

The Heavens 1611

Chapter 1611: Untitled

Xu Qing stood there next to Meng Hao, looking at the parrot and meat jelly, and she started laughing. It was a laughter so warm and beautiful it could melt ice.

Meng Hao took a deep breath as he looked over at the coffin containing the Mountain and Sea Butterfly, and his parents. As the coffin melted, the butterfly transformed into countless motes of colorful light, light that was bursting with life force. Gradually, the light formed together into a man and a woman, who stood there embracing each other.

At the same time, rumbling sounds could be heard as an enormous open door descended. It was the door leading to the cycle of reincarnation, which would ensure that the souls who were part of it never died.

The ice mountain was melting, and as it did, the awakening soul seeds inside became countless figures who floated up toward the door.

They had been waiting to be reincarnated for a very, very long time. From a distance, the soul seeds became like a river that swept into the door of reincarnation, Meng Hao's parents included.

Within that river of souls, he saw Fatty, Wang Youcai, Li Ling'er, Zhixiang, Taiyang Zi, Fang Yu, Sun Hai, his Master Pill Demon, Perfect, as well as many other faces. They were all people who existed within his memories. They included Paragon Sea Dream, Ksitigarbha, Shui Dongliu, Grandpa Meng, and Grandpa Fang....

Meng Hao stood there watching, his heart filled with warmth, clasping Xu Qing's hand tightly.

After all of the soul seeds disappeared into the cycle of reincarnation, Meng Hao could sense them being born again, and he smiled.

It was also in this same moment that water once again began to bubble within the Ninth Sea as Guyiding Tri-Rain began to recover!

Atop the Ninth Mountain, Patriarch Reliance, who by this point had been reduced to nothing more than a turtle shell, suddenly began to emanate signs of life. Eventually, a head emerged from inside the shell. He took a deep breath, then looked up and roared, "The Patriarch is back!"

On his back was the State of Zhao, which also began to show signs of life. Rumbling echoed out in all directions.

Beauty was blooming everywhere!

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Decades upon decades passed in a flash.

It was a new, unknown epoch in the starry sky of the Mountains and Seas. Although the Mountain and Sea Realm itself didn't exist any more, powerful organizations of cultivators were already sweeping through the starry sky.

It was hard to say which of them was more powerful, but it didn't really matter. On all the planets and worlds, mortals and cultivators alike were rising to new heights.

Some people said that this was an era which was destined to rise to the very pinnacle of glory. More powerful experts would appear in this time than ever had before, the reason being that in the recent decades, all of the powerful organizations had given rise to cultivators with shocking latent talent. There were even some legendary Chosen who appeared that only came along once in ten thousand years.

Because of such Chosen, the world of cultivation in the starry sky was reaching a dazzling pinnacle.

No one knew exactly why this was happening. As for that group of Chosen, it was almost as if they had all agreed to be born at exactly the same time.

Although they all came from different places, and didn't know each other, as soon as they met the other Chosen, they felt an instant connection. Because of that, they didn't devolve into fighting, but instead, worked together to seek out their destiny.

Now that the curse was broken, many of those who had been cultivators of the Mountain and Sea Realm chose to once again walk the path of cultivation. However, not everyone did. There were many... who chose to become mortals, to live peaceful and ordinary lives.

And yet, regardless of the decisions they made, they seemed to benefit from the blessing of the starry sky. That was of course the blessing of Meng Hao, which ensured that no matter how long they lived, or how many lives they experienced, their souls would never be destroyed. Even when the epoch ended, and everything faded away, their souls would continue on.

In some ways, they had become eternal. Given enough time, they would eventually Transcend, and then they would be able to remember everything from their previous lives.

A golden age was starting in the starry sky.

One day, on one particular planet, a young man stood proudly in front of a young woman, holding a spear in his hand. He had a freckled face, and was quite fat, like a ball of flesh.

The young woman was slender and beautiful, but her brow was furrowed as she glared at the young man.

“Are you going to agree or not?” asked the young man. “If you don’t agree to become Grandpa Fatty’s Daoist partner, well then....” With a mighty roar, he placed the spearhead into his mouth and bit down, whereupon a cracking sound emanated out as the spearhead shattered.

