

## The Heavens 261

Chapter 261: The Killing Heart is Still There!

Fleeing was far from the first of his thoughts!

Before fleeing, he must first make the enemy pay a price!

That was Meng Hao's personality. Core Formation Cultivators were engaged in battle not far away and his decision was still... KILL!

As the black-robed men approached, Meng Hao's eyes filled with coldness. He lifted his hands and waved them forward. As he did, no magic appeared. Instead, a cold wind sprang up.

The wind blasted over the dozens of black-robed men, causing a displacement force to spring up. Immediately, the corpses of the two men Meng Hao had just slain with the wooden swords began to expand.

It happened extremely quickly. In the blink of an eye they had expanded to the point of explosion.

BOOM!

Amidst the roar, chunks of blood and gore showered out in all directions, rapidly turning black. A rotten smell filled the air.

As the blood and gore flew out, miserable screams could be heard. The seven or eight black-robed men nearest to the corpses were clearly infected by the black blood.

The blood contained poison!

As a Furnace Lord who focused on studying the Dao of poison, he had long since coated the two wooden swords with poison that he himself had created. He had done this even when he was still in the Violet Fate Sect.

The black robed men looked on in shock for a moment. Before they could react, the ground exploded up as a mass of dark violet vines burst up. There were more than ten of them, which shot toward the crowd of people.

All of this happened in an instant. Blood curdling screams echoed out, and everything was thrown into a deadly chaos. The killing in Meng Hao's eyes boiled, and his body flickered as he shot forward.

He cut a slice into his index finger with his thumb. Blood flowed down, and the Blood Finger appeared, something that hadn't been seen in the Southern Domain for a long, long time. Meng Hao's six Perfect Dao pillars glowed with a violet aura, and began to rotate. His seventh Dao Pillar was nearing completion, and was now around eighty percent formed.

Power invincible to the Foundation Establishment stage poured out from Meng Hao. A massive crushing pressure emanated out in all directions. These black-robed men were of the full circle of Foundation Establishment. However, their Dao Pillars immediately began to shake. Their faces filled with astonishment. Meng Hao's fearsomeness exceeding anything they could have imagined.

How could they ever have predicted that this stranger who had charged into their trap looking like a weak scholar, was actually a divinity of death!

Meng Hao hadn't fought for five years, and now that he did, he made only killing moves. The index finger of his right hand flashed like lightning, slamming down onto the mask of one of the black-robed men. It pierced through the mask, stabbing down into his forehead. Perfect Dao Pillar power burst out, transforming into a terrifying, all-encompassing explosive force. It immediately destroyed the man's Dao Pillars and Core sea, crushing his will, exterminating his life.

Meng Hao's face was cold as he took hold of the man's corpse. He took a step forward, toward another black-robed man. He squeezed the corpse, which subsequently exploded. Blackened blood splashed out in all directions. A look of shock appeared on the other man's face, and he wasn't fast enough to avoid the blood. It drenched him, and immediately, terrifying screams filled the air. Meng Hao moved on toward another black-robed man.

His body flitted around like an evil spirit. Beneath his mask, the face of one of the black-robed men twisted. Without hesitation, he bit down on his tongue, spitting out a blood mist which spread out mysteriously to cover his body. He had to attempt to delay Meng Hao; there were still three other black-robed men nearby who were approaching with magical items in hand.

Meng Hao gave a cold snort, which echoed out like a clap of thunder. The sound pierced to the very hearts of the four remaining black-robed men. The three who were currently approaching suddenly stopped in their tracks. The man who had just employed the blood mist felt as if his mind was spinning out of control.

Meng Hao's right knee flew into the air, slamming viciously into the blood mist. It immediately fell into pieces and scattered. His knee continued on, slamming into the black-robed man's chest. Even as the cracking of bones rang out, Meng Hao's right hand snaked out to latch onto the man's neck.

He turned, and spit out the lightning mist, and a boom filled the air as it enveloped them all. Screams rang out, and after the space of a few breaths, Meng Hao emerged from within. The three men who had just been approaching were now dead, their eyes still wide with astonishment. Even up to the moment death took them, they couldn't understand how an alchemist... could have such intense killing intent.

Originally there had been twenty seven black robed men. In just a few moments, their numbers were reduced to eleven. Their minds were shaken, and they backed up nervously. The person in front of them didn't seem to be a single Cultivator, but an entire army.

Meng Hao's hair swirled around his head. The dozen or so tentacles writhed in the air around him bizarrely as he stood there. He emanated the smell of medicinal pills, and the stench of blood. His cold face, his grim eyes, all of it, caused the black-robed men's heart to shake.

"Who are you?!" asked one of the black-robed men, his voice quivering. It was a question that Meng Hao should have been the one to ask.

Meng Hao didn't respond. His clothes fluttered in the wind. It was a north wind, blowing stiffly, as if it wished to wash away the reeking smell of blood. As the north wind blew, Meng Hao lifted his hand. There in his palm appeared a bit of red powder.

The powder lifted up into the wind, blowing about. The faces of the black-robed men twisted as they thought back to the hyper toxic poison from moments ago.

Without the slightest hesitation, the eleven men retreated. However, even as they did, Meng Hao made an incantation gesture and then pointed out with his finger. A mass of tiny Flame Globes appeared. As they floated in mid-air, they began to change into a green color.

The ignited, and suddenly a massive, green Flame Sea appeared. It was shocking, its heat impossible to describe as it expanded along with the wind, seeming to mix with the powder that was floating in mid-air.

The raging three thousand meter wide Flame Sea expanded out, and as it did, it seemed as if the surrounding valley couldn't withstand the heat. It began to crack and melt.

The eleven black-robed men were moving backward quickly, but they simply weren't fast enough to escape the ghostly, greenish Flame Sea, and were consumed.

It was at this same moment that a boom could be heard off in the distance. With a single blow, the azure-masked Cultivator lopped off the head of the Golden Frost Sect Cultivator. Then he turned, a grim look appeared in his eyes as he looked at Meng Hao, just barely visible behind the Flame Sea

Separated by the Flame Sea, Meng Hao looked back at the azure-masked Cultivator. Their gazes locked as the screams of the dying black-robed Cultivators drifted up from within the flames.

Glancing at Meng Hao's clothing, the azure-masked Cultivator said, "Such a young East Pill Division Furnace Lord. There's only one person like that.... You must be Fang Mu!" His voice was hoarse and muffled, yet filled with coldness.

"Cultivators with killing intent like this can only be found in one place in the Southern Domain," replied Meng Hao coolly. "The Black Lands." Actually, from the moment he had first laid eyes on the black-robed Cultivators, something about them had seemed familiar. It was the same feeling he'd gotten from that Cultivator in the Black Sieve Sect's Blessed Land, the one who had told him about the usefulness of the Thunderclap Leaf to Black Lands Cultivators.

Meng Hao couldn't tell what the azure-masked Cultivator was thinking. What he saw was the man take a seemingly leisurely step forward. In actuality, he was moving very quickly and was apparently planning to cross the Flame Sea. A wind sprang up, and it appeared as if he planned to carve a path through the flames.

The instant the azure-masked Cultivator shot forward, Meng Hao's Furnace Lord garment began to flicker. Even as the man passed through the sea to arrive in front of Meng Hao, Meng Hao's body began to fade away.

At some point, the azure-masked had called forth flying swords, which passed harmlessly through the disappearing image of Meng Hao.

“Fang Mu, prominent in the East Pill Division of the Violet Fate Sect, victor of the Dao alchemy debate in the Black Sieve Sect between the East Pill Division and the World Pill Division.” The azure-masked Cultivator’s voice was cool. He didn’t seem to be in a rush to pursue. As he spoke, his right hand slowly lifted and began to make an incantation.

“You are the ninth alchemist on our list. How fortunate to run into you. You won’t escape.” The man’s eyes flickered, and even as he finished speaking, his fingers finished with the incantation.

“Ahh, that direction.” The azure-masked Cultivator’s body flickered, and he shot off like lightning. His speed was far, far greater than that of the Foundation Establishment stage. They weren’t even remotely on the same level. Even more shocking was his Core Qi. Core Qi could only be employed by Core Formation Cultivators. Because the varying techniques and power levels of each Cultivator, the Core Qi they employ will be different colors.

However, even the weakest Core Qi is sufficient to crush the great circle of late Foundation Establishment. Even a group of late Foundation Establishment Cultivators wouldn’t have the hope of raising a hand to a Core Formation Cultivator using Core Qi.

Core Qi can make Core Formation magic reach the pinnacle. Afterwards, when the Cultivator reaches the Nascent Soul Stage, their magic will be half way to the point of divine ability.

This azure-masked Cultivator’s Core Qi was a light yellowish color, which indicated that he had an Orange Core. As the Core Qi emanated out, the indistinct shape of a roc seemed to exist inside of it.

Core Qi had ever-changing forms which can alter according to the will of the Cultivator. For example, the roc which appeared in the mind of this Cultivator added explosive speed to the Core Qi.

It was because of this characteristic that allowed Core Formation magic to employ its greatest power!

It was also why it only took about ten breaths of time before Meng Hao, who was fleeing at top speed, suddenly sensed an incredibly powerful aura approaching from behind him.

This was not the first time he had faced Core Formation Cultivators. He didn’t have much reverence for them. Even back in the State of Zhao, he had led Core Formation Cultivators to their deaths.

Just as the Core Formation Cultivator was almost upon him, the Furnace Lord garment flickered again, and he was immediately transported about forty kilometers away.

Without hesitation, he began to flee. In his palm was the good luck charm, which he hadn't used in five years. It was flickering, but he could tell that it would be some time before he could activate it.

“My seventh Dao Pillar is almost complete. However, I'm still no match for a Core Formation Cultivator. However, I have enough Spirit Stones, enough medicinal plants, and enough medicinal pills.... I have to push forward without stopping until I reach the great circle of Foundation Establishment!” Resolve appeared in his eyes. Soon he would be able to employ the full accumulated knowledge of five years of studying the Dao of alchemy!

Chapter 262: First Battle with Core Formation!

A shocking roar sounded out in all directions. At the same time, an icy coldness raced toward Meng Hao.

Thirty breaths had passed since Meng Hao used the Furnace Lord robe to displace himself for the second time.

Before he could fly much further away, the azure-masked Cultivator was in hot pursuit. In this instance, the man was clearly some distance away; however the light yellow glow continued to emanate from the top of his head. In it, the image of a sword was faintly visible.

It appeared illusory, but even glancing at it from this distance caused Meng Hao's heart to tremble. An intense feeling of danger filled his heart and mind.

“This guy has cultivated Core Qi!” thought Meng Hao. He was no longer a newcomer to the Cultivator World. He had seen and experienced many things, and had learned long ago of the fearsomeness of Core Formation, especially the shocking Core Qi.

Back in the state of Zhao, none of the Core Formation Cultivators he had met had been able to utilize Core Qi, except perhaps for the old woman. All of this was information Meng Hao had deduced from reading the ancient records of the East Pill Division.

“Core Qi has ever-changing forms. However, it has a nucleus which does not change. I wonder what the essence of this guy’s Core Qi is....” His heart trembled, but suddenly an idea flickered into his mind.

