

The Heavens 181

Chapter 181: Meeting One's Match, the General Meets the Genius

Chen Fan arrived at the same time as his words. He landed in front of Meng Hao, glaring up coldly at the man named Li.

The Li man's expression became somewhat unsightly. He stared at Chen Fan, and his gaze especially seemed to take note of the black flying dagger.

"Do you really think you can protect him forever?" he said with a cold snort. His face filled with disdain as he looked at Meng Hao. "He won't amount to anything if all he can do is hide behind others. It seems mid Foundation Establishment is the end of the line for him!"

"As long as I'm here, I won't let you touch a hair on my little Junior Brother's head!" said Chen Fan, his voice cool, but hard enough to chop nails and slice iron.

Li glared hatefully at Meng Hao, his disdain growing thicker. "If it weren't for your Elder Brother, I would kill you with the wave of a hand. Let's see how long you can keep hiding!" He turned, flicking his sleeve and disappearing into the distance.

Meng Hao sighed as he watched the man leave. He had read the man's expression, of course, but could do nothing about it. Exterminating him would be simple, but twice now, Chen Fan had stood in front of him, making it impossible to proceed with battle.

Chen Fan looked back at Meng Hao, who gave a wry smile.

Chen Fan, of course, misinterpreted Meng Hao's expression. "Don't worry, little Junior Brother," he said comfortingly. "That Li fellow is nothing. With me here, he won't dare to bully you." His expression was one of concern, leaving Meng Hao without a word to say. "Unfortunately, Master went into secluded meditation last month, and it seems he won't emerge for a few more months. I left him a message, though. He'll get it as soon as he comes out.

"After you and I get back from the Song Clan, you can officially join the Solitary Sword Sect. Then that Li guy won't dare to mess with you. Although, in the meantime, you need to be a bit more careful. Well, I'll be here by your side anyway, so it doesn't matter."

Chen Fan's concern made Meng Hao feel warm in his heart. "Many thanks, Elder Brother," he said, clasping hands and bowing.

"What's there to thank? Don't be so polite! Come come. Let's light some candles and chat all night." He laughed heartily as he pulled Meng Hao into the house. Once inside, he slapped his bag of holding to produce two jars of alcohol.

"Your Elder Brother doesn't have much to offer here. But when I went to Master's I grabbed these two jars of Sword Wine. This stuff is pretty good. I've really come to like it over the past few years." He handed one of the jars to Meng Hao, then opened his own and took a swig.

Meng Hao accepted the jar and took a drink. His face immediately grew a bit red, and his entire body suddenly felt hot and dry. Sweat broke out all over. He took a deep breath, and then slowly let it out.

He felt as if his entire body had just been washed out. Sweating, he continued to breathe in and out. His eyes seemed to glisten a bit more brightly. He looked at Chen Fan.

"What alcohol is this?"

"Master brews it himself. Heh heh. Come on, drink up. This alcohol is really good for Cultivators, especially for the Foundation Establishment stage. It's comparable to medicinal pills!" He smiled and took another drink. "I drink this stuff all the time. Oh, by the way, little Junior Brother, I see your Cultivation base is at the mid Foundation Establishment level. Don't forget, we Cultivators are building mountains; you must establish a firm foundation." His words were earnest, causing Meng Hao to put down his jar of alcohol and listen thoughtfully. Occasionally he nodded in agreement. "Don't greedily speed through the various stages and ignore your fundamentals.

"Take me, for example. I could have created my fourth Dao Pillar and entered mid Foundation Establishment last year. But Master wouldn't permit it. He always says that creating Dao Pillars is like turning trees into boats. It can't be undone. The best thing to do is go with the flow, and exercise caution. Creating a fourth Dao Pillar isn't as important as refining the third pillar. Once it is full and complete, then the fourth Dao Pillar can be created properly.

"Another thing," said Chen Fan, sounding extremely serious. "During the course of our Cultivating, we are bound to encounter friction with other Cultivators. But you cannot solve all problems by

killing! You need to understand that regardless of whether you're talking about magical techniques or magical items, they are all just ways to protect the Dao! They are protection, not the Dao itself!

“What is the Dao? My Cultivation base isn't high enough, so I probably shouldn't even bring it up. But Master told me that even though he doesn't quite understand it himself, there's something that should never be forgotten; killing and magical techniques are all just for protection!

“Don't let your Dao be overwhelmed by killing. You need to listen to your heart, and follow your principles.” Chen Fan looked Meng Hao over. “You know, you seem to have a fairly strong killing aura.”

Even as the words came out of his mouth, a voice could be heard from within Meng Hao's bag of the Cosmos.

“That's right! That's right! I said this child's killing aura was too strong. You're right. You make a lot of sense. Your words are extremely accurate!” The suddenness of the voice's appearance left Chen Fan dumbfounded.

Meng Hao's face darkened. Before he could say anything, a flash of colorful light emerged from the bag of the Cosmos which turned into a parrot. It flapped its wings as it flew around the room.

The meat jelly parrot had previously been in the blood-colored mask, preaching to the Li Clan Patriarch. Now, it flew a few circles around the room and then landed on Meng Hao's shoulder.

“What's that...?” said Chen Fan, still in shock.

“I picked this thing up and found that it can't be thrown away...” replied Meng Hao. Before he could finish, the meat jelly parrot interrupted him.

“Son, you couldn't be more correct,” it said, eying Chen Fan energetically. “Meng Hao's killing aura is too strong. It's wrong! Immoral! Come come, let's discuss a few things. I think I'm going to like you.”

Meng Hao took a deep breath and looked at Chen Fan sympathetically. He could only imagine the torture Chen Fan would be dealing with momentarily.

“So you’re my littler Junior Brother’s Spirit creature,” said Chen Fan, looking curiously at the parrot on Meng Hao’s shoulder. “Pleased to meet you, sir. I’m happy to discuss anything with you.”

Seeing the gleam in Chen Fan’s eye, Meng Hao sighed to himself. There was really nothing he could do to save him.... But Meng Hao couldn’t bear to just do nothing.

“Elder brother, this bird....”

“Junior Brother, you misspoke,” said Chen Fan in a serious tone. “This isn’t a bird, it’s a parrot. And it can speak! You can see from the look in its eye that it’s intelligent. It’s a Spirit! You really need to take good care of it.”

The meat jelly seemed to be on the verge of tears after hearing Chen Fan’s words. It seemed to have finally met a kindred spirit.

“You are so correct. You make so much sense. Why couldn’t I have met you first? Aiiii. There’s no need to bring that up. Now, why don’t we discuss the meaning of life?”

“The meaning of life? Okay!” said Chen Fan excitedly. “I’ve always wanted to have a discussion about the meaning of life. But for some reason, my Master is always in secluded meditation. In fact, so are my Junior and Elder brothers. I originally planned to chat with my little Junior Brother tonight, but if you want to join, the please, by all means do.”

“A discussion about the meaning of life needs to be built up to, though. For example... why don’t we talk about this morning’s weather? Only a truly educated person can discuss the weather....”

“Huh? The weather? Well... okay. I think the weather was excellent this morning. But you know, I think it might be more beneficial to discuss the killing aura coming off of my little Junior Brother.”

“Eee? I completely agree with you there. You are so correct. You make so much sense. I always say that if the weather is bad, it can have a negative influence on your mood. I mean, I mean, don’t you agree about that...?”

“Well that’s the first time I’ve heard of such a thing,” said Chen Fan. “But it actually makes a lot of sense. I remember one day a few years ago, it was really overcast outside, and my Cultivation didn’t go very well. I was fidgety all day. Yeah, I think what you said just now makes a lot of sense.”

“A lot of sense? You think I make a lot of sense?! Heavens! Dear heavens! In this life, and the life before that, and the life before that, I’ve never met anyone who said such a thing. You think I make sense....” The meat jelly parrot was shaking in excitement. It flew off of Meng Hao’s shoulder to stand in front of Chen Fan.

Their talking turned into a buzzing that filled Meng Hao’s ears as he watched on in a daze. The eyes of both Chen Fan and the parrot began to shine brightly. They had both met their kindred spirits, and as they talked, it gradually became apparent that a contest of sorts had begun.

Meng Hao suddenly shivered and edged backward.

He moved as far away as possible, to a distant corner of the building, where he sat cross-legged to meditate. He feared that if he continued to listen, he would become far too annoyed. The clamor of the bird by itself was bad enough, but now....

As Meng Hao looked at Chen Fan and the meat jelly parrot, a single thought ran through his mind; “Meeting one’s match, the General meets the Genius....”

Time passed by, and Meng Hao did his best to ignore the sound of their conversation. Two hours passed, and he finally opened his eyes. He had assumed their discussion would be nearing an end, but when he peeked over, he discovered that they were engaged in a lively conversation.

“Right? Tell me, am I right, or not...?”

“Absolutely correct. Actually, that makes me think about one day last year when I....”

“Of course! That’s what I said earlier! Oh right, weren’t we going to talk about the meaning of life? How about this: after we finish talking about this morning’s weather, then we can talk about the noon sunshine....”

“Great idea. Let’s save the meaning of life for the end of the conversation. The best would be to wait until dusk. The best time to talk about life is under the setting sun....”

The sound droned on in Meng Hao’s ears. He stared blankly at Chen Fan’s excited face and the equally enthusiastic meat jelly parrot. One man, one bird, their eyes shining with anticipation.... It

caused Meng Hao to shiver and close his eyes again to meditate, fearful of getting dragged into the discussion.

Time, slowly passed....

Chapter 182: There's Always a Bird Out There That's Better Than You

Dawn.... Meng Hao opened his eyes, then immediately closed them again.

“What a good friend! In the past several lives, I’ve only had myself to talk to. I never realized how boring it is to talk to myself... And I could never figure out why everyone hates me so much. They even call me Ultimate Vexation....”

“Yeah! I haven’t had a discussion like this the entire time I’ve been in the Solitary Sword Sect.”

“Come come, now that we’ve finished talking about the noon sunshine, let’s talk a bit about the afternoon....”

Late morning.... Sunlight filtered into the house. Meng Hao opened his eyes and stared blankly at Chen Fan and the meat jelly. He sighed and continued to meditate.

“Let me tell you, I’m sick of afternoons. I remember the afternoon of one year when I....”

“You’re right! I’m the same way. But the only thing I can do during that time is to grind my teeth....”

More hours passed, and soon it was afternoon. Meng Hao opened his eyes a few times, but all he could do was laugh bitterly and close them again.

Chen Fan and the meat jelly had talked through the entire night, all the way through the morning. One man, one bird, seemingly inexhaustible and, in fact, in high spirits.

Meng Hao couldn’t help but admire Elder Brother Chen. It seemed he really was a perfect match for the meat jelly.

Meng Hao sat quietly. He wanted to stand up, but was worried that Chen Fan and the meat jelly would drag him into their conversation. He took a breath and then closed his eyes, pretending that he couldn't hear anything that they were saying.

Eventually, the sun began to set....

“I like sunset the best. Every time I gaze at the setting sun, I think of that time one year when I was just a tiny meat jelly, I...”

“Sunset is immeasurably wonderful. You know, you really don't know how difficult it is to practice Cultivation. Oh, that reminds me, throughout the years, I've actually collected a thousand different stories about the sunset. I really want to tell you all of them. Come come. I'll start with the first one....”

The sun had set, and evening passed. Soon it was night again. One man, one bird, chattering away endlessly for a day and a night. They talked on, seemingly not the least bit tired. When midnight came, it finally seemed that Chen Fan wasn't able to keep going.

“Umm, why don't we rest a bit?”

“No way! I don't get many chances to have such a lovely discussion. We still haven't talked about the meaning of life yet. Ah, the meaning of life. What a beautiful whatchamacallit flower Oh, right. I forgot. Before we talk about the meaning of life, we need to talk about moonlight....”

“Uh... Alright. Actually, I have over three thousand stories about the moonlight....”

“Eee? I have some stories too! Actually, I have ten thousand. You go first, and then me.”

Meng Hao was almost on the verge of collapse. His eyes were bloodshot, and he panted as he forced himself to calm down and return to meditation.

The night passed slowly. Outside, everything was quiet. But within the room, one man and one bird had reached the pinnacle of their conversation. Early morning light once again made its way into the house. Chen Fan's face was a bit wan, and his eyes were bloodshot.

“Let's rest a bit... I... I have some plans today....”