Then, he proudly continued, “Don’t you know? Grandpa Fatty has some of the best latent talent in the entire starry sky! And I understood why because of a dream I had. I’m actually the brother of the will of this starry sky! Be with me, and both of us can become immortal together!”

He was trying to sound elegant and refined, but the chunks of the spearhead in his mouth hurt quite a bit, and he was even starting to tremble involuntarily. Inwardly, he grumbled to himself that this habit that he picked up in the dream was entirely unbearable.

The young woman’s jaw dropped, and she stared at the young man with wide eyes. She was a disciple of the Godplume Sect, and this was her first time leaving the sect on training. She had never imagined that she would run into a fat kid like this. Even more unbelievable was that he had been following her around for months pestering her.

“You’re crazy!” she said. The way that he was trembling actually frightened her a bit, so she snorted coldly, turned, and walked off.

“Hey, wait for me!” the fat young man cried, and immediately hurried after her, pasting an ingratiating smile onto his face.

After they left, the sound of chuckling could be heard from the spot they had just been standing in, as Meng Hao and Xu Qing materialized. Xu Qing was covering her mouth with her hand, and a wide smile could be seen on Meng Hao’s face.

Naturally, that fat young man was none other than the reincarnated Fatty, Li Fugui.

The parrot and meat jelly were perched on Meng Hao’s shoulders, disdainful looks on their faces.

“Shameless. Completely shameless!”

“So that was how he got all those Daoist partners back in the day.”

Meng Hao shooked his head and looked off into the distance.

“Come on, let’s go check in on everyone else,” he said softly. “After that, we can leave this place....” He seemed reluctant to part with all of his friends, but the determination in his eyes was clear.

Chapter 1612: Missing Clues

Meng Hao and Xu Qing traveled among the powerful organizations in the starry sky of the Mountains and Seas, checking in on all the familiar faces who were rising to glory after having been reincarnated.

Zhixiang had become a princess in one of the mortal kingdoms. Li Ling’er had joined a powerful sect and become their only Legacy disciple.

Wang Youcai was a rogue cultivator with an intense, murderous aura, who had fought and killed his way to fame. Dong Hu was his younger brother, and the two of them were the most famous of all the rogue cultivators!

Taiyang Zi and so many other familiar faces all had their own stories to tell.

Paragon Sea Dream had been a powerful cultivator in her previous life, but this time she chose the mortal world. She got married and had children, and was very happy....

Then there was Ksitigarbha. He also chose the mortal world, becoming an upright and plainspoken local magistrate, who brought justice to the common people!

Pill Demon was innately skilled in the Dao of alchemy, and that didn't change because of reincarnation. He joined the largest alchemy sect in the starry sky, where he became the most illustrious of Chosen.

Fan Dong'er became the leader of a group of rebels in one of the mortal worlds. She led the people in revolt, overthrowing the tyrannical government. Although she was merely a mortal, she shone with a brilliance that inspired trust in anyone who laid eyes on her.

Fang Yu and Sun Hai were eternally connected as husband and wife, a connection that remained even in the cycle of reincarnation. Although they started out in sects very far away from each other, as fate would have it, they ended up meeting....

Meng Hao arranged for Ke Yunhai and Ke Jiushi to once again become father and son. Ke Yunhai was the same loving father, and Ke Jiushi was a filial son.

Meng Hao traveled through the starry sky of the Mountains and Seas to see everyone he remembered from the past.

Some of them lived in the mortal world, others chose cultivation. Regardless of their choices, they all received blessings from Meng Hao. They were doted upon by the starry sky itself, and were all happy.

Sounds of laughter and joy could be heard everywhere. All of the soul seeds which had entered the cycle of reincarnation found happiness. In turn, that happiness brought a smile to Meng Hao's face.

It was a happiness that stayed with him constantly now that the curse had been broken.

He eventually found Chu Yuyan's daughter, Perfect. After reincarnation, she once again chose the path of cultivation. She became the Heavenly Chosen Daughter of the most powerful organization within the starry sky. Meng Hao graced her with a fatherly love, and as such, she truly could be considered Chosen by the Heavens. After all, her father was the will of the starry sky.

The mastiff grew up with Perfect, her loyal, lifelong companion.