At the same time, he unhesitatingly used the Furnace Lord’s ability to warp away to another location. As soon as his body disappeared, the sword image appeared, with its power to shake Heaven and Earth. The aura rose up, a sealing force that locked down the entire area. However, Meng Hao’s illusory body was able to slip past it.

“What a nimble and crafty alchemist,” said the azure-robed Cultivator. “However, you can only use that robe three times, and it won’t take you more than fifty kilometers away. Let see... how you plan to escape next time!” The Cultivator closed his eyes, and the light yellow Core Qi spread out. The illusory sword flickered and began to rotate. After the space of three breaths, it began to hum, and the tip pointed north.

The azure-masked Cultivator’s eyes snapped open, and his body flickered as he shot off toward the north.

Forty kilometers away, Meng Hao reappeared. As soon as he did, blood began to seep out of the corners of his mouth. There was a sword wound on his chest, from which blood flowed out. If he had teleported away even a tiny bit slower, the sword just now would have cleaved him in half.

He didn’t take the time to wipe the blood from his mouth. His body flashed like lightning as he shot away.

“A phantom sword. I wonder if this guy’s personal Core Qi is a sword....” A grim look appeared on Meng Hao’s face. A Core Formation Cultivator who had not cultivated Core Qi wouldn’t cause Meng Hao to be in such a tight spot. However, Core Qi is the most powerful tool of Core Formation Cultivators. Meng Hao knew that for this azure-masked Cultivator to have cultivated Core Qi in the early Core Formation stage, indicated that he had incredibly high latent talent.

After becoming a Furnace Lord, Meng Hao had done quite a bit of research in the ancient records about the Core Formation stage. Therefore, he was quite familiar with things such as Core Qi. Generally speaking, Core Qi is cultivated in the late Core Formation stage, or occasionally the mid Core Formation stage. Only a small group of Chosen can cultivate Core Qi in the early Core Formation stage.

Such Cultivators are very rare. The rarest of all are those who seem to innately possess Core Qi from the moment they step into early Core Formation.

Within the ever-changing forms of Core Qi is a form that does not change. This is a personal form related to the individual Cultivator, which is different for every Cultivator.

Meng Hao's face was dark as he charged forward. He popped a medicinal pill into his mouth. As it dissolved, warmth filled his body, and his speed increased.

“Thirty breaths left....” The good luck charm in his hand had been warming up from the moment he began to fight the black-robed men. As of now, there were still thirty breaths left before he could activate it.

When that happened, Meng Hao would disappear, and the azure-masked Cultivator would have no way to track him down.

However, after eighteen breaths passed, the glow of the light yellow Core Qi filled the sky. The bitter coldness appeared again. Off in the distance, the thin frame of the azure-masked Cultivator could be seen in mid-air. The surroundings seem to be shaken into a jumble as he approached relentlessly.

As soon as Meng Hao sensed his approach, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a jade pendant, which he smashed between his fingers.

“I, Yang, already said that you can't get away,” the azure-masked Cultivator said coolly. “You're a trifling Foundation Establishment Cultivator. You should feel proud that you managed to scurry around for this long.” The sword image in the Core Qi emitted an ear-piercing scream. Emanating an icy coldness, it shot directly toward Meng Hao.

Its speed was incredible, and in the blink of an eye... was directly in front of him.

It sped directly toward his forehead, and was about to pierce it through. There was absolutely no time for Meng Hao to dodge. The difference between their two Cultivation bases was too great. Death approached.

However, at this exact moment, a glow shot out from Meng Hao's palm. A rippling, water-like glow flowed out to cover Meng Hao's body. It expanded out, forming a greenish-blue shield, which the Core Qi phantom sword slammed into.



The azure-masked Cultivator's eyes went wide underneath his mask when he saw the shield. His pupils constricted, and an expression of disbelief appeared in his eyes. He was about to recall his Core Qi phantom sword, but was too late.

The Core Qi phantom sword, seemingly infinitely sharp, noiselessly slammed into the greenish-blue shield. Instantly it weakened and then began to break into pieces. In the blink of an eye, it was transformed into dust.

Seeing the Core Qi phantom sword disappear into powder caused the azure-masked Cultivator to give an irritated harrumph. Beneath his mask, blood oozed out of his mouth. His eyes filled with fury. He was a Core Formation Cultivator who had cultivated Core Qi. However, during this attempt to toy with a measly Foundation Establishment Cultivator, his Core Qi had been shattered, causing him injury.

“Nascent Soul Cultivation blood.... Let's see how many times you can pull that off!” The killing intent in the azure-masked Cultivator's eyes grew more intense. He shot toward Meng Hao, his right hand flickering an incantation gesture. Magical power erupted, transforming into ten dragons and ten phoenixes, which spiralled toward Meng Hao.

At the same time, the greenish-blue shield began to shrink, returning into Meng Hao's palm and transforming into a jade pendant. This pendant was one of the spoils of his victory in the Solitary Sword Sect. It was a life-saving treasure that contained blood from the Cultivation base of Chen Fan's Master, Zhou Yanyun, and could defend against an attack from a Nascent Soul Cultivator.

It could defend against an attack by a Nascent Soul Cultivator, but could only be used once at a time. Defending against a Core Formation Cultivator caused its glow to weaken, and it still could be used again, just not right now.

The azure-masked Cultivator's mouth was oozing with blood. He had been injured, and the Core Qi above his head was unstable. However, he continued to advance toward Meng Hao, the ten dragons and ten phoenixes howling as they shot through the air. Suddenly, an intense killing intent appeared in Meng Hao's eyes.

He did not flee, but instead lifted his hand and pointed toward the azure-masked Cultivator.

“Eighth Demon Sealing Hex!” Veins of blood shot through his eyes. As he pointed his finger out, Heaven and Earth shook, Meng Hao's body moved, everything moved. Even the ten dragons and ten phoenixes moved. Ghost images sprang up and pressed down toward the azure-masked Cultivator.

The azure-masked Cultivator's expression flickered. The ten dragons and ten phoenixes began to tremble, as if they were being held down. The world seemed to turn upside down; everything in the area was sealed.

The sealing was such that the azure-masked Cultivator seemed incapable of controlling his Cultivation base.

"What magic is this?!" he said, his heart shaking.

Veins of blood filled Meng Hao's eye, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. Using the sealing hex on a Core Formation Cultivator was an incredible load; all the blood vessels in his body seemed on the verge of bursting. Meng Hao's killing intent soared. He flicked his sleeve, and a red powder flew out, filling the area, transforming into a red mist. The mist roiled, and as Meng Hao moved forward, it shot toward the azure-masked Cultivator.

At the same time, Meng Hao placed the life-saving jade pendant into his robe. His left hand rose up, and he slashed one finger, two fingers, three fingers... all five fingers! Blood flowed down all five of his fingers, forming... the Blood Palm!

When the Blood Palm appeared, the red mist around him seethed even more violently, seeming to transform into a mist of blood. The mist began to erode everything in the area; it seemed to be hyper toxic, adding thirty percent power to Meng Hao's attack.

All of this takes a long time to describe, but actually occurred in an instant. As Meng Hao's multiple killing attacks descended upon the azure-masked Cultivator, the man's eyes went wide. Suddenly, he was able to move again; after all, he was a Core Formation Cultivator. The Eighth Hex was beyond ordinary, but couldn't keep the man sealed for more than two breaths.

"Insignificant skill! DIE!" howled the azure-masked Cultivator. His right hand flickered in an incantation gesture and then pushed out toward Meng Hao. Instantly, a roaring filled the air, and an illusory, ten-headed dragon appeared. Snarling fiercely, it shot to meet Meng Hao's magical attack. A boom rang out.

The red mist collapsed. The Blood Palm disintegrated. Blood sprayed from Meng Hao's mouth as he was tossed backward like a kite with its string cut. The azure-masked Cultivator was about to shoot after him. However, the man's eyes went wide as Meng Hao, even in the midst of being seriously injured and tossed backward, suddenly slapped his bag of holding. He flicked his sleeve,

sending more powder out to fill the air. It was thin, but it was enough to cause the azure-masked Cultivator to pause momentarily.

Moments ago, he had prevented the blood mist from entering his lungs. However, he had still been able to sense the terrifying power of the mist. That was because he had a tiny cut on the pinky of his right hand which had been slightly infected. That tiny bit caused an intense pain to shoot through him.

Even as blood sprayed from Meng Hao's mouth and he toppled backward, his pupils began to glow with a violet light. His skin and Qi passageways also began to glow violet, making his entire body glow.

This was the Violet Pupil Transformation!

Within Violet Pupil Transformation, Meng Hao's body began to recover rapidly. Surrounded by poison mist, he glared at the azure-masked Cultivator and the Core Qi which emanated from his head. The man was stabilizing rapidly. Within ten breaths at the most, he would be able to release his Core Qi.

Meng Hao didn't hesitate a moment longer. He immediately pressed down on the good luck charm, activating the teleportation ability.

Instantly, a black hole appeared, a massive mouth which consumed Meng Hao. This turn of events caught the azure-masked Cultivator completely by surprise. His face flickered, and he shot forward in pursuit.

He was too late.

Chapter 263: Ancient Dao Geysers

The azure-masked Cultivator's expression was somber. His eyes radiated coldness, a deep coldness that contained fury. From the moment he had entered the Core Formation stage and cultivated Core Qi, he had been able to sweep with ease across any other Cultivator who lacked Core Qi.

But today, a Foundation Establishment Cultivator had disintegrated his Core Qi, injuring him in the process, and then had just as quickly suppressed him. Despite all this, his fury burned as hotly as ever.

Even more infuriating was that someone he viewed to be as weak as an ant, had before his very eyes slaughtered all of his white-masked men. Such provocation caused killing intent to rise within his heart. However... even beneath such killing intent, the man had fled.

The coldness in the man's eyes grew even sharper. He knew that if his fellow Sect members learned of this, they would surely ridicule him. After all, the Cultivator who had escaped from his hands was not adept in magic, but alchemy.

He couldn't accept it, nor could he understand what had happened. In fact, among all the Cultivators he knew who were famous for their abilities in magic, he couldn't think of any who could compare to this alchemist.

In terms of decisiveness, fighting skill, and treachery, he couldn't help but think that this alchemist who had just fled, really seemed like a ruthless Black Lands Cultivator.

"How could there be an alchemist like this?!" He stared at the place where Meng Hao had just disappeared from. His Core Qi was now fully restored, but no matter how he cast his senses about, he couldn't pick up the slightest track to follow.

It was clear that his opponent had teleported to somewhere very far away, somewhere he could not sense.

After some time passed, the azure-masked Cultivator gave a cold harrumph. "Well, he was injured by the frigid power of my Ten Flood Dragons. He can run away from me, but not from death, even if he is a Furnace Lord. Let's see whether or not he dies in the end.

"He's looking for death.... Foundation Establishment Cultivator.... No one can live more than ten days after being hit by the frigid power of my Ten Flood Dragons." Abandoning thoughts of pursuing and killing, he turned and disappeared.

In the western region of the great Southern Domain is an area covered with thin mists. Few mountain ranges exist, and many lakes can be seen. Among them is one of the famous three Danger Zones of the Southern Domain, the Primordial Dao Lakes.