“No way! I’m not finished yet. We still haven’t talked about the meaning of life. Now that I’m finished with my ten thousand stories about the moonlight, we can continue our discussion.”

Morning passed, and soon it was noontime, then another sunset. Chen Fan’s expression was dull as he stared at the parrot and its unceasing torrent of words. A look of admiration slowly grew in his eyes.

“Now that we have built up the conversation properly, we can finally discuss the meaning of life. Eee...? It’s dark outside. I just realized that when we talked about sunset, there were thirty thousand stories I forgot to mention. That won’t do! I don’t get chances like this very often. I need to tell you those stories....” The meat jelly cleared its throat a few times, and then began speaking again.

A few hours passed, until finally Chen Fan’s patience and long-windedness were run out. “I... I really do have some plans....” said Chen Fan, standing up suddenly.

His body swayed back and forth a bit, and then he took a few steps back, his face drained of blood. Meng Hao opened his eyes and looked admiringly at Chen Fan. He had just chatted nonstop for two days and two nights....

“Little Junior Brother, I actually have some plans, so I’m going to take off. Um... I’ll come back for you in a few days....” His face was pale and he looked dizzy. As of now, he didn’t look at the meat jelly with admiration, but rather, fear.

He’d always thought of himself as someone who could talk, but now he realized how wrong he was. There existed a bird that could surpass even him! Without waiting for Meng Hao to respond, Chen Fan opened the door and fled.

“Elder Brother,” Meng Hao called after him, “I think you have an affinity with this talking Spirit parrot, why don’t you take it with you....”

Chen Fan suddenly staggered, and his face twisted. Without an instant of hesitation, his body transformed into a beam of light that disappeared into the distance.

“What a good fellow,” said the meat jelly parrot, sighing with emotion. “I really like this Elder Brother Chen of yours. I haven’t met someone in years who could carry on such a long conversation with me. Eee? We never discussed the meaning of life!”

Meng Hao's scalp suddenly began to grow numb. To be able to provoke such a reaction from Elder Brother Chen showed how truly powerful this meat jelly was. Such power was rarely seen in the world.

"It's too bad I couldn't finish," said the meat jelly discontentedly. "I was just starting to get excited. Now it's all over?" Chattering away, it flew up onto Meng Hao's shoulder. "Why don't you chat a bit with me, I'm feeling a bit lonely..."

Meng Hao's face went pale, and he took a deep breath. He forced a wry smile onto his face, and his mind spun, trying to come up with an idea.

"I think perhaps you forgot someone," he said.

"Who? Who? Who? Who did I forget? How could I forget somebody?" Given a chance to have a conversation, the meat jelly would definitely seize it immediately.

"You forgot about the old man in the mask!" said Meng Hao hurriedly. "You still haven't turned him back from the path of wickedness."

"Eee? Right! That old man isn't too bad, actually. But you're right. I need to go have a talk with him." Face shining with anticipation, the meat jelly parrot flashed, instantly disappearing into Meng Hao's bag of the Cosmos.

Meng Hao could just barely hear the sound of the Li Clan Patriarch's sad, shrill cry when the meat jelly entered the mask. He had never heard such a cry come from the man before.

Meng Hao let out a long sigh and sat down on the ground, laughing bitterly. He looked at the moonlight outside and sighed again, wondering about what his life would be like in the coming days. Having the meat jelly with him constantly was a frightening thought.

"There must be a way to control it. That damned meat jelly..." Meng Hao gritted his teeth, and his eyes glittered brightly. "Its old enemy... the copper mirror... the parrot..." His eyes glittered even more brightly when he thought about reaching Core Formation. His anticipation soared to new heights.

Three days flashed by, during which time Chen Fan never returned. Obviously, he was so frightened of Meng Hao's meat jelly that he didn't dare to come back. If he did, the meat jelly parrot might draw him into another conversation.

It was on the fourth day that he cautiously made his way back. He opened the door to the room, then immediately retreated several steps. When he saw that there was no parrot on Meng Hao's shoulder, he glanced around the room and then let out a sigh.

Meng Hao could only give him a wry smile. What else could he say?

Chen Fan stood nervously outside the room. "That.... Little Junior Brother, it... it's gone?" He looked very nervous.

"Pretty much...." replied Meng Hao, standing up and walking out.

Chen Fan let out a long sigh and looked at Meng Hao with a forced smile.

"Little Junior Brother, that parrot of yours is... Wow, what a bird. I truly admire it. Well, no need to talk about it, really. There are only a few more days until the Song Clan's banquet. I've already arranged everything. When it comes time, we can teleport directly there. Today, why don't you let me show you around the Solitary Sword Sect? After all, when we come back from the Song Clan, this will be your Sect, so you should get to know it." He grabbed Meng Hao's sleeve and pulled him out to the courtyard.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, but in his mind appeared an image of the map of the Southern Domain. The Song Clan was located relatively close to the Violet Fate Sect. As for the Solitary Sword Sect, Meng Hao thought about it a lot during the past days and had finally reached a conclusion. He decided that he would not take advantage of Chen Fan's offer to join the Solitary Sword Sect.

He still wanted to figure out some way to disguise himself and join the Violet Fate Sect. He would learn Violet Qi from the East as well as alchemy. And he would also figure out a way to get Grandmaster Pill Demon to dispel his poison.

As for the Solitary Sword Sect, Meng Hao didn't believe that Chen Fan's master would be able to help him get rid of the poison. He needed the help of someone, not of the Nascent Soul stage, but the Spirit Severing stage!

Meng Hao was certain of this. However, Chen Fan was so warm and welcoming, he didn't feel it was appropriate to tell him directly. Regarding the Song Clan, Meng Hao very much wanted to go see it; however, because of his concerns regarding the Black Sieve Sect, he was still hesitating.

"I need to figure out a way to get in touch with Han Bei...." he thought. "She should be able to tell me what ended up happening with the Black Sieve Sect." He rubbed his bag of holding, and a cold smile touched his lips. There inside was a piece of jade which he could use to keep Han Bei in her place.

He followed Chen Fan around the Solitary Sword Sect. Buildings lined the meandering paths, and streams flowed here and there. The whole place looked both imposing and tasteful.

The two of them chatted as they walked, and soon it was noontime. Eventually, they reached a large circular structure which was filled with hundreds of energetic Solitary Sword Sect disciples.

"This is the Battle Arena," explained Chen Fan, "where Solitary Sword Sect disciples can fight each other. You can injure, but not kill. There are strict punishments for anyone who breaks the rules."

Meng Hao looked at it and was about to walk away when suddenly, his brow furrowed. A sinister voice suddenly rang out.

"Guests can fight in the Battle Arena to exchange techniques with our Sect disciples. I, Li, shall enter the arena. I would like to invite this outsider guest... to duel with me if he dares!" It was none other the middle-aged man named Li. A hypocritical smile covered his face as he strolled out from the crowd, staring mockingly at Meng Hao.

"Will you hide behind your Elder Brother again? Can you even make a single attack, you good-for-nothing loser? If you don't dare to fight, then you'd better hope you don't have to face me again in the future."

Everyone's eyes came to rest on Meng Hao and Chen Fan.

Chapter 183: How Long Since We Saw That Shy Face?

Meng Hao's expression was the same as usual. He wasn't the least bit moved. He looked calmly at the sneering Li, and Zhou Shanyue, who stood next to him, face grim.

Chen Fan looked angry. He knew that Elder Brother Li and Zhou Shanyue were on good terms, and that neither of them liked him very much. It was only because of his flying dagger that they never did much to him.

However, having Meng Hao at his side had caused innumerable difficulties with this sinister pair.

“If you want a fight, how about you two versus me?” said Chen Fan coldly.

“As fellow Sect members, we have nothing to learn from each other,” laughed Li. “I want to see if I can pick up a move or two from this outsider. Junior Brother Chen, you aren’t really going to prevent such an exchange, will you?”

Chen Fan gave a cold snort, grabbing Meng Hao to leave. Meng Hao smiled. He found the whole situation quite amusing. However, Chen Fan seemed devoted to keeping Meng Hao safe, and he didn’t want to refuse his good will. He was just about to follow along with Chen Fan when Zhou Shanyue’s dark voice rang out.

“If you’re scared, we understand.” The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples all laughed loudly. “How about this: Elder Brother Li will restrict his power to that of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. That would make things fair. We really want to see what magic you outsiders have. Junior Brother Chen, this matter has nothing to do with you. You can’t keep him hiding behind you forever.”

Solitary Sword Sect Cultivators generally stay away from outsiders. Many of them, although they didn’t want to sneer at Elder Brother Chen, were getting excited at the scene which was playing out in front of them.

Chen Fan ignored them, continuing to pull Meng Hao away. However, hearing Zhou Shanyue’s words caused Meng Hao to suddenly stop in his tracks. He turned and looked at Li and Zhou Shanyue, forcing an outraged expression to appear on his face.

“Since a battle to the death is out of the question, we need to make a wager,” he said, making his voice seem out of control.

Hearing this, the surrounding Solitary Sword Sect Cultivators burst into more laughter. Many of them had Cultivation bases lower than Meng Hao, but they were disciples of the Solitary Sword

Sect, the number one Sect in the Southern Domain. It was only natural for them to feel somewhat superior.

Zhou Shanyue laughed, as did middle-aged Li.

“Excellent,” said Li. “If you stop hiding behind Junior Brother Chen and dare to fight me, then there’s no harm in making a little wager. I have a treasured sword as well as several tens of thousands of Spirit Stones!” Laughing, he slapped his bag of holding to produce an azure-colored sword. The sword aura which swirled around it wasn’t spectacular, but wasn’t ordinary either.

“Little Junior Brother, you....” said Chen Fan.

He was about to continue when Meng Hao, eyes bloodshot, interrupted him. Glaring, he said, “A handful of Spirit Stones and a sword aren’t enough for Meng Hao. Put some more onto the table, sir, and then I’ll fight you!” His loud voice rang out. The words he had spoken, and the expression on his face, were something he had long since become accustomed to using. He had faced many situations like this in the State of Zhao. Furthermore, he still had an unused golden spear in his bag of the Cosmos....

The crowd around them laughed loudly. Li looked at Meng Hao, his sneer growing larger.

“Very well,” he said. “Whatever you put up as stakes, sir, I will match in value.”

Next to him, Zhou Shanyue laughed. “No matter,” he said. “Whatever you produce, if Elder Brother Li matches it in value, then so shall I!” He glared at Chen Fan, and deep in his eyes, killing intent swirled.

Meng Hao gasped. His eyes darted around as if he wished to run away. “Are you serious?!” he said, his voice sounding forced.

“You’re in the Solitary Sword Sect, now,” said Zhou Shanyue haughtily. “Do you really think we would lie?”

Chen Fan grabbed Meng Hao’s arm and was about to say something.

Trembling, Meng Hao looked over at him and said, “Elder Brother Chen, can you please loan me your flying dagger?”

Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao for a long moment. Finally, he lifted his hand up, and the black flying dagger appeared, a blade which could unleash the power of the Core Formation stage!

This dagger was extremely important to Chen Fan. If he lost it, his position within the Sect would immediately become unstable. The repercussions would be dire. However, it only took the space of a few breaths for him to make up his mind to place it in Meng Hao’s hand.

This display of brotherly affection caused Meng Hao to look deeply at Chen Fan. A warm feeling filled his entire body, creating a memory that would exist for the rest of his life.

“Junior Brother,” said Chen Fan, his eyes glowing with encouragement, “if you’re really going to fight, then do so with a light heart. If you lose, it won’t matter. No big deal. And if you win, then win something good!” Although he didn’t have much faith that Meng Hao could win, this was his style.

Everything was quiet around them as the crowd stared at the black flying dagger in Meng Hao’s hand.

The silence lasted only for a moment before a buzz of conversation filled the air.

“That’s Patriarch Zhou’s Core Formation flying dagger!!”

“That’s the symbol of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons, and Elder Brother Chen is actually giving it to a stranger to put up as stakes for a bet....”

“These stakes are incredible!!”

The surrounding disciple’s eyes shone brightly, and more than a few produced transmission jade slips to notify other fellow disciples of what was happening.

“This is what I’m putting up. Now it’s your turn. No bet, no fight!” Meng Hao’s voice was resolute, and his eyes shone with a do-or-die look. To the onlookers, however, it appeared that his coolness was forced, and that he was simply trying to bluff Zhou and Li into leaving him alone.