When Meng Hao saw the smile of happiness on Perfect's face, his eyes shone with the warmth of love. He reached out and waved his hand, leaving a sealing mark on her soul. It was a mark that would forever connect the two of them as father and daughter. After Meng Hao left, it wouldn't matter how far away he went, that connection would always remain.

The depths of the Universe might be a bustling, thriving place, but it would also contain untold dangers. Meng Hao was confident enough to take Xu Qing with him there, but he also hoped that the friends and relatives he left behind in his starry sky... would be protected.

This was his home, and these people were his family.

"They're happy," Xu Qing said softly, clasping his hand. He nodded, and the two of them made their way off into the distance.

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On one particular land mass within the starry sky, the weather was very strange. According to the legends, many epochs in the past, this place had been a huge flower, divided into two worlds, one of ice, the other of fire. Eventually, a Heaven and Earth came to exist here, and yet, there were only two seasons. Half the year would be filled with snow and ice, and the other half would be scorchingly hot.

That sort of environment affected the personalities of the people who were born there, and most of them cultivated magic that had to do with ice and fire.

In the very center of that world was a mountain, half of which was freezing ice, the other half of which was covered with burning flames. However, the peak of the mountain was always as cool as spring.

A young man sat cross-legged on the mountain, smiling, a profound gleam in his eyes as he looked off into the distance. His name was Shui Dongliu. He had not been born with that name; he had given it to himself. He had simply told people that it was his true name.... Shui Dongliu.

He was a disciple of a small sect, and instead of practicing cultivation, he preferred to sit on this mountain and look off into the distance, as if he were waiting for something.

People had asked him what he was waiting for, and his answer was always the same: "I'm waiting for an old friend. He'll be leaving soon, but he'll come to say farewell before he does."

The days passed, icy coldness swirling on one side of him, burning flames on the other. One day, a bright light flickered in his eyes, and he turned and smiled.

"It's been a long, long time," he said.

As the words left his mouth, Meng Hao and Xu Qing materialized in front of him. Smiling, Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply.

That bow was one of thanks, thanks to Shui Dongliu for discerning how to break the curse. It was also a bow of deep respect.

Shui Dongliu started laughing, a loud, clear laughter, filled with happiness.

"Meeting with old friends is always one of the greatest happinesses in life," he said. "I've already looked into your fortune, and I can tell you... that your trip into the Universe will lead to magnificent glory. As for this place, don't worry, I'll remain behind to watch over it."

"Many thanks, Senior," Meng Hao said. It was no surprise to him that Shui Dongliu had somehow recovered his memories. Shui Dongliu was a legendary figure. Whether it was his identity as Nine Seals, or that part of his soul which came from even further back in time, when it came to the Mountain and Sea Realm, and to this starry sky, he was as attached to it as Meng Hao was.

Xu Qing gave a curtsying bow to Shui Dongliu, for whom she also felt deep respect and veneration.

Shui Dongliu smiled and shook his head. He looked deeply at Meng Hao, then Xu Qing, and finally at the parrot.

Although he bore the semblance of a young man, when he spoke, his voice seemed completely ancient, filled with the power of Time.

“That parrot... comes from the same place as Allheaven. It has forgotten the past, sealed it away. Take it with you into the Universe. You have already reached the highest peak. And yet, long ago, someone told me that the Dao is boundless.” Shui Dongliu once again shook his head and smiled. Rising to his feet, he turned and walked away, away into the Heavens, into the void, far, far away...

A tremor ran through the parrot, and a blank look could be seen in its eyes, as if it had just recalled something, something vague and difficult to fully grasp. After a moment, though, it heard Meng Hao speaking.

“Don’t think about it now,” he said. “Later... I can help you search for those missing clues.”

Chapter 1613: A New Life for Father and Mother

In one part of the starry sky of the Mountains and Seas was a planet that, if you examined it carefully, closely resembled the old Planet South Heaven from the Mountain and Sea Realm.

When Meng Hao and Xu Qing materialized on the planet, a slight tremor ran through Meng Hao. Considering the high level of his cultivation base, there were few things in the world that could shake him mentally. This planet was different though. This place was too important.

It was on this planet that his father and mother had been reincarnated.

