherical maelstrom again. Then, mind spinning, he turned once more to look at the four astonishing pillars.

He knew exactly what those four pillars were. He had seen them in the vision from the second set of frescoes. They were the four fingers left behind by Allheaven after his death!

In the vision from the third set of frescoes, he had seen one of those fingers destroy a thriving world and kill all of the lives within it.

“So I am outside the Vast Expanse, and this spherical maelstrom is the Vast Expanse, within which I exist.” Panting, Meng Hao suddenly thought about something he knew which apparently conflicted with what he was seeing.

“The Vast Expanse School is a branch of the Vast Expanse Society, which exists on the outside. The Ninth Paragon even came from there. But if I am outside the Vast Expanse right now, then where is the Vast Expanse Society...?”

“Perhaps I’m in a different time...? But then why would I be able to see the Mountain and Sea Butterfly, and everything else in the Vast Expanse?” Meng Hao frowned. He wanted to get closer to the four pillars, to study them, but when he tried to move, everything turned blurry. After things got clear again, he wasn’t near the four pillars, but back in the fourth stone chamber.

In that moment, the bronze lamp inside of him quieted down. The sense of being called faded away, as if what had been reaching out to the bronze lamp was none other than this fourth set of frescoes.

Now that he had laid eyes on it, the bronze lamp became calm once again.

“If you really are Patriarch Vast Expanse, then the message you wished to pass on to me by leaving these frescoes... has been received.” After a moment, Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Now that he had experienced the visions within the frescoes, he was filled with a deep skepticism regarding the Immortal Gods, the Devil Realm, the Vast Expanse, and the destruction of the Mountain and Sea Realm.

There was also a name he would not be forgetting. Allheaven!

And there was that saying, 'Allheaven fears the Immortal!'

Meng Hao took a deep breath and rose to his feet. After closing his eyes, he calmed himself, then took the skepticism, the doubts and the misgivings, and tucked them away deep inside his heart. When he opened his eyes, they seemed just like they had been before he had experienced the visions. With that, he left the chamber.

Proceeding along, he soon reached the end of the tunnel, where a staircase led up to ground level. As he emerged, he looked around to find ruins stretching out around him in all directions.

He was on the outer edge of the first land mass, an area filled with broken buildings and ruined structures. Everything was quiet, except for a whispering breeze which occasionally picked up the dust and carried it off into the distance.

Before experiencing the visions, Meng Hao's third eye had enabled him to see the Ghost City as it was in the present. But now, after having seen it when it was flourishing and alive, looking around at what remained of it caused him to sigh. Subconsciously, he looked up into the sky.

"That finger descended from above. One finger... wiped out all life here." As Meng Hao stood there quietly, he realized how insignificant he was, and at the same time, was as focused and determined as ever.

After another moment passed, Meng Hao turned, transforming into a beam of light that shot at high speed across the surface of the land mass. This location was no longer unfamiliar to him; after seeing this world in his vision, he had come to know it well, as well as where the others were located within it. In fact, after looking at the ruins and the mountains around him, he quickly determined his exact location.

"The Sect Leader and the others are at the altar in the center of the land mass. Apparently... that is their target destination.

"The aura of Transcendence...." As he flew along, his eyes glittered coldly, and he turned to look toward the east. "I remember that the Sixth Paragon was in that area. He shouldn't be very far off."

Snorting coldly, he changed directions to head toward the location of the Sixth Paragon.

Meng Hao was not the type of person who enjoyed living for hatred and revenge. However, the Sixth Paragon had provoked him three times, and the last time had been with killing intent.

Therefore, Meng Hao would kill him, along with the Eighth Paragon and... the golden-robed young man!

It was a decision he made without the slightest hesitation or misgiving. After experiencing the visions he just had, he seemed calm on the inside, but was actually deeply anxious. That anxiety in turn unleashed a deep skepticism within him, something that stemmed from his guilt over the destruction of the Mountain and Sea Realm.

That skepticism and that anxiety filled him with the desire to kill!

At the moment, the Sixth Paragon was one of the targets on his list.

Meng Hao shot through the air like lightning, doing nothing to mask his aura. His cultivation base surged with power, becoming a raging tempest that formed into a face. It was a ferocious semblance of his own by about seventy percent. However, this face had a horn protruding from its forehead, and appeared to be as cold as ice. It was brutal, and shockingly Demonic.

Off in the distance, the Sixth Paragon was traveling through the ruins with his sole surviving subordinate, an 8-Essences Paragon. He was heading toward the central altar, but was simultaneously searching for other good fortune. Suddenly, his face fell, and he looked up to see the shocking face that resembled Meng Hao's speeding toward him, bursting with a murderous aura.

"Dammit, you're actually not dead!!" His face fell as he sensed the killing intent coming from Meng Hao. His scalp tingled as he thought of the madness with which Meng Hao fought. Gasping, and without the slightest hesitation, he pulled out a jade slip to contact the golden-robed young man and the Eighth Paragon. Then he turned, leaving behind afterimages as he went all-out in an attempt to escape.

Even as the Sixth Paragon fled, Meng Hao's voice echoed out like thunder behind him, "You brought this upon yourself, old man!"