Zhou Shanyue's body trembled as he glared at the black dagger in Meng Hao's hand. He panted, as did middle-aged Li. They exchanged an excited, shocked glance.

They had never imagined that Chen Fan would actually take out the flying dagger and give it to his Junior Brother to put up as stakes in the bet.

"If you don't have anything to bet, then you can't blame me for not participating," repeated Meng Hao, preparing to hand the flying dagger back to Elder Brother Chen. Zhou Shanyue obviously couldn't allow this to happen. His hand shot up and he ripped open the top of his robe to reveal a jade pendant hanging around his neck.

"This is a life-saving jade forged by my father himself with blood from his Cultivation base. It has no attack power, but it can stand up against an attack from the Nascent Soul Stage! If you win, then it's yours. I'll even give you some of my Cultivation base blood to use to refine it! I, Zhou, never go back on my word!" His tone of voice could chop nails and slice iron. As they rang out, Chen Fan, along with the rest of the onlookers, gasped. Chen Fan stared at the life-saving jade. It was a treasure his master had bestowed upon his son to protect him. In terms of value, it definitely exceeded his flying dagger.

Meng Hao put on a look of complete shock. He began to breathe heavily, causing Zhou Shanyue to laugh coldly, his eyes shining coldly.

In a seemingly forced voice, Meng Hao said, "That's not enough. You just said that both of you would match the value of whatever I put up!"

Hearing this, middle-aged Li laughed heartily. He glared coldly at Meng Hao, and then gave pale-faced Chen Fan a sinister look. At the moment, he was convinced of what to do. He knew Chen Fan and Chen Fan's personality. He wouldn't do anything devious, so clearly his expression revealed his true feelings.

"I, Li, don't have any precious treasures like Junior Brother Zhou. However, I do have some Spirit Stones saved up. Fellow disciples, if you are able to loan me some Spirit Stones, it will be to your benefit. I will pay them back with an additional one stone for every hundred you give." He laughed again, watching as the hundreds of surrounding Cultivators saluted him respectfully. A few of them flew over to him, and then more and more.

"No problem, Elder Brother Li. Of course we can help you."

“Hahaha! I don’t have a lot of Spirit Stones, just a few thousand, my savings from the past few years. If you need them, Elder Brother Li, then they’re yours.”

“Don’t worry, Elder Brother Li. We can definitely help you out.”

The voices of hundreds of Cultivators filled the air. All of them produced Spirit Stones, in amounts ranging from hundreds to thousands. Soon, they had been piled together into a group of several tens of thousands of Spirit Stones.

“These Spirit Stones can’t compare in value to Junior Brother Zhou’s precious treasure. Fine, fine, I won’t try to take advantage of you. I have some magical items in my bag of holding that are worth tens of thousands of Spirit Stones. In total, their value is roughly 500,000!” He flicked his sleeve, and then shot into the air, transforming into a beam of light which shot toward the Battle Arena. Amidst the excited cries of the surrounding Cultivators, he landed in the middle of the arena and turned to stare at Meng Hao.

Chen Fan looked at Meng Hao with a forced smile. He was just about to give some advice when Meng Hao put the flying dagger on the ground and then flew up in the air toward the Battle Arena.

No one made a move to stop him.

As he entered, the surrounding Cultivators craned their necks to watch. Middle-aged Li stood there arrogantly. He pressed his finger down onto the space between his eyebrows. Immediately, his Cultivation base sank down from the late Foundation Establishment stage to the mid Foundation Establishment stage, as if he had six Dao Pillars.

“Li is not the sort of person who would bully you,” he said, sticking his jaw out, “so I’ll only use the power of the mid Foundation Establishment stage. Under no circumstances will I use the power of late Foundation Establishment.”

“Actually, there’s no need for that,” murmured Meng Hao. He stood there in the Battle Arena, his expression very different than before. There was nothing fake about his expression now. He smiled, and within the smile was happiness, as well as a bit of shyness.

The people here weren’t familiar with this shyness. But the people from the Violet Fate Sect who had traded with him years before in the State of Zhao would know it well. It would cause their

scalps to grow numb if they saw it. They would think themselves to be in some kind of nightmare, and would most likely fly into a violent rage.

“In a bit, you’ll have to eat your words....” said Meng Hao shyly. He looked just like the young scholar that had stood there on Mount Daqing years ago. He seemed a little embarrassed as he took a step forward.

Chapter 184: Seven Exterminations

This man named Li had no way to know how famous Meng Hao was in the State of Zhao, nor about the iron spear which was still located within the Violet Fate Sect....

Meng Hao’s body flickered as he shot toward Li. He lifted his right hand and flashed an incantation sign; immediately, a Flame Dragon roared out.

It wasn’t very large, only about thirty meters long, and its color was not normal. Instead of being the color of fire, it was dark, and had two flapping wings. This was obviously a Flying Rain-Dragon.

Power from Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was congealed inside of it, and not a drop seeped out. Only someone significantly more powerful than Meng Hao, someone of a higher stage, would be able to sense the slight fluctuations of the Cultivation base power within it.

From the look of it, it really did seem to be something that would be produced by the power of mid Foundation Establishment, or perhaps even inferior to that.

Sneers filled the faces of the Cultivators outside the Battle Arena. They were clearly very amused by the whole scene.

Chen Fan groaned inwardly. He didn’t say anything, but his eyes were dull as he thought, not about his flying dagger, but the fact that this was a Battle Arena, and there was no way to tell what deadly moves Li might use.

Zhou Shanyue watched on, a smile covering his face. He looked exceedingly pleased. He had never liked Chen Fan, not from the very beginning when his father had brought him back to the Solitary Sword Sect. He felt that his father treated him far too well for the outsider that he was.

As for the flying dagger that had been given to Chen Fan, Zhou Shanyue thought of it as his own. How could it be given to someone else? And how come he wasn't a member of the current generation of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons?

He didn't understand, but also didn't dare to complain to his father. This caused his enmity toward Chen Fan to grow stronger and stronger.

"Finally I have a chance today!" he thought. "Chen Fan, ahh, Chen Fan, the flying dagger will finally belong to me. You trifling nobody. Do you really dare to contend with me?!" A smile broke out on his face, and he laughed.

Back within the Battle Arena, Li also laughed. A haughty look covered his face as he watched Meng Hao's Flame Dragon speeding toward him. He sneered.

"A barbarian Cultivator from a backwater Sect," he said loftily. "You don't deserve to even be here. Your magic is so simple! You really dare to use a trifling Flame Dragon art? Even being restricted to the mid Foundation Establishment stage, I can still kill you with ease." He flicked his sleeve, and the power of his mid Foundation Establishment stage boiled out. He raised his hand and the illusory image of a sun and a moon appeared on either side of his palm.

The images of the sun and moon transformed into two gleaming sword auras. Li waved his hand and they shot screaming into the air, straight toward the incoming Flame Dragon.

A cheer rose up from the surrounding Cultivators when they saw this.

Of course, all of this takes some time to describe, but happened in an instant. The images of the sun and moon swords slammed into the Flame Dragon, and as they did, for some unknown reason, they began to twist and warp.

A bang exploded out as the moon sword pushed up against the Flame Dragon. It seemed like it was trying to move a mountain. The sword instantly collapsed to pieces. Before the pieces could float away, they were transformed into ash by the heat of the Flame Dragon.

At the same time, the sun sword also collapsed. The thirty meter long Flame Dragon didn't even seem to have been scratched. Its momentum increased as it shot toward Li.

As it shot forward, its body expanded. Thirty meters, ninety meters, one hundred and fifty meters... in the blink of an eye, it was three hundred meters long and growing!

A mysterious power emanated out from the Flame Dragon, forming into a monstrous Flame Sea. This was the aura of the Flame Dragon. Its massive wings spread out to cover the sky, causing the Battle Arena to be submerged in flame.

All of this occurred too quickly, and middle-aged Li could not possibly have predicted that it would happen. It was the same with Zhou Shanyue, as well as all the surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples, who watched on with stunned faces.

A roaring sound filled the air, and the Battle Arena shook. The shield covering the Battle Arena rippled as it held back the power.

At the same time as the roaring sounded out, Meng Hao suddenly shot forward, attacking as fast as lightning. Li's face went white, and filled with an expression of disbelief. Nine jade slips appeared and floated around him, emanating a protective energy which defended him from the massive power of the Flame Sea.

These nine jade slips were clearly extraordinary in their protective power. However, Meng Hao continued to shoot toward him like an arrow. In an instant, he slammed into the shield generated by the nine jade slips.

Another boom resonated out, along with a miserable shout. The onlookers watched on, dumbstruck as the flames began to die out. Li spun backward like a kite with its string cut, blood shooting out of his mouth, his eyes filled with shock. He cut a sorry figure.

Meng Hao emerged from the Flame Sea, his face calm. He smiled, and still had the shy look on his face.

Zhou Shanyue gasped when this happened, and then stared in shock. Chen Fan blinked his eyes, looking at Meng Hao with disbelief.

Amidst the silence of the shocked audience, middle-aged Li's body stopped moving. A grim expression appeared on his face, and then he pushed down on his forehead.

Suddenly, his body quivered and then filled with the power of the great circle of Foundation Establishment. Pseudo Core stage power immediately exploded out from him.

This power was far, far beyond what he had exhibited moments ago. His eyes radiating killing intent as he watched Meng Hao striding out from within the Flame Sea. A haughty look once again filled his face.

“You seem qualified to be slain by the true power of my Cultivation base!”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He smiled shyly, but said nothing. Seeing the smile, Li felt a strong feeling of abhorrence. He shot forward, his hand lifting toward his bag of holding and retrieving a sword.

The azure-colored sword spun rapidly above his head, forming the shape of a whale. It sucked in the power of Li’s late Foundation Establishment stage power, whereupon a buzzing sound filled the air. Ghost images of the sword suddenly appeared, seven of them!

The buzz of conversation filled the air.

“Seven Exterminations! Elder Brother Li is using a killing move!!”

“That’s one of the most powerful stances of Foundation Establishment, a profound magic of the Seven Solitary Sword Sons....”

Chen Fan’s expression twisted. “Solitary Sword Seven Exterminations!” He was about to take a step forward when Zhou Shanyue laughed and stretched out his arm to block the way.

“Junior Brother Chen, it’s prohibited to interfere with matches in the Battle Arena. You’re not going to break Sect rules are you?”

As the observing Solitary Sword Sect disciples discussed the proceedings, within the Battle Arena, Li’s hair whipped about wildly. He flashed incantation gestures, causing a cyclone to spring up. The cyclone merged with the azure sword, and a roaring sound filled the air. A vicious expression appeared on his face as he waved a finger.

The azure sword seemed to split the air as it shot with incredible speed toward Meng Hao.

This attack was one of the most powerful moves from a Cultivator of the great circle of Foundation Establishment, as well as one of the most powerful arts of the Solitary Sword Sect. For Li to use it in this situation made it clear that he intended to strike a fatal blow!

“I plan to use this magic to win a place among the Seven Sons. Today... I’ll christen it with your head!” His sinister voice echoed out as the sword screamed forward. The sword and its seven ghost images bore down onto the Meng Hao....

A smile appeared in Meng Hao’s eyes.

“In terms of magical techniques, I’m still a bit deficient....” he muttered to himself. He suddenly struck his hand forward. Immediately, everything began to shake, and the approaching sword suddenly stopped.

Meng Hao then took a step forward and struck his hand out a second time, then a third and a fourth time. Each time he did, he took another step. By the time he reached the fifth strike, he was upon the sword. The ground quaked as the massive image of an illusory hand appeared in front of Meng Hao. It shot toward the sword.

At the same time, Meng Hao’s Spiritual Sense burst out. When he was in the early Foundation Establishment stage, his Spiritual Sense could shock late Foundation Establishment Cultivators. But now he had an additional Dao Pillar, which made him even more powerful. The Spiritual Sense merged into the giant illusory hand. When the hand slammed into the azure sword, a massive bang rang out.

The azure sword shook. One by one, the ghost images surrounding it popped and disappeared. All of this takes some time to describe, but happened in an instant. The ghost images of the swords disintegrated, and then cracks began to cover the surface of the sword itself.

The illusory hand passed through the sword and then continued on toward Li. There was no way for him to dodge it, so it slammed directly into his body.