They had been transformed into the Mountain and Sea Butterfly, and had borne the weight of all of the cultivators of the Mountain and Sea Realm. They had slept for countless epochs, and then entered the cycle of reincarnation after the curse was broken. Their love for Meng Hao could not be topped.

It was the type of love that was completely selfless....

On one particular continent on that planet, there was a city through which a wide river flowed. Many people lived in the city, and because it was also located on a major highway in the country, it was a place where business flourished.

The city was a hubbub of voices, especially in one particular location in the southeast of the city, where a seven-story pagoda rose up above the rest of the buildings. The public square in front of the pagoda was packed with people, all of whom were boiling in excitement. Cheering and joyous laughter rose up into the air.

Young people were hurrying toward the square from all corners of the city, filled with anticipation and excitement.

“Did you hear? Grand Philanthropist Meng is marrying off one of his daughters today!”

“I heard that she’s a real beauty! Even the prince wanted to marry her! But the leader of the Meng Clan, Meng Bancheng, refused his offer.”

“Grand Philanthropist Meng is almost as rich as the entire empire itself! He can even go into the Forbidden Palace any time he wants. The only reason he still lives in this place is because he can’t bear to part with his ancestral home....”

“Come on, hurry up! Their plan for the betrothment ceremony sounds a bit silly, but it’s no joke! It’s all up to fate, not family background. Whoever catches the silk ball will become a son-in-law of the Meng Clan!”

Everyone was in a complete uproar. In fact, outside of the seven-story pagoda, there were plenty of princes, dukes, and famous scholars from the mortal kingdom, all of whom had staked out their spots and were waiting with nervous anticipation, staring up at the top of the pagoda.

The atmosphere had reached a fever pitch. On top of the seven-story pagoda was a young woman with a gauze veil covering her face, making it impossible to see her facial features clearly. However, even from a distance, it was possible to tell that she was spectacularly beautiful.

She had eyes like deep pools of water, but as she looked down at the crowd below, her gaze gradually went blank. She wasn’t sure why she felt the way she did, but she was sure that somewhere down below, someone very important was waiting for her. For some reason, she felt like it was her husband from a previous life.

In that previous life, the two of them had been a butterfly, and after flying into the cycle of reincarnation, they had been waiting for each other.

It was at this point that a voice drifted out from inside the pagoda. It was none other than Meng Bancheng.

“My daughter’s groom will not be selected by family background or status, but by fate.

“The silk ball will be thrown out, and whoever catches it will become her husband.” Meng Bancheng’s voice was laced with age, and his words seemed to be spoken a bit begrudgingly. This betrothment method did seem a bit silly to him, and he had originally he had refused the idea. However, his daughter had stubbornly insisted.

As soon as his words echoed out through the air, a wave of excitement rippled through the audience down below.

Not too far away from the crowd, a scholar was passing by who happened to be berating his apprentice for laziness. Their original plan had been to leave the city, but because of the apprentice, they missed the departing horsecart, and were now forced to find lodging for the night.

At first, the scholar didn’t even notice the commotion of the betrothment, but then a sudden gust of wind blew past him, and his eyes glazed over slightly. He looked up, and the first thing he saw was the young woman on the pagoda, wreathed in sunlight, staring down at him. Their gazes met.

It was a gaze that could endure anything....

That seemed to spring from a past life....

That could stir the soul....

That seemed to come from a past incarnation....

The scholar saw a vague image of something like a tall tower. He was standing there, and that young woman was next to him.

He saw a vague image of himself and the young woman becoming a butterfly that fluttered through the starry sky.

He saw a vague image of the two of them growing old, smiling together, always there for each other, no matter how many lives passed....

He saw a vague image of the two of them embracing each other as they entered the cycle of reincarnation.

All of the hubbub and excitement faded into calm silence, as though the scholar was suddenly not a part of the world any more. Nothing else existed except for that young woman, whose face seemed to be imprinted deep in his heart.

The scholar shivered.

He wasn't the only one. The young woman on top of the pagoda trembled the instant her gaze met the scholar's. Then, her eyes began to shine with unprecedented brightness.

There was a voice inside of her telling her that the reason she had demanded this type of betrothment, the reason for all the choices she had ever made in her life, was because she was waiting for someone, and that that person was... this scholar!

She smiled, and threw out the silk ball with all the strength she could muster.