At a glance, the western regions seem to be covered with a myriad of mirrors placed on the ground. These mirrors are of course the countless lakes.

At this moment, above the middle of the one of the lakes, the previously glass-like waters suddenly began to ripple. A massive black hole appeared, and Meng Hao staggered out.

The instant he appeared, he coughed up a huge mouthful of blood. The blood was black, and emitted intense coldness. It splashed into the lake, and disappeared. However, moments later, the surface of the lake was covered in a thin sheet of ice.

Meng Hao's face was pale. He lifted his head and looked around, then transformed into a prismatic beam that shot off into the distance.

Several days later, in one of the sparse mountain ranges in this western part of the Southern Domain, Meng Hao sat cross-legged inside of a freshly carved out Immortal's Cave. He consumed medicinal pills and rotated his Cultivation base as he treated his injuries.

Time passed slowly. Soon, a month had gone by. During that time, Meng Hao didn't step half a pace outside of the Immortal's Cave. He was focused completely on treating his injuries. The Immortal's Cave he was in was in a remote location. Considering that few people inhabited this western area, as well as the mists that covered the land, it was very peaceful.

Finally one day, Meng Hao's eyes opened. His face was no longer pale, and his body was now mostly recovered.

"Azure-masked Cultivator!" Meng Hao's eyes glowed with a cold aura. This was the first time he had been injured in five years, and the injury had been quite severe. Were it not for the Violet Pupil Transformation increasing his healing abilities, then he would not have lasted long enough to carve out this Immortal's Cave.

Furthermore, were he not an alchemist, equipped with a variety of medicinal pills, he wouldn't have been able to last through the month.

After all, he had been injured by a Core Formation expert who could wield Core Qi!

If the Core Formation expert had faced any Foundation Establishment Cultivator other than Meng Hao, that person would never have been able to flee, and would certainly have been defeated.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. His expression was grim as he produced a pill furnace and some medicinal pills, and then began to concoct. His injury was not completely healed. There was still intense coldness within his body.

Meng Hao began to concoct a medicinal pill specifically designed for his current circumstances.

A few more months passed. Three days after Meng Hao consumed his specially designed medicinal pill, his eyes suddenly opened. He then spat out the last of the icy coldness from within his body. It scattered about the Immortal's Cave, causing frost to appear, which then turned into ice.

After a long moment passed, the cave began to return to normal.

If that azure-masked Cultivator was here to observe the scene, he wouldn't be able to believe his eyes. He had complete faith that no Foundation Establishment Cultivator could survive the frigid power of the Ten Flood Dragons. However... Meng Hao had obviously recovered from his injuries.

He took a deep breath, and killing intent grew strong in his eyes. He sat there thoughtfully for a while, and then determination grew in his eyes. He smacked his bag of holding to produce the pill furnace once again.

He held it in his hand, lost in thought.

"I need to concoct a batch of pills that will help me to surge ahead. I need a medicinal pill that will without fail produce a Dao Pillar, something that exceeds Foundation Establishment Day, and will cause my Cultivation base to soar." A deeply thoughtful look appeared in his eyes. In his mind, countless pill formulas appeared. Finally, he decided on a formula for a pill known as Stage Charging Pill.

"This pill can be used with the Three Mortalities Pill in order to break through from the Foundation Establishment Stage into the Core Formation stage!"

After thinking for a while longer, his eyes filled with decisiveness. He immediately produced a large amount of medicinal plants from his bag of holding and began to concoct the Stage Charging Pill. He focused his complete attention on the concoction process. Several days passed. Even while using the Alchemy Dao Transmutation Incantation, he failed several times. It wasn't until the seventeenth day that he was able to successfully concoct the pill.

When it appeared, a medicinal aroma emanated out, filling the Immortal's Cave. If Meng Hao hadn't already made special preparations to prevent the aroma from seeping out of the Immortal's Cave, it could very well have attracted unwanted attention.

Holding the pill in hand, his eyes glittered. He took out the copper mirror and an accumulation of Spirit Stones, then began to duplicate.

One Stage Charging Pill after another appeared, which Meng Hao all placed into pill bottles. Soon, ten full pill bottles were arranged neatly in front of him. He spit out the lightning mist, and sent the wooden swords circling around him. In addition, he activated the Furnace Lord medallion. Having made all of these preparations, he took a deep breath, picked up a Stage Charging Pill, and placed it into his mouth.

His seventh Dao pillar was already eighty percent complete. When he placed the pill into his mouth, it transformed into spiritual power which immediately caused his entire body to tremble. The seventh Dao Pillar began to emanate a purple glow, and became even more solid.

"Press on to the finish!" he thought, his eyes shining with determination. He then closed his eyes and began to meditate.

Time passed slowly. A month later, Meng Hao's body began to tremble and wither up. He calmly produced a large handful of medicinal pills and began to put them in his mouth one after another.

Seven more days passed. A roaring filled his body, and a purple glow emanated out brightly, filling the entire Immortal's Cave. The seventh Dao Pillar had fully appeared!

As soon as it did, Meng Hao's Cultivation base shot upward. His Spiritual Sense grew stronger, and his battle prowess more formidable. His entire person was like an unsheathed sword, incomparably dangerous.

Now, he was no longer in the mid Foundation Establishment stage, but rather the late Foundation Establishment stage!

Even someone with a Flawless Foundation would not be able to give rise to the slightest bit of struggle against the suppressive pressure he could emit. As of now, he was without a doubt the number one person in the entire Foundation Establishment stage!

However, Meng Hao wasn't content. Being matchless in the Foundation Establishment stage wasn't something he had looked forward to. He wanted to fight that azure-masked Cultivator! To do that, his current Cultivation base simply wasn't sufficient!

A bright glow filled his eyes, and he took another deep breath. He retrieved a vast amount of Spirit Stones and began to duplicate medicinal pills. These Spirit Stones included his profits from selling pills in the East Pill Division, as well as what had been gifted to him by the Black Sieve Sect, plus what he had received during his travels with Zhou Dekun as well. It was quite an amount, but every time Meng Hao looked at it, it didn't seem enough for him.

However, if he truly wanted to go the distance today, then he would have to ignore the pain and use them to duplicate medicinal pills. The cultivation he was about to practice was something that no one in the Southern Domain had ever seen before.

Even Dao Children would not be able to squander medicinal pills in the way that Meng Hao was right now!

Time passed. One month, two months, three months....

Meng Hao lost track of the passage of time in his Immortal's Cave. As he cultivated, his eighth Dao Pillar slowly became visible.

Ten percent, twenty percent, thirty percent.... After half a year, his eighth Dao Pillar was now eighty percent complete.

Meanwhile, outside in the Southern Domain, a violent windstorm of a commotion had arisen.

This storm came from the Black Lands!

Black Lands Cultivators were making incursions into the Southern Domain!!

More than seventy alchemists mysteriously disappeared!

These two events caused a huge commotion in the Southern Domain. The missing alchemists were mostly from the East Pill and World Pill Divisions, although other scattered alchemists were also



involved. This unforeseen misfortune caused the fury of the Violet Fate Sect and the Golden Frost Sect to rise to the heavens.

These two Sects were the first to take action. Mysterious Patriarchs from both Sects immediately traveled to the Black Lands. According to the rumors, Grandmasters Pill Demon and Eternal Mountain both secretly made the trip themselves.

The Black Lands had existed for many years, and was a brutal place, but there was little the Southern Domain could do about it. The details of the affair between the two powers were not made public. The only thing that people knew was that the Golden Frost Sect did not recover any of their alchemists, whereas the Violet Fate Sect managed to bring back all of theirs, with the exception of a Furnace Lord named Zhou Dekun. After the incident, neither Sect brought up the Black Lands ever again.

As for the Black Lands, they laid down the flag and stilled the drums, so to speak. Everything seemed to go back to normal in the Southern Domain. No more alchemists went missing, and as for what was happening in the Black Lands, no one knew.

After half a year in which the Black Lands' aggressiveness had been reigned in, a Dao Geyser appeared not far away from the Primordial Dao Lakes, in the western part of the Southern Domain.

Within the fountain of water that shot up from the geyser, an illusory image could be seen. It was an image from ancient times, of a Foundation Establishment Cultivator breaking through into the Core Formation stage.

The appearance of the geyser immediately caused a huge stir among the great Sects and Clans of the Southern Domain. Veteran old timers from the various Sect went to inspect the geyser, then left. Afterward, Chosen disciples of the Foundation Establishment stage, as well as Dao Children, were dispatched to continue observation of the geyser.

A message was sent out by a late Nascent Soul Stage Patriarch from the Solitary Sword Sect:

“This geyser contains enlightenment. Gain this enlightenment, and you might enter Core Formation. It is not suitable for us, but rather for you Foundation Establishment Cultivators.”

These words caused a huge commotion among all of the Foundation Establishment Chosen within the Southern Domain. From all areas, they began to flock to the western region of the Southern

Domain. A month later, Zhou Jie, Dao Child from the Black Sieve Sect, made a breakthrough next to the Dao Geyser, and entered Core Formation. He formed a Green Core, astonishing everyone.

#### Chapter 264: A Shout Like a Clap of Thunder

After Zhou Jie of the Black Sieve Sect reached Core Formation because of the ancient Dao Geyser, a long-lasting storm wind kicked up among the Foundation Establishment Cultivators of the Southern Domain.

It swept across the great Sects and Clans, causing all disciples of the Foundation Establishment stage to rush to the western region of the Southern Domain.

Now, the western region, which previously contained hardly the trace of a person, quickly became a convergence of Chosen. Of course, friction immediately broke out. For months, there were countless battles. Whoever came out on the top of such battles would instantly become famous.

Spontaneous conventions such as this rarely occurred in the Southern Domain. It was not often for there to be such an assemblage of Chosen, all gathered together in one place and contending for supremacy.

That was exactly what was happening now, though, thanks to the appearance of the ancient Dao Geyser!

The geyser erupted on a monthly basis. Furthermore, there was limited space in which to properly observe it. As such, it was common for magical battle to erupt.

In the second month after the appearance of the ancient Dao Geyser, Conclave Disciple Xu Qing of the Black Sieve Sect defeated Li Clan Dao Child Li Daoyi [1], which rocked the entire western region.

Before the battle, few knew the name of Xu Qing. Afterwards, though, it spread far and wide.

In the fourth month, Dao Child of the Wang Clan, the one who had been rumored to have died all those years ago, Wang Lihai, along with Han Shandao one of the Seven Sons of the Solitary Sword Sect, both gained the enlightenment of the ancient Dao Geyser. Although they didn't have breakthroughs, their Cultivation bases experienced significant growth. According to the rumor, both of them received enlightenment regarding a certain magical technique.

In the fifth month, Dao Child of the Song Clan, Song Yunshu battled Chen Fan, another of the Seven Sons of the Solitary Sword Clan. In the end, they were evenly matched; however, because of the battle, Chen Fan's reputation grew rapidly.

During the same month, Dao Child of the Blood Demon Clan, Li Shiqi of the Solitary Sword Sect. The explosions caused by the battle filled the area, and did not end with victory or defeat, but rather, with both parties gaining the enlightenment of the Dao Geyser.