Blood sprayed from his mouth, and he staggered backward, his face pale. Meng Hao’s fifth step placed him directly next to the azure sword. He reached up and pushed against it.

A cracking noise sounded out and the sword... split completely in half.

“You lose... Now pay up,” said Meng Hao. He flicked his sleeve, sending the two pieces of the azure sword flying away to land at the feet of Li. Li’s face was deathly pale, and he coughed up another mouthful of blood. His aura seemed to have weakened. He looked at Meng Hao, a look of disbelief and bitter anguish covering his face.

He... had lost!

Chapter 185: Gathering at the Song Clan

Silence reigned outside of the Battle Arena. Hundreds of Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at Meng Hao in shock and disbelief. As the seconds ticked by, their eyes filled with intense fear.

In the Cultivation world, respect is delivered to the powerful. Meng Hao was only at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but the efficiency with which he had vanquished the great circle of late Foundation Establishment left a deep impression on everyone. Their fear transformed into respect. Respect for Meng Hao.

No one said anything. They watched him as he left the Battle Arena, the shy look still on his face as he walked back to Chen Fan.

Chen Fan gaped at him for a long moment. And then, a smile broke out on his face and he started to laugh. His laughter shattered the silence, and a hubbub immediately broke out.

“Who is that guy?!”

“He’s at the mid Foundation Establishment stage but actually defeated the great circle of Foundation Establishment! This type of Cultivation base... this type of power... he can’t be a nobody!”

“He... seems almost like a Dao Child! The magic he just used seemed somewhat familiar. It was like the Black Sieve Sect’s 19 Black Cloud Strikes....”

The sound of discussion echoed about. Zhou Shanyue’s face was pale as he staggered back a few steps. He tilted his head and stared closely at Meng Hao, the first time he had done so. Previously, he had thought Chen Fan was the one he needed to pay most attention to. His eyes filled with an intense, venomous hatred and rage.

“You despicable, shameless bastard! You’re a swindler!! You obviously know the power of your Cultivation base and pretended to be weak! You avoided battle before with the sole purpose of picking this fight!! Your depravity knows no bounds!!” Zhou Shanyue was gnashing his teeth and cursing as middle-aged Li exited the Battle Arena, his face pale. He chuckled bitterly, looking at Meng Hao with complex expression that included hatred and other emotions.

He still didn’t understand. Clearly, he had been played. He’d thought he had the situation completely under control, and yet it turned out that his opponent had effortlessly tricked him.

Then he thought of the Spirit Stones he had wagered, which weren’t even his. He had borrowed them from surrounding fellow Sect members and had to pay back everything with interest. His face grew even more ashen.

Meng Hao gave a light cough. His expression bashful, he said, “You were the ones who insisted on the match.” Zhou Shanyue trembled. With the flick of a sleeve, he turned to leave, clearly intending to go back on his word and not hand over the jade pendant.

Chen Fan gave a cold snort. “Junior Brother Zhou,” he said coolly, “The stakes of a bet mean nothing, but the prestige of the Solitary Sword Sect is everything. Don’t tell me you intend to break your word!?” Instantly, the eyes of all the surrounding Cultivators came to rest on Zhou Shanyue.

They were all Solitary Sword Sect disciples. They might not always be able to measure up to others in terms of skill, but the importance of upright conduct had been drilled into them from the moment they joined the Sect. One’s word could not be broken.

Zhou Shanyue felt the eyes of hundreds of his fellow disciples upon him, and his expression flickered. He stamped his foot angrily on the ground. Heart aching, he took off his life-saving jade pendant and threw it toward Meng Hao. He also tossed out a drop of his own blood.

He glared at Meng Hao, his eyes filled with fury and disgrace. If he could, he would kill Meng Hao hundreds of times over. Finally, his body turned into a colorful beam that shot off into the distance.

Meng Hao coughed lightly again. Such gazes were not unfamiliar to him, and he was actually used to them. His eager gaze next fell upon Li’s bag of holding. Inside were the tens upon tens of thousands of Spirit Stones which he had put up as stakes in the bet.

Pale faced, Li couldn't help but wonder how he would possibly pay back his fellow Sect members. Then he thought about how he owed literally hundreds of people, and his vision grew dim.

Without the slightest trace of politeness, Chen Fan walked up and grabbed the bag of holding. Li did nothing to stop him. He could only smile sadly. Chen Fan was just about to turn and walk back, when Meng Hao coughed again.

"Elder Brother, there's also a sword worth tens of thousands of Spirit Stones." Could Meng Hao really forget that? Considering how much he cared about Spirit Stones, as well as desire to join a Sect, he might be able to forget about other things. But he could never forget matters related to Spirit Stones.

"The sword?" Chen Fan said to pale-faced Li, holding his hand out.

Face bitter, Li produced the sword. His heart trembled, and felt as if it would tear in half. He handed it over to Chen Fan, and from his expression, it looked like he was handing over the love of his life.

He glared murderously at Meng Hao, the venom in his eyes growing stronger and stronger.

"No shame whatsoever!" he said, clenching his jaw. He flicked his sleeve, turned and left.

Chen Fan gave a cold snort, and then hurried away with Meng Hao and all the winnings. They returned to his house, their faces covered with smiles.

"Little Junior Brother, we won out this time. But next time," he exhorted earnestly, "you can't do something like that. That was extremely dangerous, and also, you now have to worry about those two trying to get back at you."

Meng Hao nodded, knowing that Chen Fan was simply concerned for him. With a smile, he said, "Elder Brother, how about I take the Spirit Stones, and you keep the jade pendant?"

Chen Fan thought for a moment, and then replied, "No, I don't need it. You take it. Listen to your Elder Brother. You take everything. This is my Sect, so I have everything I need. As for the jade pendant... consider this: You take it, but when Master emerges from secluded meditation, return it. After all, you will eventually be a member of the Sect."

Meng Hao tried to convince him to take the piece of jade, but Chen Fan, although he didn't directly refuse, declined to take it. Finally, Meng Hao collected together all his winnings, whereupon Chen Fan produced some more alcohol. The two Brothers sat down to drink, and chatted about the Reliance Sect.

A few days passed, and Chen Fan's master continued to remain in secluded meditation. The date of the banquet at the Song Clan drew closer. Finally, one morning at dawn, the sound of bells filled the Solitary Sword Sect.

At the bottom of the mountain was a stretch of ground normally covered with restrictive spells. Currently, people were flying from all directions toward this very area.

Meng Hao was among them, flying alongside Chen Fan.

As he approached, the first thing Meng Hao noticed was an enormous teleportation portal, surrounded by nine stone pillars. Not far away from it, a gray-robed old man sat cross-legged and motionless.

"That's the portal keeper," said Chen Fan quietly. "His only job is to keep watch over the teleportation portal." Meng Hao nodded, shifting his gaze to look at the portal itself as well as the surrounding area.

Other than Chen Fan and himself, there were three others present. They all wore the Daoist robes of the Solitary Sword Sect, and had large swords strapped to their backs. When he looked at them, they looked back and gave him slight nods.

With a smile, Meng Hao clasped hands and saluted them. They smiled back.

Despite the lack of any words being exchanged, Meng Hao could tell that they knew who he was. Obviously, his match with Li had gained him no small amount of prestige in the Solitary Sword Sect over the past few days.

Time passed, and more people arrived. After the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, there were about eighteen people present. None of them were very old; most were around thirty, and some seemed to be as young as twenty.

They seemed to brim with vitality, and were all extraordinarily good looking. Furthermore, all of them were in the Foundation Establishment stage, two of the group being at the late Foundation Establishment stage.

As they arrived, each one would look at Meng Hao. Some would then nod, others simply ignored him.

“Soon Elder Fan will arrive,” whispered Chen Fan. “He’ll lead us through the teleportation portal to the Song Clan. Your Elder Brother is going to work hard to get you a beloved!” He chuckled, but his expression was very serious.

Meng Hao gaped. This was the second time Chen Fan had brought up the matter. Meng Hao had a strange feeling about this trip to the Song Clan.

Time passed, and soon a beam of light appeared in the sky, a few dozen meters wide. In an instant, it had reached them, and an old man appeared, wearing a voluminous Daoist robe. His face was ruddy, and he had a full head of long, white hair. He carried a gourd of alcohol in his hand, and strapped to his back was a huge pitch-black sword.

He had a brandy nose, and his entire body emanated the smell of alcohol. His robe was wrinkled and messy. He burped.

“Greetings, Elder Fan!” said Chen Fan and the others, immediately clasping hands in salute. Meng Hao also bowed his head and clasped hands in greeting.

“Alright, you little brats. Let’s see if any of you are lucky enough to take that Song girl in marriage and bring honor to the ancestors of the Solitary Sword Sect....” The old man’s sonorous voice echoed out, shaking Meng Hao, and even the very ground, it seemed.

When he said the words “bring honor to the ancestors,” his voice grew especially loud, causing the gray-robed man to open his eyes and then slowly shake his head. He seemed to find the wording somewhat inappropriate. However, he said nothing.

“He’s definitely not a Core Formation Cultivator,” thought Meng Hao, taking a deep breath. He had seen Nascent Soul eccentrics before, and it seemed... that’s exactly what this man was! Nascent Soul stage!

Chen Fan stepped forward. Raising hands again in a respectful salute, he said, “Elder Fan, this is a disciple from my former Sect, my Junior Brother who....”

“Got it. No problem! Don’t forget to bring me a few jugs of your master’s alcohol when we get back.” The old man clapped Chen Fan on the shoulder. He glanced at Meng Hao, and then strode forward toward the teleportation portal.

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment and then said, “Elder Brother, this trip to the Song Clan....”

Chen Fan hurriedly replied. “The Song Clan has an urgent need for a son-in-law, so they’ve invited the five Sects and two Clans to visit. Little Junior Brother, if you play your cards right, you might have a chance. Whether you join the Solitary Sword Sect, or become a member of the Song Clan, you will soon have a proper foundation upon which to practice Cultivation.” He grabbed Meng Hao’s sleeve and dragged him toward the teleportation portal.

Meng Hao was hesitant for a moment, and then made his decision. “The people from the Solitary Sword Sect are here, so I can’t try to get the meat jelly to help me change my appearance. This isn’t really working out how I want it to. Oh well, once we get to the Song Clan, I’ll think of an excuse to get away.”

Chapter 186: Another Encounter with Wang Tengfei

The Song Clan was one of the three great Clans of the Southern Domain, and was somewhat isolated in its position. It had a history stretching back tens of thousands of years, and was deeply rooted in the society of the Southern Domain. It existed on the edge of a wide plain which contained some rolling hills, but few mountains.

In the southeast of the plain, however, was a mountain range called Neck of Heaven, under which flowed a river. Look down on it from the sky, and it had the appearance of a woman resting her head on her arm. It was quite pretty and charming.

The Song Clan was situated atop the chain of mountains. It was different from other Clans. Its main gate was actually an ancient castle, connected to which was an enormous wall that snaked throughout the various surrounding mountains, creating a very spectacular sight.

As for the castle of the capital city, it was pitch black and had the appearance of an enormous wild beast, filled with indescribable ferocity. Anyone who saw it for the first time would be left with the impression that the Song Clan was not to be provoked.

The capital city was surrounded by eighty-one smaller cities, which were constructed according to the rise and fall of the mountains. Each city was densely populated by Clan members.

In the sky above the Song Clan was an enormous rotating Sun and Moon. When it was pitch black in the outside world, the sun blazed in the Song Clan. When it was bright and sunny outside, the moon shone in the Song Clan.

This Sun and Moon was a precious treasure of the Song Clan.

Every great Sect and Clan possessed some valuable treasure. Only in this way could their continued status and glory be maintained.

For example, the Black Sieve Sect had their incense burner, and the Solitary Sword Sect its enormous sword. They were all precious treasures. As for the Song Clan, the sun and moon which hung in their sky enveloped the entire Clan, transforming it into a different world than what existed outside.

It was likely because of this treasure that for so many years, the Song Clan had not experienced any friction with outside Sects and Clans, and held such a lofty position. They did not provoke others, and others did not dare to provoke them.

The Song Clan was not as powerful as the Solitary Sword Sect, nor as mysterious of the Blood Demon Sect. It was not as extravagant as the Violet Fate Sect, nor did they have a vast array of magics like the Golden Frost Sect. They were not as erudite as the Black Sieve Sect, either.

