

# **I Shall Seal the Heavens #Chapter 2: The Reliance Sect - Read I Shall Seal the Heavens Chapter 2: The Reliance Sect**

## **Chapter 2: The Reliance Sect**

The Reliance Sect, located within the borders of the State of Zhao, on the southern edge of the lands of South Heaven, was once first among the Four Great Sects. Even though it was still famous in the Southern Domain, it had experienced a decline in recent years and did not maintain the glorious position it once had. Nowadays, compared to the other Sects within the State of Zhao, it could only be considered inferior.

Actually, it hadn't always been called the Reliance Sect. But a thousand years ago, a Cultivator appeared who caused a great sensation in the Southern Domain. He'd called himself Patriarch Reliance, and had forced the Sect to change its name as such. He'd trod roughshod over all the other Sects in the State of Zhao, plundering their treasures, remaining unrivaled for some time.

But things were different now. Patriarch Reliance had been missing for nearly 400 years. If it were not for the fact that no one knew if he was alive or dead, the Sect would already have been swallowed up by some other Sect. It was past its glory days. Considering the lack of resources in the State of Zhao, and pressure from the other three Sects, if they wanted to get new recruits, they were forced to kidnap people to act as servants. There was no way they could open their doors to recruit openly.

Meng Hao followed the green-robed man along the small paths that wound among the mountain peaks. The surroundings were garden-like, with strange rocks and odd-looking trees everywhere. Amidst the beautiful scenery, extravagantly decorated buildings with jade roof tiles rose up out of the clouds and mist. Meng Hao sighed continuously. Sadly, the fat teenager next to him wailed the entire time, somewhat ruining the mood.

"I'm finished, really finished.... I want to go home," muttered the fat teenager, tears rolling down his face. "There's mantou waiting at home, and fish. Dammit, dammit. I want to inherit the family land, become a rich old man, and have a few concubines. I don't want to be a servant here."

He muttered under his breath for the time it takes to drink half a cup of tea, until the green-robed man turned. "If you spout one more bit of nonsense," he said coldly, "I'll cut your tongue out."

The fat teenager suddenly trembled violently, his eyes shining with fear, but he shut his mouth.

When he saw this, Meng Hao began to reconsider how wonderful the situation might or might not be. But he had a persistent personality, so he took a deep breath and maintained his silence.

After a while, when they reached a point about half way up the mountain, Meng Hao saw a row of flat buildings emerging from the roiling fog.

Seven or eight young people wearing hemp robes sat outside the buildings. They looked exhausted. As Meng Hao and the others approached, the young people noticed them, but did not call out any greetings.

Some distance away, a young man wearing a light blue robe sat on a crag. His face was long, almost like a horse, and his robe was obviously more expensive and fancy than those worn by the other youths. Though his face was cold, when the green-robed man approached leading Meng Hao, the young man stood and greeted him with cupped fists.

“Greetings, Elder Brother.”

“These are two newly arrived servants,” said the green-robed man impatiently. “Please arrange for their accommodations.” With that, he turned and left, not even glancing at Meng Hao and the other young man.

After he left, the horse-faced young man sat down again, crossing his legs and coldly glancing over Meng Hao and the fat teenager.

“This is the Northern Servants’ Quarter,” he said in a cold, emotionless voice. “The Reliance Sect does not support slackers. Now that you’re here, you will work for thirty years, upon which you can leave. If you try to escape, well, there are many wild beasts in these lonely mountains, and you will certainly die. Go retrieve your work uniform. From now on, you are isolated from the mortal world, and will work peacefully as a servant.”

The fat teenager trembled even harder, his face filling with despair. Meng Hao remained calm. In fact, deep within his eyes was an indescribable sparkle. The horse-faced man noticed. He had held this position for many years and had seen many young people captured to be servants, but had never seen anyone as calm as Meng Hao.

“If you have a good temperament,” he said lightly, “you may not need to labor for the full thirty years. You can practice cultivation in your time off. If you manage to reach the first level of Qi Condensation, then you will be promoted to the Outer Sect.” He flicked his wide sleeve, whereupon two hemp robes appeared in front of Meng Hao and the fat teenager. On the front of each robe was a wooden badge the size of a thumb, engraved with the character “Servant.”

In addition to the robe, there was also a small booklet, upon the cover of which was written three characters: "Qi Condensation Manual."

As soon as Meng Hao laid eyes on the characters, he began to breathe hard. He stared at the booklet and recalled how when discussing the cold-faced woman, the green-robed man had mentioned the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

"We can become Outer Sect disciples when we reach the first level, but that woman has already reached the seventh level... what is Qi Condensation? Perhaps that is the way to become an Immortal, like they talk about in stories."

If that was the pay he would receive from his work, well, it might not be money, but it would be worth hundreds of pieces of gold in the outside world. Meng Hao's excitement rose. He grabbed the robe and used it to wrap up the badge and booklet.