The beautiful, multi-colored silk ball became a crescent streak of light that soared through the air....

Meng Hao and Xu Qing were standing there in the crowd, observing. A smile could be seen on Meng Hao's face, and his heart was calm. The young woman, of course, was his mother, and the scholar was his father.

The scene playing out in front of him filled his heart with gladness. But then, even as the silk ball began to descend, he noticed a cultivator in the crowd who wore a cold smile on his face as he manipulated the ball to head in his direction.

Of course, that cultivator had no way of knowing who he was actually offending....

Meng Hao's expression turned grim. For a cultivator to do something like this was far worse than wanton killing and slaughtering, as far as Meng Hao was concerned. He waved his finger, and the silk ball continued to fly toward the scholar. A moment later, it landed in his arms.

The scholar stared in shock, grabbing onto the ball and then looking back up at the woman on the pagoda. A shy smile could be seen on her face as she ducked her head down and hurried back into the pagoda.

At the same time, servants poured out from the Meng Clan and clustered around the young scholar, bowing respectfully. Under the annoyed and jealous glares of the crowd, the scholar was hurried into the pagoda. He would soon be a son-in-law of the Meng Clan, husband to one of the clan's daughters.

Meng Hao's expression softened even more. A few days later, the scholar and the young woman were married. The wedding feast was a grand celebration that filled the entire city with joy.

Meng Hao and Xu Qing both attended.

It was a strange feeling to attend the wedding celebration of one's own parents, but it was a happy thing. He and Xu Qing even prepared a gift, which was a wall scroll.

It read, "Eternal happiness through all lives...."

Chapter 1614: A Ship Approaches From the Horizon!

A few days later, Meng Hao and Xu Qing left, having left his parents with his eternal blessings.

As for the cultivator who had tried to interfere with the silk ball, it goes without saying that he met a bad end. He had offended Meng Hao, the lord of the starry sky, and had done so in a way that was no better than slaughtering a sect or even wiping out a world. To Meng Hao, it was actually worse than any of those things.

The cultivator vanished without a trace. He was completely wiped out, along with the memories of him which existed in the minds of people who had known him. It was as if he had never even existed within the starry sky to begin with.

Considering Meng Hao's status and position, he normally wouldn't do such a thing. However, that insignificant cultivator... had encroached upon the most precious place in Meng Hao's heart.

The cultivator was destroyed in body and soul, never even aware of the monumental disaster he had brought upon himself.

There was one last thing Meng Hao did before leaving. He took Xu Qing down the river to a fishing village.

There, they caught sight of a fisherman, a burly fellow who was in the middle of tossing out a fishing net. The river was teeming with fish, so the man was shocked when he pulled the net in to find only a gourd inside.

He looked curiously at the gourd, wondering why it would be lying at the bottom of the river. It seemed almost like it was brand new, but the top was stoppered up, turning it into a storage container.

The fisherman stood there, curiously examining the gourd, and was just about to open it when he noticed Meng Hao and Xu Qing.

"You're Mr. Zhou from the Zhou Clan, right?" Meng Hao asked, eyes glittering as though he was very happy to be talking to this man. He smiled. "Would you mind selling me that bottle gourd?"

The burly man stared back in shock for a moment, apparently surprised that this person even knew his surname. He looked at the bottle gourd and grinned. "It's just a bottle gourd. It's hardly worth anything. If you want it, big bro, you can have it." With that, he handed the bottle gourd over to Meng Hao.

Meng Hao took it, but shook his head, and his eyes sparkled. Xu Qing stood off to the side, watching in surprise. It almost seemed as if this burly fisherman were an old friend of Meng Hao's. However, she always felt a sense of familiarity toward Meng Hao's old friends, and this man seemed like a complete stranger.

"I insist on buying it," Meng Hao said. "How about this: I'll give you ten pieces of silver for it. Okay?" With that he extended his hand, within which were ten pieces of silver.

The burly fisherman's eyes went wide. Apparently, he thought this young man was a complete imbecile. He took a deep breath and then accepted the silver, looking a bit embarrassed. Then he scratched his head and said, "Uh, this..."

"Don't mention it, Mr. Zhou." With that, Meng Hao took out three more pieces of silver and put them into the fisherman's hand. "Here are three more silver pieces. Take them. All of this is to pay for a debt I owed to the Zhou Clan years ago."