In the sixth month, friction arose between the Golden Frost Sect's Dao Child, and Wang Youcai [5], Chosen of the Blood Demon Sect. A bloody battle was fought, during which the Dao Child's arm was severed. This sent mighty waves of astonishment throughout the Southern Domain.

During the same month, Wang Tengfei, Chosen of the Wang Clan and younger brother of Wang Lihai, also achieved enlightenment. He made a breakthrough in his Cultivation base, reaching the great circle of Foundation Establishment. This also caused quite a stir.

By observing the tableau within the erupting geyser, and gaining the power of the enlightenment, one could gain something from nothing, and cause the Cultivation base to grow, without the use of any medicinal pills. It was an opportunity for incredible luck for anyone in the Foundation Establishment stage in the Southern Domain.

Because of the Dao Geyser, it was possible to suddenly break through from Foundation Establishment into Core Formation. The only thing that would be more incredible would be to break through from Core Formation into the Nascent Soul stage. One could imagine the struggles that would result from something like that.

In the blink of an eye, the western region of the Southern Domain was thrown into turmoil. It was only the Violet Fate Sect who didn't dispatch any disciples to the Dao Geyser. There were many speculations about this, and most people came to the conclusion that it had something to do with the previous incident with the Black Lands.

The western region of the Southern Domain quickly became the focus of all attention. Not very far off from the location of the Dao Geyser, Meng Hao sat cross-legged in meditation.

His body was once again as withered as a corpse's. However boundless life force existed deep inside him. The sound of his heartbeat began to ring out, louder and louder.

His eighth Dao Pillar was now more than ninety percent complete. The critical juncture had arrived, and he had consumed roughly seventy to eighty percent of his medicinal pills. At the moment, over a hundred empty pill bottles were strewn about the Immortal's Cave.

Time slowly passed. Soon, half a month had gone by. Outside the Immortal's Cave, black clouds filled the sky, and a thin rain fell down. The curtains of rain made the outside world hazy. Suddenly, the peaceful rainy atmosphere was broken as two prismatic beams of light shot into the area.

Two young Cultivators approached, locked in magical combat. One was from the Solitary Sword Sect, another was from the Blood Demon Sect. The booming sounds caused by their magical techniques echoed out constantly. Both of these Cultivators were well-known in the world; they were Chosen of their respective Sects. And now here they were in the western region, fighting a bitter battle.

Booms echoed out, and shocking magical techniques were employed. They charged along, attacking, rocking the surroundings. Unbeknownst to them, they were nearing Meng Hao's isolated mountain. At a glance, it was obvious that the effects of their magical techniques were rippling out toward his mountain.

A massive boom sounded out, and within the Immortal's Cave, Meng Hao, his body withered like a corpse, suddenly opened his eyes. They flashed like lightning.

The instant they opened, his gaze blasted out, filled with a powerful, brilliant light. It was shocking, so much so that the mountain itself began to shake. Even the falling rain outside began to vibrate.

Moments ago, the two fighting Cultivators had only been worried about each other. All of a sudden, though, their hair stood on end, seemingly out of instinct. An indescribable sense of danger rose up, and their facial expressions immediately changed. Their Cultivation bases were suddenly suppressed, their bodies began to twitch, and their scalps grew numb. They felt as if death itself were staring down upon them, causing their hearts to pound.

Meng Hao's shrivelled lips suddenly opened. When he began to speak, the sound was a bit weak, but it instantly rose to frenzied heights, a shocking roar which filled the world outside the Immortal's cave. It slammed into the ears of the two Cultivators louder than thunder. It turned into their whole world, engulfing them, as if it were the only sound in the world.

“SCREW OFF!”

SCREW OFF...

...OFF....

...off....

...

The booming echoed back and forth in the surrounding five kilometer region, the lone mountain being the centre of it. It seemed this area was a forbidden zone.

The two Cultivator's minds reeled, and they immediately coughed up mouthfuls of blood. Their Cultivation bases were in the late Foundation Establishment stage; however, beneath the voice they had just heard, they seemed weak enough to fall at a single blow. Faces pale, scalps numb, expressions that of astonishment and panic, they retreated at top speed, using all the strength they possessed. It wasn't until they had fled fifty kilometres away that they finally looked back.

The rain fell down around them. Moments ago they had been in a life-and-death battle. However, at the moment, neither of them seemed to be in the mood for fighting. They glanced at each other, and they both seemed to feel they had just barely avoided a disaster.

“Who... was that?”

“All the heroes of the Southern Domain have come to the western region, a multitude of Dao Children and Chosen. I'm not sure who this guy is, but the feeling he gives is even more terrifying than the feeling I get from Elder Sister Shan Ling or Elder Brother Han Shandao of my Solitary Sword Sect!”

“Same here. Even facing up against Elder Sister Li wouldn't be as frightening. I felt like I was a mortal....”

Seeing how they were both so shaken, they silently turned and sped off, each in a different direction.

Three days after they left, Meng Hao sat in the Immortal's Cave. Suddenly, a violet light rose up from his body. It didn't spread out of the Immortal's Cave, which had been thoroughly sealed. However, the light caused the entire world of the Immortal's Cave to turn violet.

The glow lasted for several hours, then slowly began to fade. There sat Meng Hao; he hadn't moved for nearly half a year.

He no longer looked withered and weak; he was completely recovered. His eyes were closed. However, an explosive power seemed to be growing stronger within him.

He didn't move, but looking at him, you would get the feeling that he was moving in a way that would shake the heavens and earth.

Li Daoyi is the Dao Child Meng Hao fought in the Blood Immortal Legacy tournament Han Shandao's name in Chinese is 韩山道 hán shān dào - Han is a common surname. Shan means "mountain." Dao means "way" or "path." Same characters as "the Dao." Song Yunshu was introduced when Meng Hao went to the Song Clan Meng Hao fought Li Shiqi right after he escaped from the Black Sieve Sect with Ultimate Vexation. He thought she was a guy at first Wang Youcai was one of the group originally taken by Xu Qing to the Reliance Sect

Chapter 265: Out of Seclusion!

A long time passed, and slowly, the ferocious aura emanating from Meng Hao's body faded. Finally, he opened his eyes. His pupils looked normal, but deep in their recesses was a shocking profundity. They were like deep pools of water, or an endlessly starry night sky.

Meng Hao took a long, deep breath. Within his body, his eight Dao Pillars glowed with a violet aura. They rotated, emitting spiritual power throughout his body which far, far outmatched his previous power.

"It's still not enough," he thought. "But it's the best I can do for now. Eight Dao Pillars. I don't have quite enough to pass the critical juncture for the final Dao Pillar." It wasn't that he didn't have enough medicinal pills. For some reason, he had the strange feeling that there was something about the ninth Dao Pillar that didn't have anything to do with medicinal pills.

He felt as if he were in a bottleneck, and that at some point he would reach a turning point. Once that turning point arrived, he wouldn't need any medicinal pills whatsoever. Instead, he would be able to rely on his eight Dao Pillars to create the ninth. Then he would have completed the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

He took a deep breath, and sat there thoughtfully for a long moment. Finally, he lifted his head and looked outside of the Immortal's Cave. It was still raining. The murmur of the rainfall filled the land. Everything looked dim and hazy.

His secluded meditation had lasted for a long time, and he had no idea of the events which had transpired during that better part of a year. He also had no idea whether or not Zhou Dekun had escaped with his life.

For the moment, Meng Hao chose not to go out. His eyes shining, he looked down at his bag of holding and then produced a Spring and Autumn tree.

Having been in secluded meditation for more than half a year already, he didn't really care much about how much time had passed. Once he did go out, he wanted to be prepared to make up for his previous defeat at the hands of the azure-masked Cultivator. With death!

Meng Hao took a deep breath. He lifted up the Spring and Autumn tree in his right hand. A blinding violet glow appeared in his palm. He employed the full, massive power of his eight Dao Pillars to begin the catalyzing process.

The violet light grew more and more intense, and the Spring and Autumn tree sucked it in. Soon, a second sprout appeared on its surface. At the same time, Meng Hao's left hand performed the incantation to brand the Spring and Autumn tree with the Time locking magic.

"Including the test I performed in the Black Sieve Sect, twenty years of Time are now locked within this Spring and Autumn tree." He pulled out a jade box, within which was the Primordial Heavenly Replenishing Pill. He examined it closely, comparing it to the Spring and Autumn tree.

"Time is like a poison, a poison which can be used to refine treasures. It melts away life force...." Within Meng Hao's mind appeared the images of what had happened to Chen Jiayi. After some time passed, he took a deep breath, and then once again picked up the Spring and Autumn tree and began to catalyze the Time within.

Time passed, ten days, in the blink of an eye. On this particular day, a look of concentration covered Meng Hao's face. The Spring and Autumn tree in his hand was now half gray. However, locked within was nearly fifty years of Time. The further along he went, the more of his Cultivation base he had to use to perform the catalyzation, and the slower it went.

As of now, he was completing the last ten years of a sixty year cycle. When this catalyzation was completed, the Spring and Autumn tree would look completely different than it had before.

It was dusk, and the rain outside was still falling down in sheets. Meng Hao was completely focused on the Spring and Autumn tree. He continued catalyzing without pause. Suddenly, his expression flickered; the Spring and Autumn tree had begun to wither.

It seemed as if the tree couldn't handle the fifty years of Time. Regardless of what mystical properties the Spring and Autumn tree had, at this moment it was decaying. Soon, it turned into gray ash, which collapsed through Meng Hao's fingers.

An unsightly expression appeared on his face. He looked down at the ash, and then back at his right hand. His hand appeared to have aged as well. It wasn't fifty years, but obviously the failure just now had resulted in a recoil.

Ignoring his hand, Meng Hao began to think.

"No wonder treasures like this are so rare; forging the Time treasure is extremely complex. One failure can negate all the previous successes. It's possible to expend great cost, but then make a slight mistake in the very end. If that happens, all is for naught. Furthermore, every failure comes at the price of a Time recoil...." Meng Hao could clearly sense that the recoil just now had caused some of his life force to disappear.

"However, if there's anyone who can actually forge this treasure... then that person is me." His eyes began to glow brightly, and, muttering to himself, he slapped his right hand down onto his bag of holding to retrieve another Spring and Autumn tree. Once again, he began to catalyze it.

Time passed. By that night, the Spring and Autumn contained ten years of Time. Ten days later, Meng Hao had once again reached the point where fifty years of Time was locked within the Spring and Autumn tree.

He took a deep breath, and consumed some medicinal pills to restore his energy. Two hours later, he opened his eyes. He didn't begin to immediately catalyze the final ten years of Time. Instead, he produced the copper mirror from within his bag of holding. He duplicated some medicinal pills, then used some of his remaining Spirit Stones to duplicate the Spring and Autumn tree with the fifty years of Time locked inside.



It seemed that a full sixty year cycle of Time was a watershed mark. Before reaching it, the duplication cost wouldn't be very high. However, after reaching the sixty year cycle, Meng Hao had the strong feeling that the duplication cost would increase tremendously.