Amongst the three great Clans, the Song Clan maintained the lowest profile. Their Dao Children did not perform sensational acts, nor did the Clan struggle for glory. They were relatively quiet. What they did have, though, was information, collected over many, many years.

They did not provoke others, and others did not dare to provoke them!

The mountains they occupied left others with a profound impression. If incredible change rocked the Southern Domain in the future, other Sects and Clans might very well collapse. The one organization that was most likely to remain was the Song Clan.

The degree of their inconspicuousness was such that people knew almost nothing about them. This in turn created a sense of fear and terror.

In the past few hundred years, the only person to venture out of the Song Clan was Eccentric Song who everyone in the Southern Domain knew about. He had an odd personality, and enjoyed the collection of wild beasts. His occasional excursions gave him plenty of opportunities to interact with other Sects and Clans.

At this moment within the Song Clan capital city, dazzling lights flickered and people bustled about preparing for an ancient tradition of the Song Clan.

Women of the Song Clan were not permitted to marry outsiders. Instead, a husband would be sought from the outside, who would then marry into the family. Upon marriage, the new son-in-law would then become a Conclave Cultivator of the Song Clan.

Throughout the years, many Sects had desired to infiltrate the Song Clan. However, because of their strange and ancient marriage custom, those Sects had long since vanished. The Song Clan, however... still remained.

Of course, there were problems with the arrangement....

Song Jia stood quietly at the window, looking out. The outside world was awash with sunlight, but inside the Song Clan, the sky was dark. Wind blew against her face, lifting up her hair and revealing her spectacular beauty. Right now, she wore a sad look and seemed to be apprehensive.

Her apprehension was because of her fate as a woman of the Song Clan. She felt melancholy for the same reason. There was nothing she could do to resist; it was useless to struggle. The Song Clan's rules had been laid down by the ancestors, and could not be changed.

The soft voice of a woman could be heard from behind her. "We're different from the other Sects and Clans. As a girl of the Song Clan, it's impossible to maintain your purity forever. You can't change that, nor can I." The voice belonged to a middle-aged woman who gazed affectionately at Song Jia.

Song Jia didn't reply.

After a while, though, she nodded. In her mind, images appeared from the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament. She remembered looking on helplessly as her Blood Phoenix died. She could only watch through tear-filled eyes as it faded away.

“Perhaps it’s just my fate.” Her face filled with exhaustion. The exhaustion did not mar her good looks; in fact, it seemed to give birth to a tender beauty.

The woman behind her could sense what Song Jia was feeling. She stepped forward and stroked Song Jia’s long, beautiful hair. “It is fate,” she said. “But it’s not destiny, it’s a mission. A mission from the Song Clan of the Southern Domain.

“The destruction of the Southern Domain. Gather a hundred Clans. Fuse their bloodlines. Evade the palace of the Heavens....” Song Jia murmured the words which she had heard people recite ever since she was young. “But father said that no power within the entire Southern Domain could bring about its complete destruction. Nothing in the Eastern Lands could do so either.” She looked back at the middle-aged woman.

“That’s a legend which has existed since ancient times. Mother doesn’t know what it means either.”

Mother and daughter were silent for a while after that.

Meanwhile, outside of the Song Clan, the sun blazed brightly in the sky. On the plains below the Song Clan, a glittering light shined out, which grew in intensity over the space of about ten breaths. Then, it gradually disappeared, revealing a dozen or more people.

Meng Hao sucked in a deep breath and rubbed the bridge of his nose. It seemed his body wasn’t really suited for teleportation. He looked around and immediately noticed that up ahead existed a world of darkness. There was a huge mountain range, hanging over which was... a moon.

He gaped at the bizarre sight.

Next to him, Chen Fan sighed with emotion. “We’re in Song Clan territory now. It’s my first time here, but I’ve heard people talk of how astonishing the Song Clan is.”

The old man lifted his gourd of alcohol and took a drink. Then he let out a loud burp and laughed heartily. His laughter filled the air, after which several beams of light shot out from the darkness of the Song Clan.

“Brandy Nose!” said a voice from within the approaching beams of light. It didn’t sound pleased. “How come the Solitary Sword Sect sent you? I can smell the stench of alcohol coming off of you from here!”

“Eccentric Song! How could I not come? This old Daoist is going to drink his fill before he leaves!” The old man suddenly shot up into the air.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. The words ‘Eccentric Song’ filled him with fear. He looked up into the sky and could just make out the image of Song Clan members within the beams of light. One of them was an old man who, although Meng Hao had never seen before, he immediately knew was the same Eccentric Song from that time in the State of Zhao.

“I just arrived and already ran into him,” thought Meng Hao. “I can’t stay here long... if Eccentric Song finds out I’m here, the consequences will be terrible....” Meng Hao was just about to try to sneak off when Chen Fan grabbed him.

“Little Junior Brother, did you see? I’m not sure of the name of that member of the elder generation, but I heard everyone calls him Eccentric Song. They say he has a very bizarre personality, and that he owns tons of wild beasts. He also likes to make bets with other Sects all the time....”

Meng Hao interrupted him with a forced smile, “Elder Brother, I really can’t proceed any further, I have to....” Before Meng Hao could finish speaking, the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect and Eccentric Song suddenly started yelling at each other.

“Your Song Clan is entirely too stingy! Ten Thousand Trees Mountain only has a single pearl as the reward? What good is a crappy pearl!? That’s the prize that my Solitary Sword Sect kids are supposed to fight for? No way!”

“It’s a Cubic Pearl that can dispel even the strangest poisons in the world,” replied Eccentric Song. “It’s a treasure refined by the Sun and Moon of the Song Clan. It can only be given as a gift to a son-in-law of the Song Clan. Even if you wanted it, you couldn’t have it. Besides, what treasures could possibly compare to a girl of the Song Clan? Your granny! Are you Solitary Sword Sect people here because of the search for a son-in-law, or just to grab treasures?!”

Hearing this exchange, Meng Hao’s eyes flickered. Next to him, Chen Fan frowned.

“Little Junior Brother, you should really think things through,” he said earnestly. “You’ll be able to make a lot of friends here. Li Fugui will be here too, and you haven’t seen him for years. However, if you truly must leave, then Elder Brother won’t stop you.”

Meng Hao lowered his head thoughtfully for a moment, then looked up and smiled.

“Fine, since I’m here, I might as well check things out.”

Chen Fan smiled in return. He clapped Meng Hao on the shoulder and was just about to continue speaking when another blinding light appeared. It spread out, attracting the attention of everyone, including Eccentric Song and the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

The glowing light spread out, and within, the figures of dozens of people gradually grew distinct. Meng Hao’s eyes glittered, and Chen Fan frowned.

These were people from the Wang Clan.

The group was comprised of both men and women. They looked around after they appeared, and their eyes were especially drawn to the mountain chain in the distance, upon which the Song Clan was situated.

At the front of this group of people was an old man whose face was covered with a tranquil expression. He strode forward, looking up at Eccentric Song and the old man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

“Fellow Daoist Fan,” he said, “you arrived quickly. Could it be that you caught a whiff of the Song Clan’s alcohol, causing you to arrive faster than everyone else?”

Elder Fan laughed and took a swig of alcohol. “I’m not that fast. At least, I’m not as fast as Fellow Daoist Wang was that time back at the Rebirth Cave. The speed and beauty of your retreat were incredible.”

The old man from the Wang Clan smiled. He didn’t respond, but clasped his hands and gave a slight bow to Eccentric Song.

Behind him were various members of the Wang Clan, including Wang Tengfei. He wore a white robe, along with a cold expression and a slight, grim frown. It seemed as if he were thinking about something important. His features were handsome, his disposition perfect. Everything melded together to give him an air of flawlessness.

Standing next to him was Wang Xifan. His expression was proud and aloof as he gazed at the Song Clan mountains. Then his gaze shifted to the group from the Solitary Sword Sect. He frowned when he caught sight of Meng Hao.

“He looks a bit familiar...” His gaze passed by before he could recall who Meng Hao was. However, it was at this moment that Wang Tengfei’s surprised eyes fell onto Meng Hao. A look of disbelief appeared.

Meng Hao looked back at him. They were in different groups of people, hundreds of meters away from each other, and yet their gazes locked.

Just like they had years ago in the Reliance Sect!

Chapter 187: Good Old Fatty

“Meng Hao!” thought Wang Tengfei, his eyes instantly shining with a mysterious glow. He felt a sudden stab of pain from the index finger of his right hand. The finger was pitch black, and inside, a pulsating black aura could be seen.

Seeing Meng Hao here was not something Wang Tengfei had ever imagined would happen. Many years had passed, but he recognized him immediately. This was that damned Cultivator from the State of Zhao who had stolen away his legacy and wrecked all of his meticulously laid plans!

As soon as he saw Meng Hao, Wang Tengfei’s breath quickened. He had assumed that Meng Hao disappeared along with the State of Zhao. How could he have predicted that he would suddenly appear here? Furthermore, he was in a group from the Solitary Sword Sect. Many thoughts ran through his head during the space of a few breaths. Then he recovered his composure and looked away.

“Since he’s here,” thought Wang Tengfei, “I’ll have to find an opportunity to sacrifice him to my poison finger.” His expression calm, he slowly began to exhibit the same disregard for Meng Hao that he had years ago. It was as if he would eternally be above Meng Hao. It didn’t matter if they were in the State of Zhao or the Southern Domain. He didn’t care at all about Meng Hao. He was a member of the Wang Clan. He was Chosen. He was superior, and as for Meng Hao, it didn’t matter

what relationship he had with the Solitary Sword Sect. To him, Meng Hao was nothing more than an insect.

He had perfect good looks and a flawless temperament. He stood there, slowly becoming the center of attention. He smiled lightly, his expression indifferent. The disregard for Meng Hao which existed in his heart slowly transformed in to scorn and arrogance. He tilted his head up, and it appeared, for all intents and purposes, that Meng Hao was nothing to him and could be crushed on a whim.

At the same time, Wang Xifan frowned slightly. He looked at Meng Hao again, and a mysterious look appeared in his eyes. A smile tugged at the corners of his mouth. It was a smile similar to Wang Tengfei's, filled with scorn in disregard.

Now he remembered the scene from years ago. He remembered this ant that he almost crushed on the top of the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect, only to be stopped by He Luohua.

“Interesting,” he said with a chuckle. His words did not echo out, and could only be heard by Wang Tengfei. “So, we once again run into this insolent kid. Tengfei, now is your chance to conclude matters from all those years ago. Kill him, and prove that everything I’ve told you is true. You are Chosen, and he is nothing more than an insect.”

Wang Tengfei smiled. “I’ve long since stopped thinking about the things that happened that year,” he said coolly. “However, I really should take his head.” He looked at Meng Hao once again, and his eyes brimmed with confidence in his ability to kill him. It would be as easy as turning over his hand. He looked away, ignoring Meng Hao and staring off into the distance. He appeared thoughtful once again, as if he were wrestling with some matter in his heart.

“Don’t overthink things,” said Wang Xifan, his voice low. “You need to trust Chu Yuyan.”

Wang Tengfei was quiet for a long moment, then growled, “If I ever find out who it was, I’ll tear him into a thousand pieces!!” His eyes were filled with cold, callous hatred, as well as humiliation. Killing intent roiled out of him, much more intense than when he had seen Meng Hao. This matter was something he could not ignore, something he could not cool down from.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. Seeing Wang Tengfei here wasn’t completely unexpected. However, it naturally caused various emotions to bubble up within him.

The enmity between him and Wang Tengfei was not something he cared much about any more. Years had passed, and as of now, Meng Hao actually felt that he had been a bit too hot-blooded in his youth. There were definitely some areas in which he was in the wrong.

Now, Meng Hao's Cultivation base was at the mid Foundation Establishment stage, and his battle prowess put him in the same league as Dao Children, although few people knew that. In Meng Hao's estimation, if he could defeat Wang Tengfei when in the Qi Condensation stage, then nowadays it wasn't even worth thinking about.

What concerned him most was the Song Clan's search for a husband, and the Cubic Pearl that Eccentric Song had mentioned moments ago. It could dispel the strangest poisons in the world, and that made Meng Hao's heart palpitate with eagerness.