Chapter 1430: Crushing the Sixth Paragon!

As the rumbling sounds echoed out, the Sixth Paragon's face fell. Even as he teleported backward in retreat, the space he had just occupied was crushed and destroyed.

The ground quaked and crumbled as a huge crater opened up. As Meng Hao shot forward like lightning, the vicious Demon face which surrounded him picked up speed. In the blink of an eye, it was bearing down on the Sixth Paragon, radiating Demonic qi which caused everything to shake, and bright colors to flash in the area.

The Sixth Paragon's pupils constricted, and he waved his hand out in a grasping motion. A long banner appeared in his hand, upon which were depicted the images of numerous roaring, wild beasts. Among the countless types of creatures, there were even dragons!

"All-Consuming Beast Swarm!" he screamed, waving the banner through the air. Instantly, the countless creatures inside the banner surged out, roaring. It was a sea of beasts which swept out toward the fierce Demon face.

In the blink of an eye, the two forces slammed into each other, resulting in a massive explosion which shattered the surrounding ruins and crushed the air. It was almost like two enormous mountains had collided, causing the ground to quake and a huge cloud of dust to rise up!

BOOM!

Meng Hao was shaking visibly, but at the same time, the Sixth Paragon coughed up a huge mouthful of blood, and his banner was shredded to pieces.

It was a critical moment in the fight. The Sixth Paragon took advantage of it to speed off, coughing up blood the entire time. Then, popping sounds could be heard as numerous ghost images appeared. Tens of thousands of shadows resembling the Sixth Paragon all began to scatter in different directions, making it almost impossible to determine which was his true self.

The Sixth Paragon had tangled with Meng Hao in the past, and had long since come to fear him. Therefore, he had no intention of fighting a protracted battle, and immediately attempted to flee.

Meng Hao let out a cold harrumph, and opened his third eye. The world changed into that of the Ghost City, wherein countless figures could be seen. At the same time, Meng Hao was instantly able to determine which among the tens of thousands of shadows was the Sixth Paragon's true self.

“You can’t get away,” he said coldly. As his voice echoed out, he flickered into motion, reappearing directly in front of one of the shadows. Then, he unleashed a fist strike.

It was the God-Slaying Fist!

A boom rang out as the shadow shattered, and the Sixth Paragon emerged from within, face ashen. He immediately fell back at top speed, a vicious expression gleaming in his eyes. However, before he could escape, Meng Hao waved his finger, unleashing the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex.

Because of Meng Hao’s current battle prowess, the Eighth Hex was now strong enough to affect even 9-Essences Paragons. The Sixth Paragon’s face fell as he suddenly lurched to a halt. Although he recovered almost immediately, a brief moment of immobility like that could be an eternity in a fight like this.

A boom rang out as Meng Hao launched another punch toward the Sixth Paragon. However, in that instant, the Sixth Paragon’s skin turned bright red, and a glow like that of blood emanated out, transforming into a shield which blocked the punch.

Meng Hao’s fist slammed into the blood-colored shield, causing the shield to distort, and the Sixth Paragon to stagger backward.

However, even as he did, Meng Hao launched another fist strike, then another. Booms echoed out as the blood-colored shield struggled to hold. When the third successive fist strike hit it, the shield shattered, and the fist landed onto the Sixth Paragon’s chest.

Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and a sensation of numbness swept over him like flood waters. Even his cultivation base teetered unstably, and his soul trembled.

“Dammit, Jin Yunshan is obviously aware that I need help, but isn’t responding. Old Eighth is the only one on the way. He’s not too far away, but still needs time to get here!!

“This Meng character is not only a lunatic, he also excels at seizing the initiative in battle. I can’t even use a full eighty percent of my power because he never gives me a chance to do anything!” As Meng Hao closed in again, the Sixth Paragon let out an enraged roar. By this point, he knew that it wasn’t very likely he would be able to extricate himself from the fighting. Clearly, Meng Hao was completely focused on exterminating him.

In that case, it would be better to die fighting than to run away. In fact, his only hope lay in drawing out the fighting long enough for the Eighth Patriarch to arrive. Then the two of them could either fight or flee together. Either way, they could change the situation.

“Meng Hao, you push things too far!” he howled. His body was still bright red as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, billowing clouds appeared behind him as he unleashed all of his Essence power. It transformed into a huge black head which lunged toward Meng Hao as if to swallow him whole.

Meng Hao’s expression was icy cold as he flickered into motion, a streak of azure light that transformed into an azure roc. The roc slammed into the black head, piercing through it and destroying it. The Sixth Paragon let out a miserable shriek as blood spurted from various wounds. Even as he prepared to fall back, the azure roc teleported, appearing directly in front of him and then shooting forward to blast through his body.

It was an intense, deadly situation. The Sixth Paragon let out a roar of rage, hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture that caused all of the light around him to vanish. Everything turned black as he called upon his ninth Essence, that of the darkness of night.

The darkness of night was capable of crushing all light, of superimposing the color black onto everything and anything. All existence could be wiped out. This Essence magic was the Sixth Paragon’s trump card, and having been forced into the corner he was in, he unleashed it without any warning.