A few moments later, a bang sounded out. An irritated look appeared on Meng Hao's face as his entire right arm aged, and the Spring and Autumn tree once again crumbled into dust. He didn't have many Spirit Stones left, but he pushed down the sense of pain and used almost the entire remaining amount to produce another copy, which he then began to catalyze.

This catalyzation lasted a full two days before the Spring and Autumn tree turned gray. After sealing it with the Time-sealing magic, the tree began to emit an archaic sense of Time.

He had finally succeeded in embodying the Spring and Autumn tree with a full sixty year cycle!

Meng Hao began to pant as he looked at the Spring and Autumn tree. His eyes began to shine. He could sense that the Spring and Autumn tree contained a feeling of Time similar to the Primordial Heavenly Replenishing Pill! It was much, much weaker, but it was definitely there.

"Sadly, I don't have enough Spirit Stones. In the future, this treasure will definitely require a lot of them. A Time treasure with a sixty year cycle of Time is considerably powerful, though. It's good enough for now!" His eyes flickering, he looked thoughtfully at the Spring and Autumn tree for a moment, then used his left hand to begin to whittle it.

A few moments later, Meng Hao was holding a simple wooden sword. Its appearance was crude, but this crude wooden sword was a magical treasure that Meng Hao had created himself.

He looked at the Wooden Time Sword for a moment, then put it into his bag of holding. Next, he produced some jade bottles. Each of these bottles contained blood; they were none other than the three generations of ancestral blood that he had collected from the Black Sieve Sect when concocting the Soul Refining Pills.

"I concocted pills for thirteen generations of the Black Sieve Sect, and of them, was able to collect five sets of ancestral blood from three generations.... From this blood, I should be able to create five rudimentary Blood Clones." Within his mind he could see the description of Blood Clones which was contained in the Blood Immortal legacy.

"Blood Clones are like shadows. Meld the self into the shadow, and it becomes like a doppelgänger, its life and death tied to my thoughts. A Blood Clone contains twenty to thirty percent of the power

of the Cultivation base of my true self. If I can upgrade it to a Blood Spirit, it can employ one hundred percent of my true self's Cultivation base. The final version, which is created with nine generations of ancestral blood, is a Blood Divinity, which is a defiance of the Heavens!" The legacy of the Blood Immortal was truly sinister! Early on, he had had his doubts. However after all his years in the Cultivation World, and after studying the Dao of alchemy and the Dao of poison, he now had a much better understanding.

"Much like poison, there are thousands of types of magic. The great Dao is limitless, filled with paths which may be trodden according to one's will and one's own decisions." He lifted his right hand and, according to the method described in the Blood Immortal legacy, began to create his Blood Clones.

This technique used one's own blood as the spirit, and the three generations of ancestral blood to bolster it. Furthermore, a sacrificial object was also necessary. According to the Blood Immortal legacy, this sacrificial object was of utmost importance. Of course, there are myriad objects in Heaven and Earth. Plants and trees, rocks and earth, anything could be used. In fact, the ancient Blood Immortal even used the skin of his enemies as the sacrificial object.

As long as the sacrificial object was not destroyed, the Blood Clone could not be destroyed. The greater the fusion between the two, the more power could be manifested by the Blood Clone's Cultivation base.

After thinking for a moment, Meng Hao decided that the sacrificial item he would use would be the meat jelly's shed skin!

When the meat jelly had shed, it had left behind plenty of residual skin which Meng Hao had collected. Meng Hao retrieved five pieces the size of a fingernail, and then began to use them to refine the Blood Clones.

Time passed by slowly. Soon, three months had gone by...

The Dao Geyser in the western region of the Southern Domain eventually increased its rate of eruption from once per month to every three days. Soon, the interval grew shorter; every two days, and then every day. Eventually, it was erupting multiple times per day, with no end in sight!

According to the ancient records of the Sects of the Southern Domain, continuous eruptions would go on for seven days, and then the geyser would disappear.

Time was running out. The Chosen of the great Sects and Clans spent all their time and focus on trying to gain enlightenment, vying for a chance to receive good fortune at the critical moment.

One day, Blood Demon Sect Dao Child Li Shiqi gained enlightenment and made a breakthrough, reaching Core Formation. Spiritual energy poured out of the geyser, absorbable only by her. No one else dared to steal away even a scrap.

After her was Dao Child of the Li Clan, Li Daoyi, the very same one who had been defeated but not killed by Xu Qing. His name immediately spread throughout the Southern Domain as the third Cultivator to break through to Core Formation. Again, the spiritual energy which poured out of the Dao Geyser could only be absorbed by him, the one who had gained enlightenment.

The Southern Domain was in full commotion.

It was during this period of time that Meng Hao finally left his secluded meditation, after nearly a year. He stepped out, his hair long, his right hand somewhat withered. He no longer wore the clothing of a Violet Fate Sect Furnace Lord, but instead an azure robe.

It was a rainy morning when he emerged. He immediately transformed into a beam of prismatic light that shot off into the distance.

His expression was placid, but his eyes seemed to contain the profundity of the stars.

His Cultivation base was still in the Foundation Establishment stage, but his battle prowess was no longer on the same level as Foundation Establishment Cultivators. As for exactly how much more powerful....

Meng Hao wanted to find out for himself!

Therefore, he would go to battle!

By battle, he would gain enlightenment of Heaven and Earth. By battle, he would gain enlightenment regarding his ninth Dao Pillar. By battle... he would shock the world!

He would seek out that turning point which would lead to a breakthrough in his Cultivation base!

## Chapter 266: The Faceless Azure Hero!

Seven days later, massive, figurative storm winds buffeted the Southern Domain. The hearts of each and every Southern Domain Cultivator in the western region was completely shaken.

All of this was because of one name.

The Faceless Azure Hero!

According to the rumors, he wore a long, azure-colored robe, and his face was nothing but a blur.

According to the rumors, he was only in the late Foundation Establishment stage, but his battle prowess was incredible, something rarely seen.

According to the rumors, whenever he attacked, he would only say one thing:

“Fight!”

The rumors had begun to spread immediately after his first battle, seven days before. He had fought a Chosen of the Golden Frost Sect, who was of the great circle of late Foundation Establishment. They had met each other flying in mid air, and for no apparent reason, the words “fight” had been uttered, whereupon a boom filled the sky.

In an instant, the Golden Frost Sect Chosen was defeated. It happened in the blink of an eye, as if the man were dry weeds or rotten wood, just waiting to be crushed.

Many people saw the fight. It was incredibly shocking, but before they could even spread the news, they witnessed the Faceless Azure Hero’s second battle.

His opponent was a Chosen of the Blood Demon Sect. Again, the Chosen was defeated in an instant!

Their lives were spared. However, such decisive defeats were like massive floodwaters that could smash away one’s self-confidence, and left each opponent at a complete loss.

In the following days, the Li Clan, the Black Sieve Sect, the Song Clan, the Solitary Sword Sect, the Wang Clan... all the grand Sects and Clans saw similar fates befall their Chosen disciples. Anyone who met the man in the azure robe would never even have a chance to make two attacks. They were all instantly defeated.

The western region of the Southern Domain was in an uproar as everyone began to speculate regarding the identity of this faceless, azure-robed man. Opinions were widely varied.

On the eighth day, roughly fifteen hundred kilometers away from the Dao Geyser, where the Solitary Sword Sect disciples were gathered together, an azure-robed form flitted about in mid-air. Up ahead was a middle-aged man with a flushed face. His eyes shone brightly as he stared at the azure-robed man in front of him.

“Just who exactly are you?!”

The azure-robed man was naturally none other than Meng Hao.

For the past several days he had been constantly fighting, all in an attempt to gain battle enlightenment regarding his ninth Dao pillar. He had heard of the Dao Geyser, of course, as well as of the people who had reached Core Formation.

However, he didn't immediately go to the Dao Geyser. Instead, he continued to issue challenges to the heroes of the Southern Domain. After days of facing off against multiple opponents, and achieving victory after victory, he now had his sights set on the Dao children of the various Sects and Clans.

The middle-aged man in front of him was none other than the First of the Seven Sons of the Solitary Sword Sect, Han Shandao, of the great circle of Foundation Establishment, half way to Core Formation!

“Fight? Or not?” asked Meng Hao, his voice cool.

Han Shandao's eyes shone brightly. Lifting his head to the sky, he laughed heartily, then rose his right hand, sending his massive greatsword screaming out. The sword aura shone up to the heavens as it shot toward Meng Hao. A light smile touched the corners of Meng Hao's lips, and he advanced forward a step.

A massive boom filled the air, and at the same time....

Blood sprayed from Han Shandao's mouth as he tumbled backward through the air. Astonishment filled his face. His greatsword had begun to crumble into pieces. Hidden inside was a flying dagger which could unleash the power of Core Formation. However, it too was shaking and covered with cracks, and flew backward along with Han Shandao.

One moment, one move, utter defeat!

A long slash stretched from Han Shandao's right shoulder all the way to his left armpit. Bone could be seen within the wound, and blood gurgled out from within. Han Shandao's face was pale as one of the other Solitary Sword Sect disciples helped him to his feet.

He took a deep breath and stood there on wobbly legs. "Your excellency has gained enlightenment regarding the ancient battle incantation contained in the Dao Geysir. I concede defeat."

Meng Hao didn't respond. He simply turned and left. During these eight days, he had battled many people. Quite a few of them brought up the matter of the Dao Geysir, and the ancient battle incantation.

After Meng Hao took his leave, the blurriness on his face changed. A moment later, he once again looked like Fang Mu. However, he still wore the azure robe. An hour later, Meng Hao looked out over a massive lake.

It was a lake, but it would be more proper to call it a Dao Geysir!

The lake was surrounded by quite an assembly of Cultivators, over ten thousand of them. They all sat cross-legged, seemingly deep in meditation.

Meng Hao's arrival didn't attract any attention whatsoever.

He looked around at the crowds, and then selected a spot with fewer people, where he sat down cross-legged and began to silently observe the Dao Geysir.

Time passed. On the second day, Meng Hao noticed that more and more Cultivators were arriving, from all directions. By midday, there were now several tens of thousands of people present.

By evening, the entire area was packed. There appeared to be nearly one hundred thousand Cultivators!

Suddenly, water shot up and then glowing lights appeared above the Dao Geyser. The lights interlocked to form a screen in the sky. Within the screen was the indistinct image of a person, sitting cross-legged in meditation, both hands flashing an incantation. It was a Dao Projection!

“It’s appeared!”

“What exactly is the enlightenment contained in the Dao Geyser? What the hell? I’ve been here for nearly a year, but my Cultivation base hasn’t made the slightest bit of progress.”

The voices of the surrounding Cultivators filled the air. Meng Hao looked up to examine the screen. As he did, the blurry image began to glow clearer, as did the man’s two hands. Meng Hao suddenly realized that the illusory image of the man was emanating killing intent!

The killing intent was faint, but Meng Hao was sure it was there, and that he was not the only person to notice it.

Murmuring to himself, he calmed his heart and forced himself into a state of tranquility. He stared at the figure on the screen, and gradually began to zone out everything else. He was in this state for an entire night. Early the next morning, he frowned. He had made no progress whatsoever.