He wasn't sure if the Cubic Pearl could dispel the poison of the Resurrection Lily, but considering the Song Clan was offering it up as a prize, it was surely no ordinary object.

"I wonder if it really can dispel the poison.... If it can, then maybe I won't need to infiltrate the Violet Fate Sect after all. Staying in the Solitary Sword Sect wouldn't be bad." His heart pounded in anticipation. As he traveled the path of Cultivation, his next big hurdle would be Core Formation. That was a difficult bridge to cross, and joining a powerful Sect would surely help.

After a long moment of thought, his eyes filled with determination.

Up above, Eccentric Song, Elder Fan, and the Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Wang Clan turned into beams of prismatic light that shot toward the darkness which surrounded the Song Clan.

Two other Song Clan members had come out with Eccentric Song. They split, one walking toward the Solitary Sword Sect's group, the other to the Wang Clan's group.

They clasped hands and bowed. Smiling, they said, "Fellow Daoists of the Solitary Sword Sect and Wang Clan, please follow us. We will enter the mountains of the Song Clan together."

Everyone flew up into the air. Various members of the Solitary Sword Sect and the Wang Clan were obviously acquainted. The two groups merged into a larger group. Talking and laughing could be heard as they transformed into beams of light and shot toward the Song Clan.

Meng Hao and Chen Fan were on the edge of the group, some distance away from the Wang Clan Cultivators. Wang Tengfei flew along, expression cold. He frowned, apparently too busy being lost in thought to pay any attention to Meng Hao.

They flew at high speed, and very soon reached the area where the brightness of the outside world gave way to the darkness of the Song Clan. The instant they entered, Meng Hao's heart leaped. He had just discovered a major difference between the outside world, and the Song Clan. The spiritual energy here... could be felt and absorbed!!

This unexpected turn of events shook Meng Hao's mind and heart. Of course, after all his years of practicing Cultivation, he was able to prevent his feelings from showing on his face. His expression was the same as ever.

“So it turns out... I can absorb spiritual energy in this place! This is the perfect location for me to practice Cultivation!” This discovery exceeded the entirety of Meng Hao's imagination. He was just preparing to rotate his Cultivation base and begin to absorb spiritual energy when a thought flashed through his mind, and he stopped.

One of the tools which Meng Hao had developed after escaping all the various snares and traps throughout the years, was caution. Therefore, he would be cautious here, too.

He looked around and soon began to pick up on some clues. As the Solitary Sword Sect disciples flew forward, frowns appeared on their faces.

“So, we can't absorb the spiritual energy here...” Chen Fan whispered to him. “I heard before that the Song Clan is strange, and that certainly seems true. Apparently, only members of the Song Clan can do breathing exercises here to absorb spiritual energy. Other Sects and Clans are unable to. It's not that spiritual energy is forbidden here, it's that we can't absorb it.”

A bit more time passed. Seeing all the mountains and cities filled with Cultivators pass by beneath him, Meng Hao was filled with a sense of mystery. After passing scores of mountains, they reached the Song Clan's capital city.

Within the capital city was an enormous square. Already, many Cultivators from outside the Song Clan had arrived there. Present were members of the Golden Frost Sect and the Blood Demon Sect.

The place was alive with activity, and the hubbub of conversations filled the air.

Even before the Solitary Sword Sect and Wang Clan Cultivators could land, a loud voice drifted up into the air. “It’s absolutely, one hundred percent true. I, Zhou Daya saw everything with my own eyes. That day, Chu Yuyan wasn’t wearing proper clothing. She was wearing a man’s garment! Furthermore, she seemed to be on very intimate terms with the male Cultivator. You all don’t believe me? I, Zhou Daya, swear an oath that if my words are in any way false, you can gouge my eyes out!”

The person talking was a young Cultivator. He was speaking so passionately that spit flew out of his mouth. He gazed at the surrounding Song Clan members with exuberant, shining eyes. As he spoke, he gesticulated wildly and jumped up and down. The dozens of surrounded Song Clan members watched on in astonishment.

The Cultivators from the Blood Demon Sect were situated off to the side. They sat there quietly, cross-legged, and in their midst was a Li Shiqi dressed in a white robe!

Sitting cross-legged next to Li Shiqi were two people. One was Sang Luo’s brother, and the other was none other than Wang Youcai

Wang Youcai was looking quietly at the group of people from the Golden Frost Sect. In their midst was a rather fat fellow whose face had a few pimples on it. He wasn’t very tall, and at the moment he was smiling complacently at Zhou Daya. This was none other than Li Fugui.

When the two of them had run into each other earlier, Fatty found, to his surprise, that Wang Youcai responded coldly to his attempts to start a conversation and even pretended not to know him. At the moment, he wasn’t sure what to think, and could only sigh inwardly.

“You simply can’t imagine the expression on Chu Yuyan’s face,” continued Zhou Daya. “I guess you can only say that it was wonderful. And that male Cultivator, well, he was extraordinarily handsome, a dragon amongst men. Really. They embraced each other and exchanged some sweet words. As their hands groped each other frantically, they began to pant....” As he spoke, Zhou Daya got more excited.

Li Fugui suddenly cleared his throat and spoke out in a loud and clear voice. “I can bear witness to this,” he said, “as I was also present. Ai, at first I planned to go give them a piece of my mind. As all of you Fellow Daoists are well aware, Fellow Daoist Chu Yuyan is the beloved of Fellow Daoist Wang Tengfei. And of course, Fellow Daoist Wang Tengfei and I are the closest of friends.

“Therefore, when I saw what was happening, I wanted to speak my mind. However... Ai, you have no way to know how the two of them looked. It was clear that the feelings between them, were true love.” As his voice rang out, the faces of the Song Clan members all filled with strange expressions.

They knew Fatty, of course. He was a member of the Golden Frost Sect that no one dared to provoke. He was a treasure of the Sect, and as such, his level of seniority was extremely high. Anyone who offended him would arouse the wrath of the entire Golden Frost Sect. To do so would be similar to rubbing a cat’s hair backward.

This was because the Golden Frost Sect had eighteen bloodline legacies. By combining their power, the Sect could wield the power of a great Dao Reserve spell. According to the rumors, the power of this spell was so incredible that it could slay Immortals!

However, for many years, the Sect only possessed seventeen of the bloodlines. The last one had disappeared, and no matter how hard the Golden Frost Sect searched, it could not be found. There was no one who the legacy could be passed onto. Therefore, for many years, the ultimate power of the Golden Frost Sect’s spell could not be unleashed. However, it turned out Li Fugui was perfectly suited to accept the legacy. Therefore, he was treated as a treasure of the Sect. Usually, the Sect Priest would treat him very amiably and was very protective of him. You could essentially say that the entire Sect was at his beck and call.

Furthermore... Fatty didn’t like to practice Cultivation, nor did he want an assigned Dao Protector. So to protect him....

Whenever he went out, a large group of Golden Frost Sect disciples would accompany him. The Sect was extremely worried that something might happen to him. The most extreme thing that had happened was that once after someone provoked Li Fugui, the Sect Priest personally slaughtered an entire Sect. Afterwards, he issued a proclamation in the Southern Domain that anyone who dared to even touch Li Fugui would provoke the unbridled fury of the entire Golden Frost Sect.

Chapter 188: True Love is Priceless

Actually, Li Fugui was diametrically opposed to Wang Tengfei, and wouldn’t let him off the hook for anything. Normally, whether he was inside the Sect or outside, he constantly said sarcastic things about him.

This, of course, made Wang Tengfei furious. However, there was nothing he could do about it. Offending Li Fugui was not an option. Their feud was a trifling matter of the junior generation. Furthermore, Li Fugui was too important to the Golden Frost Sect. The difference between Li

Fugui's importance to the Golden Frost Sect and Wang Teng Fei's importance to the Wang clan, was immeasurable.

Fatty suddenly leaped up onto the table, to the embarrassment of his fellow Golden Frost Sect members. They could do little more than cough lightly and watch as he cried out, "Ah, true love. Fellow Daoists, could I really not see such a thing? It was definitely true love. How could I, Li Fugui, do anything to split apart such an affectionate couple? Would I really do that, just for my good-for-nothing friend Wang Tengfei? Would I really disturb a scene of true love? Never! I could never do such a thing!

"There's a saying which speaks of a love that can transcend something-or-other, I forgot. Anyway, someone told me something once. Actually, it was the best friend I've ever had, the person I admire most in the world. He told me that love is the most valuable thing in the world, worth more than even millions of Spirit Stones!" As he spoke, his mouthful of extraordinarily large teeth became visible. In the end, he began to choke up and started to cry aloud.

Seeing this caused the Song Clan members to smile wryly. The Blood Demon Sect Cultivators eyed Fatty with strange expressions.

Li Shiqi frowned, but didn't say anything. Wang Youcai also maintained his silence, although a slight smile appeared on his face.

"Therefore," continued Fatty, growing more and more excited, "I pretended that I didn't even see them. However, it left me with the feeling that Wang Tengfei is really a useless nobody. Furthermore, he's completely shameless. Anyone could see that it was true love. Were I in Wang Tengfei's place, I would simply smile, and hand over the beauty.

"That unknown Cultivator, in terms of appearance, of Cultivation base, of everything, is clearly above and beyond Wang Tengfei. Sadly..."

Suddenly, an infuriated shout could be heard from mid-air.

"LI FUGUI!!!" Killing intent roiled out from Wang Tengfei as he shot out from the group floating in the air. His entire body was like a sharpened sword slicing toward Li Fugui.

Before he could get very close, the Golden Frost Sect disciples behind Li Fugui leaped up with amazing speed. In the blink of an eye, they shot forward. One of them, a tall, strapping man, let out

a cold harrumph and formed a fist, which he lifted into the air. Ripples spread out from it in all directions, and a roaring sound filled the air. Wang Tengfei's facial expression flickered.

Wang Xifan exploded out with incredible speed. In an instant, he was in front of Wang Tengfei, waving both hands out forward.

A boom echoed out. The blood drained from Wang Xifan's face as he grabbed Wang Tengfei and retreated backward. He glanced back murderously at the large man from the Golden Frost Sect.

"Members of the Wang Clan, please conduct yourself with dignity," said the large man coolly. The power of his Core Formation Cultivation base rolled out.

The group of people Meng Hao was a part of descended to the ground. Meng Hao had a strange expression on his face, and he coughed lightly. He looked at Fatty hiding behind the large man. The things Fatty had been saying were somewhat embarrassing, and left Meng Hao feeling a little guilty.

"Do you see?" said Chen Fan quietly. "Li Fugui is no small figure in the Golden Frost Sect. Now that I think about it, Wang Tengfei's current situation really is deserving of sympathy. Little Junior Brother, have you seen Chu Yuyan? Ai, I'm really curious which Sect that Cultivator is from who got entangled with Fellow Daoist Chu Yuyan...."

"Uh... yeah I saw her before...." said Meng Hao hesitantly, not sure of what else to say.

Chen Fan sighed. "I really hope I have a chance to meet that guy one day. He must be brilliant to be able to snatch Chu Yuyan away right out from under Wang Tengfei's nose. Ah, such skill. He must truly be a man of character."

"Such skill, such skill...." Meng Hao felt even more guilty. Lowering his head, he slowly edged backward. At the same time, he looked over the crowd. He suddenly noticed Wang Youcai, and he stared in shock. Wang Youcai sat there taciturnly, avoiding Meng Hao's eyes.

"Wang Tengfei, do you really dare to attack me?" said Fatty, sticking his head out from behind the large man and pointing at Wang Tengfei. "Your granny!" he roared. "You truly dare to attack me? According to the rules of seniority of the five Sects and three Clans, I'm your Master Uncle. Do you actually dare to bully your seniors?!" Fatty slapped his bag of holding to produce a Spirit Stone, which he popped into his mouth. Crunching sounds echoed out as he crushed it into bits. It was quite a ferocious sight.

After crushing the Spirit Stone to pieces, Fatty extended his hand. With a wry smile, the big man produced a jade bottle which he handed over to Fatty. Fatty popped it into his mouth.

“Li Fugui, you are too excessive!” Wang Tengfei ground his teeth. Even as the words left his mouth, Fatty closed his eyes.