However, even as the Essence exploded out, causing Heaven and Earth to turn dark, Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. He could sense the boundless killing intent that surrounded him. His body felt as if something else were controlling it, as if a boundless coldness was surrounding him and trying to bore inside of him to wipe away his soul.

Meng Hao suddenly laughed and said, “Someone once tried to corrupt my body, to defile my soul. I let her, so that she could be happy and at ease. And now you’re trying use a similar Essence magic against me....”

“This Essence of the darkness of night can cover over Heaven and Earth. However, the Demonic qi within me can cover over the Vast Expanse....” With that, Meng Hao ceased struggling, and allowed the darkness of night to enter his body. However, the process went too slowly for his taste, so he opened his mouth and intentionally sucked it in.

Almost immediately, the darkness of night began to tremble. In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao had turned into a black hole. Everything trembled as boundless darkness... poured into his mouth!!

The sight was completely shocking, leaving the Sixth Paragon feeling as if he had been struck by lightning. His eyes shone with disbelief and shock as he watched Meng Hao sucking the darkness of night into his mouth. Meng Hao's hair whipped about as he began to emanate an aura that the Sixth Paragon had never encountered before in his entire life.

It was an evil aura, a multifarious aura. It was like an Immortal, and yet also like a God, and at the same time, like a Devil. It changed back and forth rapidly, causing Heaven and Earth to tremble. As of this moment, Meng Hao was like the Dao of a world, and when he flicked his sleeve, everything began to collapse.

Even more shocking to the Sixth Paragon was that he suddenly realized that his ninth Essence... was vanishing from inside of him.

"C-consuming... consuming Essence? Y-y-you..." The Sixth Paragon was scared out of his mind. Eyes gleaming with rage, he howled as he fell back. As of this moment, he abandoned all thoughts of tangling with Meng Hao. Instead, he tried to escape with all the speed he could muster, leaving a series of afterimages behind him as he fled.

Meng Hao's mouth twisted into a grim smile. Even as the Sixth Paragon began to flee, Meng Hao took three steps forward, each one of which caused everything to shake violently.

After three steps, his energy had risen to a level that seemed to supercede the entire world. Suddenly, a sensation of indescribable deadly crisis filled the Sixth Paragon.

"He's going to kill me!!" he thought. He slapped his hand down onto his head. A droning sound filled his mind as he unleashed an unknown secret magic. Green smoke rose up from his red skin, increasing his speed dramatically. In the briefest of instants, he was 500 kilometers away.

Killing intent flickered in Meng Hao's eyes as he took four more steps. With each step, Heaven and Earth trembled. The fourth step took him 500 kilometers forward. Then he took the fifth and sixth steps, which were as equally grand and dramatic.

The Sixth Paragon's face was ashen, and the sensation of deadly crisis grew more intense. He had completely lost any fighting spirit, and could sense the trump card that was his ninth Essence fading away, which caused his scalp to tingle. Then he sensed Meng Hao's energy rising, and his mind

began to reel as he realized that it almost felt as if he were fighting a peak 9-Essences cultivator like the Sect Leader or Jin Yunshan.

“Dammit!” he shrieked. “That’s... that’s the Seven God Steps of the Devil Realm!!” He knew that the most powerful explosion of energy from the Seven God Steps came from the seventh step. That raised one’s mind, life force, cultivation base and everything else to a higher level. In the blink of an eye, it would lead to an explosive, exponential increase in battle prowess.

As Meng Hao took that seventh step, the Sixth Paragon’s vision turned red. However, in that moment of deadly crisis, a beam of light appeared off in the distance, shooting toward them at high speed.

The Eighth Paragon had arrived!

“Old Ninth, what are you doing? How dare you attempt to harm fellow sect members. Stand down immediately!!” The Eighth Paragon’s voice echoed like thunder, and rumbling sounds caused even the clouds to vibrate as he shot forward.

The Sixth Paragon’s eyes went wild with joy, and he immediately sped in the direction of the Eighth Paragon. It was in that moment that Meng Hao completed his seventh step!

Heaven and Earth shook. The sky took the shape of Meng Hao’s face, and the lands turned black. A profoundly murderous aura filled the area, converging upon Meng Hao’s right hand in the form of the Eighth Hex Essence!

It was... Spatial Hexing!

Shockingly, he was preparing to completely and thoroughly seal the Sixth Paragon, to seal the space around him, to seal his cultivation base, and to seal... his life!

As soon as the sealing mark appeared, the incoming Eighth Paragon’s face fell.

“Meng Hao, are you looking to die?!?” By this point, he didn’t even call Meng Hao by the title of Ninth Paragon, but rather, by his true name!

The Sixth Paragon's mind was spinning, and he was completely overwhelmed by the sensation of crisis. It was as if Meng Hao had superseded the entire world, and as his right hand descended, the Sixth Paragon screamed.

“You'll never seal me, Meng Hao!!” Apparently throwing caution to the wind, he chose to do the only thing he was capable of doing at this juncture... detonating one of his Essences!