Even as he sat there thoughtfully, an eager voice came to him from off to the side. “Hey, Fellow Daoist, check this out.” It was a middle-aged man, gaunt, but with bright eyes. His entire person seemed to radiate shrewdness.

Meng Hao had noticed him earlier. He had been making his way through the crowds surrounding the Dao Geyser, peddling books from out of his bag of holding. Few people seemed interested in buying, though, and the vast majority seemed to find him extremely annoying.

The man was discreet, though, and as soon as he sensed he wasn’t wanted, would smile and take his leave.

He stood next to Meng Hao, his expression one of eagerness. With an ingratiating bow toward Meng Hao, he bowed from the waist and hurriedly began to speak.

“Fellow Daoist, are you worried because you haven’t gained the enlightenment of the Dao Geysers?” His voice was filled with infectious enthusiasm. “Have you encountered a mountain of treasure, but aren’t really sure what to do with it?”

Meng Hao stared at the man, taken aback.

“Don’t worry a bit,” continued the man, his eyes shining brightly. “You are about to gaze upon the Exalted Lord’s Limitless Ancient Dao Geysers Enlightenment primer!” He slapped his bag of holding and immediately a faded pamphlet appeared in his hand.

“In this Exalted Lord’s Limitless Ancient Dao Geysers Enlightenment primer, I have humbly recorded the enlightenment of countless Fellow Daoists. In fact, at no small cost, I even went to pay my respects to Celestial Goddess Xu Qing of the Black Sieve Sect, Celestial Goddess of the Blood Demon Sect Li Shiqi, as well as Dao Child of the Wang Clan, Wang Lihai. All of their enlightenment is contained therein. It also contains the knowledge of more than one hundred Chosen from various Sects. It was with copious blood, sweat and tears that I produced this Exalted Lord’s Limitless Enlightenment primer!” The man spoke very quickly, holding the book in one hand and making various gestures with the other. Meng Hao stared in shock.

“Fellow Daoist, I know what you’re thinking. The value of a book such as the Exalted Lord’s Limitless Ancient Enlightenment primer is impossible to determine. It’s priceless, right?” He slapped his thigh, as if forcing himself to make a decision.

“Fellow Daoist, you can rest assured. The cost to acquire this Exalted Lord’s Limitless Enlightenment primer is not one hundred thousand Spirit Stones. It is not ten thousand Spirit Stones. Nor is it one thousand Spirit Stones. This book, which contains the enlightenment of over one hundred Chosen, as well as several Dao Children, which was compiled at the cost of countless blood, sweat and tears, this Exalted Lord’s Limitless Enlightenment primer can be yours for only ninety-nine Spirit Stones!”

Meng Hao cleared his throat and was about to say something.

“Fellow Daoist, don’t lose out on this opportunity! You have a chance now that will never return again. Listen, I’ll tell you a secret.” He looked around, then lowered his voice. “Have you heard of the Faceless Azure Hero? That’s the famous, ruthless wanderer who has defeated countless Chosen,



all in the blink of an eye. In fact, you might not have heard that just a few days ago, he fought with Han Shandao of the Solitary Sword Sect, and Han Shandao was defeated decisively!

“Fellow Daoist, listen. Just half a month ago, the Faceless Azure Hero purchased one of my Exalted Lord’s Limitless Enlightenment primers!”

Meng Hao frowned as he took another look at the middle-aged man.

“Okay, okay. How about ten Spirit Stones? I’ll sell you a copy for ten Spirit Stones. You’re my first customer of the day, which makes us friends. I’m Xu Liushan, disciple of the Blood Demon Sect.”

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment, and then said, “I only have three Spirit Stones.” He promptly pulled out his final three Spirit Stones from his robe.

“Deal!” replied the middle-aged man, without a moment’s hesitation. He immediately placed the Exalted Lord’s Limitless Enlightenment primer into Meng Hao’s hand, apparently fearing that Meng Hao might change his mind.

Meng Hao looked at the pamphlet with a wry smile. A sudden breeze passed by, flipping open the pamphlet. Meng Hao’s eyes suddenly narrowed, and he handed the three Spirit Stones to Xu Liushan.

Xu Liushan quickly left, sighing and muttering to himself about how difficult it was to do business these days. Actually, the images in the booklet had been drawn by himself. He had been in the area of the ancient Dao Geysir for quite some time. Each time the screen appeared, he would draw an image of it. After some time, he came up with the idea of selling it.

Meng Hao ignored Xu Liushan and began to leaf through the pamphlet. Each drawing seemed to be almost exactly the same. However, it wasn’t long before a strange light began to gleam within Meng Hao’s eyes. He lifted his head to look up at the image on the screen which hovered in the middle of the Dao Geysir.

“The images in this booklet all appear to be the same, but actually there is something different about each one...” Meng Hao studied the screen for some time, until finally it began to fade. The instant it was about to fade completely, a tremor ran through Meng Hao’s body. He had seen what the difference was. Within the figure on the screen was... a strand of Qi!

The strand of Qi was constantly in motion. Therefore, each of the drawings was slightly different. The differences were so minute, however, that even Xu Liushan hadn't noticed.

#### Chapter 267: Black Lands Cultivators

A moment later, the screen completely faded. The surrounding Cultivators began to depart. Meng Hao remained, sitting cross-legged and staring out into the blank air, thinking.

Two days after the appearance of the Dao Projection, in the evening, Meng Hao closed his eyes. When it was deep in the night, his body flickered, and he disappeared.

The Wang Clan Dao Child and Chosen, in fact anyone in whose veins ran the blood of the Wang Clan, were all congregated on a mountain not too far from the Dao Geyser.

This particular night was doomed to be anything but tranquil.

The moon hung high in the sky when Meng Hao appeared just outside the mountain. He glanced up at the Wang Clan banner fluttering in the wind at the top of the mountain, then shot up toward it.

“Who are you? You dare to charge into Wang Clan territory!?”

“This place is marked with the Wang Clan banner, your excellency, please halt!”

Voices rose up as eight figures flew out, shooting toward Meng Hao. In front of them appeared whistling sword Qi, which also shot directly at Meng Hao.

His face was calm as he flicked his right sleeve. Power exploded from his eight Perfect Dao Pillars. What appeared to be the simple flick of the sleeve was actually crushing pressure from his Cultivation base, which transformed into a gale force wind that spread out in all directions.

A boom filled the air, and the eight sword auras collapsed into pieces. The eight Cultivators' faces filled with shock as they tumbled backward, mouths spewing blood.

They couldn't even cause Meng Hao to pause. He passed through their midst, continuing on toward the top of the mountain. It was at this time that ten beams of prismatic light flew out. Behind them were nearly a hundred people, a massive group, all heading straight for Meng Hao.

“You dare to charge into Wang Clan territory!? It doesn’t matter what Sect you’re from, we’re gonna bury you here today!”

“What’s the point of being so long winded, kill this guy!”

As the group of people approached, magical lights began to shine up. Even people far away would be able to see the shocking glow which filled the night sky.

Meng Hao’s expression was calm. He lifted his right hand, slicing his finger. He catalyzed the blood with the power of his Dao Pillar; everything turned red and began to rumble. It grew into something that looked like a massive Blood Dragon; a roar filled the air as it blasted forward directly into the charging Wang Clan Cultivators. Their faces filled with shock and blood sprayed from their mouths. They spun backward head over heels, seemingly completely out of control.

A path now led to the top of the mountain, a path carved out by the Blood Dragon. Amidst thunderous roars, Meng Hao advanced, and within the space of about ten breaths, stood at the peak of the mountain.

Behind him, the Chosen of the Wang Clan coughed up blood. During his entire way up the mountain, no one had been able to do anything to block Meng Hao’s way.

“The Faceless Azure Hero!” people cried amidst their gasps. The Wang Clansmen surrounded the mountain peak, all of them staring at Meng Hao.

In front of Meng Hao was a Cultivator wearing a black robe and a grim expression. He appeared to be about thirty years of age, and his eyes shone with a profound gleam as he looked at Meng Hao. This was none other than Wang Lihai, Dao Child of the Wang Clan.

His Cultivation base was halfway to Core Formation. His presence made it seem as if there were another mountain peak on his mountain.

“Sir, I have come here today to fight the Wang Clan Dao Child!” said Meng Hao. His cool voice rang out in a tone that could sever nails and slice iron.

“You want to fight? Then let’s fight!” Wang Lihai’s eyes glittered, and he took a step forward, lifting his hand at the same time. Behind him, an image appeared that seemed to contain both a sea of stars and the yellow springs of the underworld. Three finger attacks shot toward Meng Hao.

The first finger seemed capable of transforming life into death. The second embodied killing intent that seemed to stem from the yellow springs. The third contained the silence of extermination, making the world seem empty.

These three finger attacks were a magical technique of the Wang Clan, the Vermillion Bird Three Fingers.

Wang Lihai was well aware that this Faceless Azure Hero was unfathomable. Therefore, he attacked him without the slightest bit of contempt, and led with his most powerful magical technique.

Meng Hao’s eyes glowed brightly. He strode forward, also lifting up his right hand, immediately attacking with one of the three Blood Immortal techniques, the Blood Finger.

A boom rattled out, causing everything to rumble. At the same time, a massive wind sprang up as Meng Hao’s body turned into a beam of light that shot up into the air.

All eyes on the mountain peak were fixed on Wang Lihai. His expression was the same as ever as he watched Meng Hao disappear. After a long moment, he coughed up a mouthful of blood, and then staggered backward a few paces. His index finger was quivering, and was so swollen he couldn’t bend it.

“Defeated,” he murmured. The other Wang Clansmen heard the words, looks of astonishment covered their faces.

Wang Lihai wasn’t the only one to be defeated that night. Song Yunshu, Dao Child of the Song Clan, as well as the Dao Child of the Golden Frost Sect were also vanquished!

As Meng Hao flew away from the Song Clan airship, Song Yunshu leaned up against the wall, blood dripping down onto the ground. His face was pale as he stared at Meng Hao’s disappearing shadow. Eventually, a stubborn look appeared on his face.

Outside the valley occupied by the Golden Frost Sect, a shocking roar filled the dawn air. It echoed out all but once, and then the Golden Frost Sect Dao Child was defeated. He immediately went into secluded meditation. Only a few people witnessed the shocking battle.

The next day, the name of the Faceless Azure Hero swept across the western region of the Southern Domain. There was not a single person who hadn't heard that he had defeated not only Chosen from the various Sects, but Solitary Sword Sect Dao Child Han Shandao, Wang Clan Dao Child Wang Lihai, Song Clan Dao Child Song Yunshu, and the Dao Child of the Golden Frost Sect!

In just a few days, the Faceless Azure Hero had risen to prominence in the western region of the Southern Domain.

In fact, some people had already taken him to be on par with Zhou Jie, Li Shiqi and Li Daoyi, who had all broken through to Core Formation.

Many people believed that the mysterious azure-robed man would continue to challenge more Dao Children, or perhaps even Li Shiqi and the others. Shockingly, however, after the three successive battles, he suddenly went into hiding.

At the moment, the illustrious azure-robed man was actually sitting cross-legged near the Dao Geyser, staring at the screen, and the figure on it, lost in thought.