“What exists between them is true love,” he said. “Do you understand what true love is? True love exists between your wife Chu Yuyan and another man. I’ve seen it with my own eyes. Why would you possibly interfere with that?!” People around started to laugh, causing Wang Tengfei’s face to grow even more enraged. “If only you understood. Ah, true love. It’s priceless! I truly admire that Fellow Daoist. He’s so skilled. He truly handled things masterfully....” As Fatty went on with his speech, Meng Hao continued to edge backward. However, he wasn’t fast enough. He suddenly noticed that Zhou Daya was staring directly at him, a look of disbelief and astonishment covering his face.

Meng Hao’s heart began to thump. Although he had intentionally set this thing in motion, he had never imagined he would see a scene such as that playing out today. He wanted to hide, but suddenly, Zhou Daya’s raised his voice.

“It’s him!!” he shouted, pointing directly at Meng Hao, seemingly afraid people wouldn’t recognize him. “It’s him! That’s the Cultivator who I saw with Chu Yuyan!!”

Zhou Daya really did live up to his name, which means ‘big mouth.’ Not only did he like to gossip, he also had a very loud voice. His voice rang out clearly, causing everyone’s attention to instantly follow the line of his finger to fall onto Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s face flickered. The surrounding Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at him in shock and unconsciously edged away from him. Soon, he and Chen Fan stood there alone.

Chen Fan was also gaping numbly at Meng Hao. He recovered his composure quickly, however, in the end, also quickly edged away. He didn’t want any misunderstandings to result from standing next to Meng Hao. If anyone tried to bully Meng Hao, he would leap to assist in an instant; but what was occurring right now was a romantic love scandal....

As he edged backward, Chen Fan’s eyes began to glow brightly. A look of both disbelief and admiration filled them.

As Zhou Daya pointed at Meng Hao, all of the Solitary Sword Sect disciples stared at him, as did the Cultivators from the Wang Clan, the Song Clan and the Blood Demon Sect. Everyone was looking at Meng Hao.

Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect had a strange expression on her face. She had noticed Meng Hao moments ago. At the moment, she snorted, turning her head to ignore him. Wang Youcai stared in shock at Meng Hao.

As for Wang Tengfei, he stood there mutely, glaring at Meng Hao. Veins began to bulge out on his face, and veins of blood appeared in his eyes. He thought back to the Flying Rain-Dragon legacy, to the Reliance Inner Sect training. He thought back to his feelings in the Flying Rain Dragon's cave. His humiliation and rage billowed up to the heavens.

Everything was completely silent. All eyes were on Meng Hao. Of course, in the past days, the rumors about Chu Yuyan being seen with a strange man had been spreading throughout the five great Sects and three great Clans.

It had started in the Golden Frost Sect. Everything about the rumor made sense and was quite vivid. No one knew, and everyone wondered, who the strange man might be. Now here, in front of all these eyes, Meng Hao had been pointed out.

Fatty stared in shock. He stood blankly for a moment, and then rubbed his eyes vigorously. Suddenly, he started to look very excited.

Just as he was about to rush over, a dozen or so colorful beams of light approached from off in the distance. As they whistled down, it was clear that this was the Violet Fate Sect!

Chu Yuyan was not with them, however, there were two people who Meng Hao did recognize. They were none other than Qian Shuihen and Lu Song who were now in the early Foundation Establishment stage.

They flew on either side of a young man with a cool expression. His body radiated the power of late Foundation Establishment, and seemed to occupy a position of great respect amongst the other Violet Fate Sect disciples.

At the same time, ten more beams appeared. This was the Black Sieve Sect. The beautiful Han Bei was among them. She was dressed in men's clothing, but a single glance was enough to see that she

was a woman. She was chatting and laughing with a Song Clan member as she flew down to the square.

The arrival of the Violet Fate Sect and Black Sieve Sect would normally cause various members of other Sects to seek out friends and catch up. But a strange atmosphere now filled the air. Most people just glanced momentarily at the new arrivals from the other two Sects.

As soon as Zhou Daya saw more people arriving, he once again cried out, his voice even louder, "It's him! That's the Cultivator I saw with Chu Yuyan. She was putting on his clothes...." In actuality, there is a vast difference between 'wearing his clothes' and 'putting on his clothes.' The Cultivators from the Violet Fate Sect all stopped in their tracks and stared at Meng Hao.

As disciples of the Violet Fate Sect, how could they not be aware of the rumors swirling about regarding Chu Yuyan? As for Qian Shuihen and Lu Song, the instant they caught sight of Meng Hao, their eyes grew wide and they stared in shock. Then their eyes grew hateful.

It had been years since they had seen Meng Hao, but the blow they had received that year was enormous. Even down to this very day, people still talked about what had happened. The events had caused hatred to seep down into their bones. It was the greatest humiliation they had ever experienced in their lives.

Qian Shuihen stared at Meng Hao, and he started breathing heavily. Killing intent began to roil within Lu Song's eyes.

"Dammit, it's you!!"

"So, it's you!!"

The two of them roared, filling the spectators with even more shock. The details of the matter with Chu Yuyan were still not clear, but the intense rage of these two Violet Fate Sect disciples was clearly no joke. They obviously hated Meng Hao down to the marrow of their bones.

Chapter 189: All the Enemies Arrive

Meng Hao smiled wryly. The spot he occupied in the square had long since grown empty, making him especially conspicuous. His smile grew more bitter, and he sighed inwardly.

“If I had known things would end up like this,” he thought, “I wouldn’t have let Zhou Daya go.... Ai, are all of my enemies going to appear today...?” He coughed and subconsciously rubbed his nose. He suddenly got the feeling that he’d done a bit too many things over the past few years. Now the moment had arrived in which his crowds of victims were accusing him.

“Damn you, Meng Hao!” howled Qian Shuihen. “I will never forget the matter of the iron spear from that year!” He immediately took a step forward. Next to him, Lu Song’s eyes were red. Throughout the years, the two of them were often derided by fellow Sect members because of the incident with the iron spear. They had often wished to go seek Meng Hao to exact revenge. However, the State of Zhao had disappeared, presumably Meng Hao along with it. They had never imagined that they would encounter him this day. Thoughts of vengeance immediately filled their hearts.

Wang Tengfei also took a step forward, his face filled with murder. “Meng Hao, I already loathed you back in the State of Zhao. You had better provide an explanation about what happened with Chu Yuyan...” Wang Tengfei felt as if he were an object of laughter among the entire current generation of Cultivators of the Southern Domain. It was something he couldn’t accept. He wanted to slay Meng Hao where he stood.

“What a lively scene, Brother Meng,” came a voice from within the Black Sieve Sect disciples. It was Han Bei. “I never imagined I would find you here. So many interesting stories.” She sighed. “Don’t forget the deal you and I made.” She covered her mouth and laughed, winking at Meng Hao. Her words made the audience’s eyes glitter even more brightly.

Meng Hao’s appearance seemed to be provoking the interest of one person after another. As of now, all the people who had never heard of him before were becoming intensely interested in the proceedings.

A buzz of conversation filled the air. One voice rose up from within the Blood Demon Sect. It was Li Shiqi. “Fellow Daoist Meng Hao, you really do have a lot of interesting stories to tell! However, I’m curious about what happened to that annoying hat of yours?” It was hard to tell what she was thinking, but her eyes shone with interest.

Chen Fen stood gaping. He took a deep breath as he gazed at Meng Hao, an indescribable admiration growing in his eyes. Fatty looked at Meng Hao excitedly. It seemed that no matter where Meng Hao went, he would attract attention.

It was the same back in the Reliance Sect as it was right here and now.

“No wonder he’s the Elder Brother!” thought Fatty, taking a deep breath. His admiration for Meng Hao had reached such heights that he wanted to fall to his knees and bow down.

Meng Hao gave a dry cough and continued to smile bitterly. He really did feel a bit guilty. However, before he could respond to anyone, ten beams of light suddenly appeared off in the distance. It was none other than the Li Clan.

As of now, all five great Sects and the two other great Clans had arrived.

In the middle of the Li Clan people was Li Daoyi. His arm had long since been replaced by the Li Clan. He was a Dao Child, so he couldn’t marry into the Song Clan. He had obviously not come because of the Song Clan’s search for a husband, but rather for some other reason. However, as soon as the Li Clan people touched down into the square, his eyes fell upon Meng Hao.

As soon as they did, he gaped. Almost immediately, his Cultivation base rippled with power, and the aura of the great circle of late Foundation Establishment filled the square.

“So, you finally appear!!” he said grimly, taking a step toward Meng Hao. Fierce killing intent emanated from his eyes. It was obvious to everyone that there was some big secret between him and Meng Hao that he wasn’t willing to talk about. Of course, their fight in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament had given birth to enormous enmity that could only be wiped away by death.

To suddenly find Meng Hao here caused Li Daoyi’s killing intent to explode outward.

Everyone else in the square who didn’t know Meng Hao were now clamoring in excitement and shock at what was happening.

“First it was the matter with Chu Yuyan and then Wang Tengfei’s murderous intentions. Then something about the Violet Fate Sect and an iron spear. After that, some agreement between him and Han Bei from the Black Sieve Sect! Next, Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect!! And finally... he’s provoked killing intent from the Dao Child of the Li Clan!!”

“How can this guy have gotten involved in so many situations? He seems to have provoked everybody! How come we’ve never heard of him before?”

“What’s going on...? His name is Meng Hao, huh? It seems like he really has the ability to piss people off...”

“Of the five Sects and three Clans, the only ones who aren’t involved are the Solitary Sword Sect and the Song Clan. He arrived with the Solitary Sword Sect, so he must not have any issues with them. But what about the Song Clan? He’s so good at pissing people off, I wonder if he had any issues with them?”

Amidst the buzz of conversation that filled the square, Fatty let out a roar and charged up to Meng Hao’s side, his face filled with excitement.

“Meng Hao, I’ve missed you to death!” he said. He hugged Meng Hao, tears streaming down his face. Years had passed, and he had grown up quite a bit. He was now much stouter than before.

Meng Hao smiled, although the smile was somewhat bitter. Everything that was happening was actually because of Fatty....

“Meng Hao! You WILL give me an explanation!” Wang Tengfei’s face was extremely grim as he stared at Meng Hao. Wang Tengfei felt as if he were wearing an enormous green hat which filled his heart with indescribable humiliation. He took another step toward Meng Hao.

Li Daoyi also took a step forward. “You still haven’t provided an explanation for what happened that day. Now that you’re here, you have an opportunity to speak.”

“Damn you, Meng Hao, we will resolve our enmity this day!” Qian Shuihen and Lu Song both began to walk toward him.

It seemed chaos would break out at any moment. Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. Fatty spun and let out a roar.

“Meng Hao is my brother! Who dares to attack him?!” Hearing this, the Golden Frost Sect disciples exchanged glances and then strode over to stand next to Fatty. The big man from before simply shook his head, choosing not to say anything.

Fatty’s sudden appearance next to Meng Hao caused Wang Tengfei to frown.

Chen Fan strode forward. “Meng Hao is my little Junior Brother. Fellow Daoists, if you insist on acting this way, then I, Chen Fan, must also take my stand.” Suddenly, his flying dagger appeared.

The addition of Chen Fan caused Qian and Lu from the Violet Fate Sect to hesitate.

Han Bei moved forward with a laugh. “Brother Meng, considering our friendship, how could I not join you as well?”

Without a single word, Wang Youcai stood up in the midst of the Blood Demon Sect Cultivators and walked over to stand next to Meng Hao.

Li Shiqi’s cold voice rang out next. “Your hat is incredibly annoying. However, for the sake of my Junior Brother Wang Youcai, the Blood Demon Sect will also stand by you. Let’s see who dares to touch you this day.”

The crowd of people surrounding Meng Hao caused Li Daoyi’s brow to furrow. It was a delicate situation. In actuality, there could not be any killing on this day and place, considering they were in the Song Clan.

Also, he had never imagined Meng Hao would have so many powerful connections. The Golden Frost Sect. The Solitary Sword Sect. The Blood Demon Sect. The Black Sieve Sect. People from all of these Sects supported him.

Wang Tengfei’s eyes shone with a cold light as he glared murderously at Meng Hao. Shock filled his heart. How could he ever have predicted that this former disciple of the Reliance Sect could have accumulated such influence?

There was Chen Fan and Li Fugui. Add to that Han Bei from the Black Sieve Sect and Li Shiqi from the Blood Demon Sect. Who knew why they all supported him, but without uttering a single word, Meng Hao had suddenly made it impossible for anyone to attack him.