"The East Seventh house is where you will live. Starting tomorrow, your job is to cut wood. Ten logs each, every day. You are not permitted to eat until your chopping is finished." He closed his eyes.

Breathing deeply, Meng Hao imitated the young man and saluted with clasped fists, then walked toward the house, followed by the fat teenager. The building appeared to be a siheyuan courtyard dwelling that had been expanded multiple times. Following the signs, they located the seventh one, then opened the door and entered.

The room wasn't large. It contained a table and two small beds, and though simple, was quite neat and tidy. The fat teenager sat down on one of the beds, then, unable to hold it in anymore, began to cry.

He was about 12 or 13 years old, and he cried loudly. It surely echoed outside.

"My father is a Lord, and I'm supposed to be a Lord too. I'm not supposed to be a servant." He seemed extremely distraught, and his fat little body trembled.

"Stop crying," said Meng Hao, trying to comfort him. "Think about it. It's not that bad here. We're working for Immortals. How many people would envy us if they knew?" He quickly closed the door.

"I don't want to work for other people," he replied. "My marriage has already been arranged and engagement gifts sent. My poor, beautiful lady hasn't even married me, yet is already a widow." The more he cried, the more heartbroken he grew.

A strange expression appeared on Meng Hao's face. This fat teenager was still young, he thought to himself. I can't believe he's been promised a wife, yet has never even felt the touch of a woman's hand. He sighed emotionally, thinking about how amazing it would be to be rich. This fat teenager's family is so rich that he never has to worry about

food or clothing. And yet I have nothing. Even after selling my ancestral home last year, I still owe Steward Zhou a lot of money.

Thinking of the money he owed made him laugh. Now that he was here, Zhou could come to chase after him for the money if he was strong enough. If not, he would be dead by the time Meng Hao left.

The more he thought about this place, the better he felt about it. He didn't need to worry about money, or lodging or food. He even got payment worth hundreds of pieces of gold, and that was before he even started working. Considering that this was a dwelling-place of Immortals, it could truly be said that he had unexpectedly been rescued from a desperate situation.

The fat teenager's crying had begun to annoy him. Ignoring him, he pulled the manual out from the hemp robe and started reading. After reading the first line of the first page, he felt shocked.

"A person should have something to rely on. If you are a mortal who desires riches and titles, if you are a Cultivator who wants to live a life free from worry, join my Reliance Sect. You can rely on me." That was the introduction to the manual, and it was signed by Patriarch Reliance.

Even though it was only a handful of words, they were filled with an indescribable power. It was both an invitation and a description of the Reliance Sect. Meng Hao felt numb, and then, everything suddenly made sense.

"The Reliance Sect. Is this the meaning of the Sect? People must find something to rely on; when they find the Reliance Sect, then they will be rich, powerful and free from worry." It made more and more sense. He realized that if he'd had an official to rely on, he would never have failed the examinations three times in a row. He sighed, his respect growing for Patriarch Reliance, whom he had never actually met. With that one sentence, it seemed as if a door in his life had suddenly opened.

"In other words, I have to find someone to rely on while I'm here. If I do, I won't have to worry about anything." His eyes grew brighter as he continued to scan the manual. Soon, he lost track of time, and didn't even notice the fat teenager crying next to him.

The fat teenager finally cried himself to sleep around midnight, whereupon his snores began to reverberate around the room like thunder. Meng Hao reluctantly closed the manual. Even though he felt very tired, his eyes were filled with vim and vigor.

"This book isn't worth 100 gold, it's worth 1,000!" he said to himself. For someone who had always dreamed of becoming a rich official, something worth 1,000 gold was worth more than anything except his life.

In his excitement, he noticed that the fat teenager's snoring had ceased. He looked over, and saw that the young man had sat up in bed and was waving his arms around and muttering.

"I'm gonna beat you to death! How dare you steal my mantou! I'm gonna bite you to death! How dare you steal away my wife!" As he talked, he got off the bed, his eyes still closed, waving his fists angrily. Then, amazingly, he grabbed the table and bit the corner hard with his mouth, leaving a deep mark. Then he went back to sleep and began to snore.

Meng Hao watched him for a bit, just to confirm that he had been sleepwalking just now. Then he looked back to the bite mark, realizing that he should never provoke the fat teenager when he was asleep. He inched away from him, then looked down at the manual again, feeling excited.

"The ninth level of Qi Condensation is the path to being an Immortal. Working for them, I have a chance to become an Immortal myself. That is the biggest payment possible. If I become an Immortal, I must have a chance to become rich." Meng Hao gripped the manual, his eyes shining brightly. He had finally found another path besides studying for the exams.

At that moment, the door was kicked open with a bang, and a loud "harumph" sounded out.