After sensing the Qi in the Dao Projection, he had gone to fight the three battles in the night. However, fighting them did nothing. He had the feeling that if he was able to gain enlightenment regarding the Qi in the figure, then he would be able to create his ninth Dao Pillar.

Meng Hao didn't know what the Qi was, but after the Dao Projection disappeared this time, he was able to sense that his own body... also had a similar strand of Qi within it.

After observing the screen and the figure, he was able to circulate the Qi strand. When evening fell, he once again stood up.

For two days, Meng Hao was unable to find an appropriate opponent. Li Daoyi, Zhou Jie and Li Shiqi had apparently all left the western region of the Southern Domain. Meng Hao couldn't find them.

Eventually, he returned to the Dao Geyser to once again observe the screen. Eventually, he closed his eyes and began to mentally review his various victories over the Chosen and Dao Children.

Gradually, the images of the various opponents grew clearer in his mind, and he realized that they had a similar Qi strand within them. Within some, it was thick, others, thinner. But they existed in all of them.

Early on the second day, Meng Hao opened his eyes to glance about at the tens of thousands of people surrounding the Dao Geyser. After observing them for a while, he could tell that all of them had this mysterious Qi within them.

It seemed to appear within anyone who observed the Dao Geyser.

Meng Hao sat there thoughtfully for some time, his brow furrowed.

In the following half month, the reputation of the azure-robed man only continued to grow. Everyone spoke about him with fear. He seemed to have gone crazy! The instant he encountered a Cultivator of the late Foundation Establishment stage, he would instantly attack them, regardless of who they were or which Sect they belonged to.

The entire time, he never killed anyone. At the same time, no one was capable of making even two attacks against him. Everyone suffered complete defeat.

All of the Chosen from the Solitary Sword Sect who were present in the western region, were defeated. The same went for the Chosen of the Golden Frost Sect. As soon as anyone saw the azure-colored robe, their face would fill with fear. Regardless of whether it be Wang Clan, Li Clan or Song Clan, during this half month, everyone suffered defeat at the hands of the azure-robed man.

It was as if an azure-colored storm had descended upon the entirety of the western region of the Southern Domain.

Half a month later, the Dao Geyser was reaching its final moments. As of now, the screen had appeared, and wasn't disappearing. According to the ancient records, this meant that the Dao Geyser would dry up and disappear in seven days.

More and more Cultivators sat cross-legged near the Dao Geyser, staring at the screen. It was at this exact same time that the challenges issued by the azure-robed man ceased.

Meng Hao once again sat cross-legged near the Dao Geyser, looking at the figure on the screen. His eyes were bright. During the half month, his every victory had caused the Qi strand to grow.

He was able to make the frequency of rotation of the Qi strand within his body match that of the figure on the screen.

Meng Hao then noticed that the Qi strand of the figure was rotating faster and faster, building up an attack momentum that seemed just on the verge of exploding out.

“This is a strand of battle Qi which can be cultivated after constantly winning successive battles. It can be used to break through a bottleneck, and increase the Cultivation base! This is the supposed ancient battle incantation.” He took a deep breath, then began to rotate the Qi strand within him. He was just a hair away from being able to create his ninth Dao Pillar, and yet, was unable to make that final charge.

Time passed. It was now the fifth day of the Dao Geyser’s final seven days of eruption. Suddenly, several beams of prismatic light appeared in the air.

The beams were filled with black-robed figures, all of whom wore masks. Shockingly, three of them wore azure-colored masks. Seven or eight wore white masks.

There were two, a man and a woman, who took the lead, and they wore gold-colored masks!

The dozen or so people whistled through air toward the Dao Geyser, immediately catching the attention of the tens of thousands of Cultivators below.

Immediately, some of the people recognized the black robes and the masks. “Black Lands Cultivators!”

Meng Hao also looked up. His gaze fell upon one of the azure-masked Cultivators, a skinny man who stood off to the side.

In that instant, Meng Hao’s eyes began to glow.

Chapter 268: The Height of the Heavens and the Depth of the Earth

This azure-masked Cultivator was the same Core Formation expert who had attempted to kill him that day not long ago.

“I’ve already run out of people to fight here,” thought Meng Hao. “This guy... is definitely my next opponent!” The glittering in his eyes soon subsided. He took a deep breath and closed his eyes, meditating and rotating his Cultivation base, ensuring that he was at the peak of his ability.

Now that he had decided to fight, he was extremely calm.

Regardless of whether he won or lost, he must attack! This battle would be the final step in his enlightenment!

The instant he closed his eyes, the people from the Black Lands arrived, attracting the attention of almost all the surrounding Cultivators.

Zhou Jie and the others who had reached Core Formation were not present. However, Wang Lihai and Han Shandao, as well as all the other Dao Children and Chosen of the other Sects, were all there.

Among the tens of thousands of Cultivators near the Dao Geyser, there were many who recognized the two in the gold masks.

“Those two in the gold-colored masks... they’re Dao Children who have risen to prominence in the last year in the Black Lands!

“Black Lands Dao Children Luo Chong and Xu Fei!” [1]

“That must be them. Only they would be wearing gold-colored masks!”

The discussions spread, and soon all eyes came to rest on the two Black Lands Dao Children. In the past year, stories about them had spread into the Southern Domain, making them quite well known. They were half way to Core Formation, and according to rumor, might increase their Cultivation bases at any time.



“The three in the azure masks behind them must be the Black Lands Three Azures. All three have Cultivation bases at the Core Formation stage. Even more shocking is their Core Qi.... They say that a lot of alchemists were captured by them.”

“Core Formation Cultivators who have Core Qi are not to be trifled with....”

Wang Lihai frowned as he looked at the group of people from the Black Lands. Not far off, Han Shandao of the Solitary Sword Sect didn't look very pleased. This was especially so as he looked at the Black Lands Dao Children.

Song Yunshu stood wordlessly in the crowd, his face grim.

The two gold-masked Dao Children from the Black Lands peered down at the crowds. One of them spoke. His voice was soft at first, but then rapidly escalated into a roar like thunder. “I, Luo Chong from the Black Lands, wish to challenge the Southern Domain's heroic Dao Children to a duel!”

Immediately, the black-robed, white-masked Cultivators moved backward.

The three azure-masked Cultivators' faces didn't change in the slightest. They hovered cross-legged in mid-air, paying no attention to what was happening.

The other gold-masked Black Lands Dao Child, Xu Fei, also spoke, in a voice much much softer than Luo Chong's, but which became icy cold as it entered the ears of the surrounding Cultivators. “I, Xu Fei from the Black Lands, also wish to challenge the Southern Domain's heroic Dao Children to a duel!”

Not a single of the tens of thousands of Cultivators surrounding the Dao Geyser said a word. They simply looked up at Luo Chong and Xu Fei, a variety of different thoughts running through their heads.

Luo Chong gave a cold harrumph. “Don't tell me that among the throngs of Southern Domain Cultivators, not one dares to fight with us?” His words rang out, filled with an intangible domineering aura that made his challenge seem even more intense.

Suddenly, a cold snort filled the air. A beam of light shot up; this was not someone from one of the five Sects or three Clans. It was a Cultivator from some other Sect, with a Cultivation base of the great circle of Foundation Establishment. He shot directly toward Luo Chong.

Beneath his mask, the Black Lands Dao Child smiled. His body flickered as he advanced to meet the attack. As the man approached, he stretched out both arms; multiple ghost images sprang up, and suddenly, the illusory image of a huge cauldron appeared and shot forward.

A massive boom rang out. The Southern Domain Cultivator staggered backward, coughing up blood, his face pale. Luo Chong waved his sleeve and advanced further. More booms filled the air, for the space of a few breaths. Finally, a blood-curdling scream could be heard. Blood fountained out from the neck of the Southern Domain Cultivator. Only a thin strip of flesh connected it to the body as it tumbled to the ground.

Luo Chong slowly lifted his gore-covered right hand and wiped some blood onto his gold mask. The sight was terrifying.

“Fellow Daoist Wang Lihai. As Dao Child of the Wang Clan, do you dare to fight with me!?” Luo Chong cried. His eyes shone brightly beneath his mask as he looked toward the Wang Clan Cultivators, and Wang Lihai.

Wang Lihai lifted his head, and began to stride toward Luo Chong, his eyes glowing.

The instant he began to move, Han Shandao from the Solitary Sword Sect also rose to his feet, then flew into the air toward Black Lands Dao Child Xu Fei.

The appearance of the two of them caused quite a stir among the Southern Domain Cultivators. All eyes were fixed on them; this battle was a fight between four Dao children. Unless something unexpected happened, their names would rock the world, regardless of who gained victory.

The eyes of the Black Lands Dao Children, Luo Chong and Xu Fei, glistened with concentration. They watched as Han Shandao and Wang Lihai approached. It seemed none of the four wanted to make the first move.

As far as Luo Chong and Xu Fei were concerned, this battle represented the pinnacle of the might of the Southern Domain. No one under Core Formation could possibly unleash greater power in battle than the great circle of Foundation Establishment.

Therefore, their eyes filled with concentration, and within their hearts burned the fiery desire for battle.

Everything was quiet as the crowds looked at the four Dao Children and waited for this pinnacle of battles to begin.

However even as everyone was paying rapt attention to these four, suddenly, someone among the throngs of cross-legged Cultivators slowly stood up.

He wore an azure scholar's robe, and as he rose, he flew up into the air. This was none other than Meng Hao.

His appearance caused looks of astonishment to appear on the faces of the tens of thousands of Cultivators who surrounded the Dao Geysers. It wasn't just them. The four Dao Children in mid-air stared at him in surprise.

Wang Lihai's eyes came to rest on Meng Hao's clothes. Seeing their azure color, his eyes narrowed, and the image of a person appeared in his mind.

Not far off, Han Shandao looked equally thoughtful as he stared at Meng Hao's clothes.

"Interesting," said Luo Chong with a smile. "This Fellow Daoist seems to have made his move a bit late. But he seems to have his mind made up. Fellow Daoist Wang, Fellow Daoist Han, would you permit me to first slay him?" As he looked at Meng Hao, he didn't seem to think much of him. He had seen pictures of all of the famous Chosen and Dao Children in the Southern Domain, and Meng Hao didn't look familiar to him at all. As such, he came to the conclusion that he wasn't even worth paying attention to.

A Cultivator like this could be killed without a second thought by Luo Chong.

Without waiting for a response from Wang or Han, Luo Chong flicked his sleeve, turned, and headed directly toward Meng Hao.

"When Luo Chong attacks," he said with a laugh, "he leaves behind only fatal wounds, not injuries. You deserve praise for your courage, so I'll leave your body intact." Seeing all this happen, the surrounding tens of thousands of Cultivators frowned.

To them, Meng Hao's actions seemed far too impulsive. If anything, it was simply delaying the amazing battle that was about to take place.

“Who is that? Does he really think he can join a battle of Dao Children?”

“He must think his Cultivation base is pretty amazing, so he wants to join the battle to earn some fame...”

As the discussions were beginning to spread, Luo Chong descended upon Meng Hao. As Meng Hao hovered there in mid-air, his cold voice suddenly rang out like rolling thunder, “You're no match for me,” he said to Luo Chong. “The person I want to fight...” He suddenly pointed. “Is YOU!!”