Qian Shuihen and Lu Song were suddenly very nervous. They, too, could never have imagined that after all these years, Meng Hao would reappear in such a fashion, with such connections.

The entire square grew silent, and it was at this moment than an impatient voice suddenly could be heard from off in the distance.

“What are you kids up to? What’s riled everyone up? Everybody simmer down! The Song Clan is throwing a feast to search for a husband, why is everyone stirring up trouble?!” The voice belonged to Eccentric Song, who was accompanied by the eccentric members of the other Sects and Clans.

Smiles covered their faces, and they obviously didn’t care about what was happening.

The appearance of the old-timers caused the tension in the square to begin to dissipate. Everyone began to return to their original positions. As they did, Meng Hao lowered his head and began to walk away with Chen Fan. Suddenly, Eccentric Song’s eyes fell upon Meng Hao.

“Hold on!” he said.

Meng Hao froze, sighing inwardly. With a silent, bitter laugh, he turned to face Eccentric Song. His mind spun as he tried to think of a way out of the situation. He placed his hand on his bag of holding. If necessary, he would try to use the good luck charm to escape.

“Kid, why do you look so familiar...?” Eccentric Song’s brow furrowed.

“Elder Song, sir,” cried Lu Song, “this is the person from the State of Zhao with the iron spear!”

As soon as he heard the word, Eccentric Song’s eyes went wide. He stared at Meng Hao.

“So, it’s you, you little brat!!”

When they heard the words, the surrounding Cultivators gasped. Previously they thought that the Song Clan was the only one Meng Hao hadn’t offended. One and all looked at Meng Hao with admiration in their eyes.

Meng Hao hadn’t managed to offend someone from the junior generation of the Song Clan, but instead, a Nascent Soul eccentric!

Meng Hao smiled, clasping his hands and bowing toward Eccentric Song.

“Meng Hao of the junior generation extends greetings to Master Song of the elder generation. Senior, your Cultivation Base is extraordinary, your demeanor Heavenly in nature. That year, I of

the junior generation, was ignorant and foolish. Senior, you have noble character and sterling integrity, I truly hope that on this joyous occasion for the Song Clan, you will not cause difficulties for the junior generation.”

Eccentric Song gave Meng Hao a long, meaningful look. Although he didn't say anything, sometimes, you can speak volumes without saying a single word. Wang Tengfei's eyes glittered, and he took another step toward Meng Hao.

“Elder Song,” he said. “There is enmity between I of the junior generation and this person. He humiliated my intended beloved. In the presence of all the various Fellow Daoists, I implore you to permit me to put an end to the enmity this day!”

Meanwhile, in the towering castle in the Song Clan capital city, Song Jia was looking at a glittering screen upon which played out the scene from down below.

A smile covered her face, and it seemed she was paying close attention to Meng Hao's scholarly figure.

“What an interesting person,” she said with a laugh. “How could he possibly have offended so many people, even Uncle?”

The middle-aged woman standing next to her also laughed, and a warm expression appeared on her face. “Why, have you taken a fancy to him?”

Chapter 190: Respected Senior

“No,” said Song Jia quickly, her face reddening a bit. She was innately beautiful, and had a tender personality.

The woman next to her laughed, looking at her lovingly. She didn't say anything.

Her voice light, Song Jia continued, “I just think he's interesting. He offended so many people, and yet so many people are willing to stand by his side. Also, he doesn't really look like a Cultivator. He looks more like a scholar.”

The middle-aged woman laughed again, and her expression grew even more gentle. She lifted her right hand, and a flaming jade slip appeared. It burned into nothing, and suddenly, a slight tremble

ran through all of the mountains in the Song Clan. The tremble was so minor that anyone under the Nascent Soul stage wouldn't notice it. Up in the dark sky, the moon shimmered.

Within the moon, countless magical symbols appeared that seemed to be deducing matters pertaining to both the past and the future. After a long moment, they faded away. It was then that in front of the middle-aged woman, time seemed to move in reverse. The jade slip seemed to un-burn as it reappeared in front of her.

Song Jia watched this happen, not with surprise, but with anticipation.

“Alright,” said the woman, pressing her finger onto the jade slip. “Let me take a look at the past of this person you find so interesting.”

As soon as she pushed down on the jade slip, it projected a screen into the air. On it could be seen a small county, and a boy sitting next to a window. He was reading a scroll by lamplight.

As he read, he slowly shook his head and fanned himself with a feather fan. It was obviously summer.

The boy was none other than Meng Hao.

The screen flickered, and Meng Hao was now wearing a neat, clean scholar's robe. He walked out of his house and stood up against a nearby wall, looking a bit shifty-eyed. Soon, a sedan emerged from the courtyard opposite him. He craned his neck to look at it, an excited expression on his face.

The screen shimmered, and now Meng Hao stood on top of Mount Daqing. He sighed and tossed a gourd bottle down into the river.

Next, he was in the Reliance Sect, holding aloft a medicinal pill, face filled with anxiety as he gave the pill away.

When Song Jia saw this, she laughed out loud. The middle-aged woman smiled and shook her head.

The next image was of Meng Hao's shop on the plateau, and his shy, bashful smile as he sold medicinal pills at exorbitant rates. There were many images from that time, but they suddenly

flashed by quickly, making it difficult to make everything out quickly. The middle-aged woman frowned, seemingly lost in thought.

The next image that Song Jia saw was that of Eccentric Song on the mountaintop and Meng Hao running along with the iron spear. She saw Meng Hao in the city of Cultivators and the deal he made with Lu and Song for the spear. After that were all the bloody events that resulted.

Song Jia couldn't stop laughing. "This Meng Hao is awful... he's nothing like a scholar!" She continued to watch, her laughter causing her eyes to look like two crescent moons.

The images again became somewhat blurry. By this time, he was in the Southern Domain. However, in this instant, the jade slip suddenly began to crumble into pieces. In the blink of an eye, it was covered with cracks. A woman's cold snort could be heard from very far off in the distance. It filled, not only the room, but the entire Song Clan.

The middle-aged woman's face filled with shock, and she coughed up a mouthful of blood. She grabbed the astonished Song Jia and staggered backward several paces, a look of disbelief covering her face.

All of the mountains within the Song Clan began to tremble. As they did, the moon in the sky above the Song Clan suddenly exploded with a blinding light. It was a flash that instantly began to tremble and darken, as if it were being forcefully suppressed by someone.

At this same moment, the seemingly endless mountains of the Song Clan continued to tremble and then... one by one, the mountains suddenly sank down an entire inch, as if they were being pushed down by some incredible force.

That inch seemed to be a warning, some demonstration of power by... someone. This person seemed to be saying that if they wished, they could wipe out the entire Song Clan mountain range.

At the same time, all of the Nascent Soul Cultivators began to tremble and spit up blood. Deep within the Song Clan mountains, near the location of their Dao Reserves, a roaring sound rose up. It didn't disseminate outward, and only certain people could sense it.

In the deepest, most remote location within the Song Clan mountains, was a stone pillar. Atop the pillar was a corpse, or rather, half of a corpse. The bottom half was nowhere to be seen. The corpse's eyes suddenly snapped opened, whereupon the aura of the peak Dao Seeking stage

exploded out. The corpse trembled, as if it couldn't stand up to the immense power which was bearing down upon the Song Clan.

“Respected Senior, calm your anger. The Song Clan of the Southern Domain is at fault....”

“If you know you are at fault, then correct it,” came the transmitted voice of a woman. She was clearly irritated. “Your Song Clan has the tradition of marrying daughters? I suggest she be a maidservant.”

The corpse hesitated. “Respected senior....”

“What was that? You know, the Song Clan of the Eastern Lands desire this honor but are unable to achieve it. Do you truly dare to refuse me?” As the woman's voice transmitted out, the entire Song Clan mountains suddenly shook, and sank down three more inches.

Without hesitation, the corpse said, “Respected senior, we shall do as you bid!”

The woman's voice faded away. At the same moment, back in the capital city, Song Jia's face was pale white. Next to her, her mother panted, and blood oozed out from her mouth.

“Jia'er, this person cannot be provoked. This person is....” Before she could finish speaking, her body began to shake. It seemed as if Divine Sense were transmitting into her mind. She didn't continue speaking, and eventually, looked at pale-faced Song Jia, a complex expression on her face.

Everything that had just happened in the Song Clan did not go unnoticed by Meng Hao and everyone else. The ground shaking caused everyone's faces to flicker, especially the Nascent Soul eccentrics.

Eccentric Song's body trembled, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. His body continued to tremble, and he coughed up a second mouthful of blood, then a third. In the end, he coughed up a total of seven mouthfuls of blood. He staggered, his face pale and filled with astonishment.

He was the only one in the entire Song Clan who coughed up seven mouthfuls of blood.

It was at this moment that the illusory image of a woman appeared in the square, although no one could see it. She stood there, invisible to everyone except for the Song Clan's most powerful Dao

Reserve, the peak Dao Seeking corpse. Only he could sense her rippling aura as she arrived at the Song Clan square.

From the moment she appeared, her eyes were riveted on Meng Hao. They were filled with kindness, tender affection, and love.

After a long moment passed, the situation in the square returned to normal. Everyone was shocked, causing a deathly silence to fill the air. The Nascent Soul Cultivators looked around pale faced.

Eccentric Song's face was deathly white; he was scared nearly witless. He wasn't sure what had just happened, nor did he know that the entirety of the Song Clan had been shaken just now.

Panting, he wiped the blood from his mouth. Suddenly, his body shook as a voice filled his mind. The voice filled him with veneration; it was none other than the Spirit Severing stage Patriarch of the Song Clan.

It was clearly a transmission of Divine Will from the Spirit Severing Patriarch, who was passing along the orders of the Dao Reserve corpse. All of the Nascent Soul Cultivators of the Song Clan received the same message.

“Meng Hao is not to be provoked!”

Amidst the silence that covered the square, Wang Tengfei's voice sounded out. “Meng Hao, you don't have the qualifications to refuse a battle with me today!” He leaped up and began to stride toward Meng Hao, his Cultivation base erupting with power. Power exceeding the early Foundation Establishment stage soared higher and higher. It turned out Wang Tengfei's Dao Pillars hummed with the energy of the mid Foundation Establishment stage.

Meng Hao's eyes flickered as he watched Wang Tengfei approach. Wang Tengfei's right hand lifted up; black tendrils rose up and circulated around his finger. His eyes were calm.

“In the Reliance Sect of the State of Zhao, you stole my belongings and wrested away my position in the Inner Sect. In the Southern Domain, you insulted me. Do you really think you qualify to be the archenemy of Wang Tengfei?” His hair whipped madly around his head and a mysterious black glow began to emanate from his poison finger. You don't deserve to be Wang Tengfei's archenemy. You were an insect back then, and you're still an insect today! Today, you shall be a blood sacrifice to my poison finger!” Wang Tengfei's words echoed throughout the square.

“Are you finished?” said Meng Hao coolly. He strode forward, lifting his right hand and striking it out. The power of his four perfect Dao Pillars congealed into the palm. Not a strand leaked out. A roaring filled the air as he struck toward Wang Tengfei.

As the boom filled the square, the surrounding Cultivators watched, completely focused on what was happening. Only Han Bei and Li Shiqi, as well as Chen Fan, looked with strange expressions toward the blustering Wang Tengfei.

Fatty looked extremely nervous. The large man from the Golden Frost Sect was holding him back, otherwise he would have joined Meng Hao to fight.

Amidst the roaring boom, Wang Tengfei tumbled backward, blood spraying from his mouth. The palm blow just now had actually not been a level strike, but a slap. The sound of the slap rang out as some of Wang Tengfei’s teeth shattered. He flopped backward, an expression of shock on his face.

“Impossible....”

Meng Hao strode forward after him, striking with his hand again. A boom sounded out, and more blood sprayed from Wang Tengfei’s mouth. This time, the slap struck the other side of his face.

“Impossible!” Wang Tengfei’s face was pale, and his eyes filled, not with confusion, but frenzied rage. He was no longer shocked or frightened. His humiliation washed away everything. He stared murderously at Meng Hao and then howled.

At the same time, Wang Xifan began to move forward, as did the frowning old Nascent Soul Cultivator from the Wang Clan.

But then, Eccentric Song’s eyes flickered. A look of discomfort and even disbelief covered his face as he reached out to prevent both of them from doing anything.