This time, the fisherman's jaw dropped.

Meng Hao wasn't finished. "Here are some medicinal pills. Boil them in water and drink the resulting elixir. It will bring blessings to the Zhou Clan for all generations to come in this starry sky. I wish you health and good fortune, sir. This... is the interest for a debt of three silvers, incurred countless epochs ago." After Meng Hao gave the silver and the medicinal pills to the burly fisherman, it seemed as if a great weight had been lifted off of his shoulders. Apparently, even his cultivation base had inched closer toward a breakthrough.

It was as if a Karma Thread stretching back countless ages into the past had finally been satisfied.

Meng Hao laughed heartily, then clasped the bottle gourd in one hand and Xu Qing's hand in the other as he took a step forward. That step took him out into the Heavens, into the vast starry sky.

Out there among the stars, Xu Qing looked quizzically at Meng Hao and asked, "Who was he?"

"Back when you pulled me into the world of cultivation, I was a scholar," he said, chuckling. "I owed Steward Zhou from Yunjie County three pieces of silver.... After all the epochs which have passed, I've finally managed to pay back the debt, principal and interest!"

Xu Qing's eyes went wide with disbelief for a moment, then she started laughing. Eventually her eyes came to rest on the bottle gourd.

"I threw this same bottle gourd off Mount Daqing, all those years ago. I guess we've come in a big circle. Now that I have it back, I might as well write down a new ambition, and toss it out into the Universe." Meng Hao's eyes shone brightly with anticipation as he gazed out into the far reaches. His expression was actually a bit bashful, and when Xu Qing noticed that, she couldn't hold back from laughing out loud. She could only imagine the scene... of Meng Hao traveling the depths of the Universe... bashfully handing out promissory notes.

There was now nothing holding him back. He had resolved all pertinent matters, and now, his old personality was finally showing through.

“It’s about time to go,” he said. “Somewhere out in the Universe are the Ghost, the God, and the Devil. They’ve been waiting out there for ages now.... I wonder if I can get any of them to write me a promissory note.” Heart bursting with ambition, face filled with pious ardor, he took another step forward. Xu Qing was laughing so hard her sides hurt, and the parrot was squawking up a storm to the babbling meat jelly. They vanished, and when they reappeared, they were no longer in the starry sky of the Mountains and Seas, they were out in the boundless Universe.

In the majestic Universe, there were unending possibilities. There were infinite mysteries, and countless worlds, like seeds, filled with limitless life.

Up ahead, a ship appeared, which also happened to be heading toward the deeper parts of the Universe. The deck of the ship was covered, making it impossible to see inside. It was an old, dilapidated ship, and yet somehow, it radiated boundless power.

An old man sat cross-legged at the prow, and at the stern was a young man in a black robe, with an icy cold expression and a murderous aura swirling around him.

The man at the prow was Old Man Extermination!

The youth at the stern was Slaughter!

When Meng Hao saw them, he smiled. “Fellow Daoists, would you mind if my wife and I join you on your travels?” He took another step forward, and he was on the ship.

Slaughter opened his eyes, looked over, and nodded. Then his eyes closed again. However, the faintest of smiles could be seen on his face.

Old Man Extermination opened his eyes, and they shone with a strange light. He looked at Meng Hao for a long moment, then smiled.

Turning his head, he called out, “Apprentice, we have some new guests on board. Please bring out two cups of wine.”

A female voice could just barely be heard inside the cabin, acknowledging the words spoken by Extermination. Then the screen hanging at the cabin door was pushed aside, and a beautiful young woman appeared, upon whose face was a faint, enigmatic smile.

She looked at Meng Hao, and then at Xu Qing, and her eyes began to shine. At the same time, her cheeks seemed to flush with embarrassment.

“Elder Brother Fang Mu, Big Sister Xu Qing, I’m not here to cause trouble,” she said. “This is my Master’s ship, and... my Master wanted me here.” She smiled.

Meng Hao’s eyes went wide.

Xu Qing looked at her, then covered her mouth and laughed. Stepping forward, she clasped the young woman’s hands in her own.

If that beautiful young woman wasn’t Chu Yuyan, then who could she be?