This second 'you' was directed to none other than the skinny azure-masked Cultivator who was sitting cross-legged in mid-air off in the distance.

The instant the words came out, the skinny, azure-masked Cultivator's eyes snapped open. They glowed brightly as he looked at Meng Hao. His pupils constricted as he recognized him.

Meng Hao's words obviously caused an enormous buzz of conversation to rise up among the tens of thousands of Southern Domain Cultivators. Many immediately rose to their feet, looks of disbelief written across their faces.

“Is that guy insane? He wants to fight an azure-masked Cultivator from the Black Lands?!?!”

“They're in the Core Formation Stage, and have cultivated Core Qi. Who is that Cultivator? He looks like a scholar! Does he really dare to issue a challenge to a Core Formation Cultivator!?”

“Late Foundation Establishment fighting Core Formation. Hahaha! This isn't something you see very often. This guy wants to be famous so badly, he's willing to die for it!”

As the buzz of conversation filled the air, Wang Lihai's eyes narrowed. Moments ago, he was unsure of Meng Hao's identity. But now, he had no doubts whatsoever. He took a deep breath. He knew that this person was none other than the Faceless Azure Hero.

Only that mysterious azure-robed man qualified to look down on Foundation Establishment, and do something that since ancient times was rarely seen in the Cultivation world. He was turning

everything upside down, issuing a challenge to the Core Formation stage while in the Foundation Establishment stage!

Han Shandao also took a deep breath. The exact same thoughts were going through his head as were going through Wang Lihai's.

Luo Chong laughed loudly. "Southern Domain Cultivators really are very interesting. Apparently you aren't familiar with the height of the Heavens and the depth of the Earth, and really have an exaggerated opinion of yourself! You are a trifling late Foundation Establishment stage Cultivator, not even of the great circle, and yet still dare to challenge a Black Lands azure-masked Cultivator." An expression of ultimate ridicule covered his face beneath the mask. Before he even finished speaking, he lifted his right hand and waved it toward Meng Hao.

"I'll leave your corpse intact," said Luo Chong with a cold laugh. "Before you die, I'll help you to understand the height of the Heavens, and the depth of the Earth!" Actually, his heart did not contain the contempt which filled his expression. He actually was taking the matter very seriously; he simply couldn't believe that this guy was actually challenging the Core Formation stage. In his opinion, he must be expecting to rely on some help. As he waved his sleeve, a bright beam shot out toward Meng Hao. Behind him, the massive, illusory cauldron reappeared and then also shot toward Meng Hao.

Chapter 269: He's the Faceless Azure Hero!

"Pipe down!" said Meng Hao coolly, completely ignoring the incoming beam of light and the large cauldron. He slapped his bag of holding, and instantly, a simple wooden sword appeared.

Gripping the sword in his hand, he swiped it at the beam and the cauldron.

The slash of the sword seemed to split the very air, sending ripples out, as well as a bright white glow. The seemingly casual slash appeared to contain some great Dao, as if great winds of Time were sweeping out through the ripples.

Within the approaching beam of light was a flying axe. Storm winds filled with a sixty-year cycle worth of Time slammed into the flying axe. Immediately, black spots appeared on its surface, as if it were aging. The spiritual power of the axe began to decay. Within the blink of an eye, it was so decayed that it seemed as if it would wither away. It immediately dropped down onto the ground.

The wind was still there; it rushed toward the illusory cauldron, which began to tremble and distort. A full sixty-year cycle worth of Time seemed to have passed. Something illusory like this could not

withstand such a passage of Time. The previously seemingly impregnable cauldron suddenly began to dissipate.

The wind landed onto Black Lands Dao Child Luo Chong, gently brushing across him. The vitality in his skin seemed to be carried away by the wind. Wrinkles appeared on his hands, and beneath his mask, his face began to age. A sixty-year cycle worth of life force was suddenly sucked out of him. An indescribable feeling of weakness welled up inside. An unprecedented expression of fear covered his face; his body trembled and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. He staggered backward, a look of disbelief filling his eyes.

“You...” His body trembled, and his face went pale. His skin continued to wither, and his entire body became emaciated. The mask suddenly fell off, revealing that his once black hair was now white. His face was that of an old man, a face that still contained a trace of its former bravery, but was now mostly covered with shock and dread. Everything was deathly silent.

The three azure-masked Cultivators suddenly stood up, their eyes filled with serious expressions. On the ground, the tens of thousands of Cultivators from the Southern Domain were silent for a moment. Then a massive hubbub broke out.

The other Dao Child, Xu Fei, subconsciously retreated a few steps, eyes filled with a look of dread as she looked at Meng Hao.

Wang Lihai and Han Shandao both took in deep breaths, staring in shock. Their hearts were pounding.

A divine ability like this was enough to shock everyone under Heaven. The entire time, Meng Hao, had only made one swipe with his sword!

The axe had been sent into a state of decay, the illusory cauldron had been dispelled, and Luo Chong had lost a sixty-year cycle of life. All of it gave rise to great waves of discussion.

“What... what magical technique was that?!?!”

“It was that sword! It must be a divine ability from that sword!!”

“No wonder he dares to challenge the Core Formation stage. Who is he...? He’s wearing azure-colored clothes. Don’t tell me....”

As the buzz of conversation filled the air, Dao Child Luo Chong stood there trembling, his face pale. His expression was one of thorough confusion.

Meng Hao flicked his sleeve and, his voice cool, said, "I've taken a sixty-year cycle of Time away from you. Now do you understand the height of the Heavens and the depth of the Earth?" With that, he ignored him, focusing his gaze on Wang Lihai and Han Shandao.

Wang Lihai looked at him and suddenly said, "It seems your excellency is wearing his true face today. I understand that you thoroughly defeated me that day. However, there is still another fight to be had between us in the future!"

Han Shandao from the Solitary Sword Sect clasped hands and bowed. "Faceless Azure Hero.... Sir, I'm much obliged for your pointers before."

Their words caused the surrounding Cultivators to instantly grow quiet. However, the silence only lasted for the space of a few breaths. Suddenly, a clamor arose which was loud enough to shake the land.

"What?! He's the Faceless Azure Hero!"

"The Faceless Azure Hero! He's made a sudden rise to prominence recently! He swept over Chosen and suppressed Dao Children. So, it's him!!"

"I wonder what Sect the Faceless Azure Hero is from? Considering how incredible he is, he must be a Dao Child!"

As the noise of the clamor lifted up, everyone stared with burning eyes at Meng Hao. The Faceless Azure Hero's reputation was just too incredible. It was a mystery that few people within the western region of the Southern Domain weren't talking about.

Luo Chong gasped, and immediately retreated several paces. Before coming to the Southern Domain, he had heard of the Faceless Azure Hero, and had come to view him as a formidable adversary. How could he have ever imagined that the person in front of him was none other than that Faceless Azure Hero? His heart filled with bitterness as he realized that he was decisively defeated.

Considering that the defeat had been witnessed by tens of thousands of Cultivators, it was obvious that the word would quickly spread throughout the Southern Domain. Black Lands Dao Child Luo Cheng had lost a sixty-year cycle's worth of Time in a single sword blow.

A fierce glow sprang up in Luo Chong's eyes as he retreated. Suddenly, he cried out, "Azure-masked Elders, please kill this guy!" Suddenly, the eyes of the two other azure-masked Cultivators began to flicker with killing intent.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, without even the slightest change. The instant he made his decision to attack, he had anticipated that something like this would happen. Before the echo of Luo Chong's words could die out, Meng Hao's voice could be heard.

This time, he spoke to the surrounding tens of thousands of Cultivators.

"Fellow Daoists of the Southern Domain. I am Fang Mu, a simple Furnace Lord of the Violet Fate Sect. A year ago, Black Lands Cultivators ambushed me and my Fellow Furnace Lord Zhou Dekun in the Barren Mountains. I escaped by a fluke, but I'm not sure if Zhou Dekun made it out alive or not. Because of enlightenment from this Dao Geyser, my Cultivation base has reached new heights. Today, I come to battle my opponent from that day in the Barren Mountains. Fellow Daoists of the Southern Domain, I would like to request that all of you bear witness to this battle!" His words rang out like thunder, causing a great stir among the tens of thousands of Cultivators below.

"Furnace Lord... he's... actually a Furnace Lord from the East Pill Division!!"

"Fang Mu. I remember! A year ago there was a new Furnace Lord in the East Pill Division named Fang Mu!"

"He's Fang Mu! A Furnace Lord!"

The Cultivators were in an uproar as they looked at Meng Hao. Great waves of astonishment filled their hearts. The name of the Faceless Azure Hero already caused their hearts to shake, but what was even more shocking were the words 'Furnace Lord.'

The glittering eyes of all the Cultivators were now glued onto Meng Hao!

"No wonder he didn't kill any of the heroes that he challenged in battle!"



“Grandmaster Fang Mu was doing it all to gain enlightenment! He had to attack, but he’s an alchemist, and didn’t want to make enemies. Therefore, he restrained his killing intent. This is an alchemist of our Southern Domain! This is a true Chosen Cultivator of the Southern Domain!!!”

Amidst the uproar, Black Lands Dao Child Luo Chong’s face suddenly changed. He stared blankly at Meng Hao, his mind reeling. Meng Hao’s identity was causing a huge commotion amongst the crowd, but it was completely rocking his mind and heart.

Next to him, Xu Fei was also panting and looking at Meng Hao with an expression of disbelief.

The three azure-masked Cultivators had grim expressions in their faces. Two of them, not the skinny one, were frowning.

Intense killing intent poured from Meng Hao’s eyes, and his gaze shifted to the skinny, azure-masked Cultivator. “My battle today is with this man. If anyone interferes, if any other Black Lands Cultivators participate, then I request all the Fellow Daoists from the Southern Domain to stop them!”

Wang Lihai’s eyes glittered, and he immediately said. “The Wang Clan of the Southern Domain will bear witness to this battle. If the Black Lands Cultivators interfere, then they will make an enemy of the entire Wang Clan!”

“The Solitary Sword Sect of the Southern Domain will bear witness to the battle. If a second Black Lands Cultivator makes a move, they will make an enemy of the Solitary Sword Sect.”

“The Golden Frost Sect of the Southern Domain will bear witness to the battle! If any Black Lands Cultivator dares to join the battle, the Golden Frost Sect will be forced to interfere!”

“The Blood Demon Sect of the Southern Domain will bear witness to the battle!”

“The Black Sieve Sect of the Southern Domain will bear witness to the battle!”

“The Song Clan of the Southern Domain will bear witness to the battle!”

“The...”

One after another, voices rang out, without end. The tens of thousands of Cultivators were no longer sitting cross-legged. They were all standing, glaring up angrily at the Black Lands Cultivators.

All the Clans. All the Sects. Their voices rang out, melding into a roar that shook heaven and earth. It was like an endless thunder.

The Cultivators here were all of the Foundation Establishment stage. However, they represented countless Sects and Clans of the Southern Domain. Clearly, they could influence the attitude of their Sects as a whole. Considering that they were all giving voice to the same opinion, the Black Lands Cultivators were now pushed into a very narrow corner.

One mistake could give rise to a great war between the Southern Domain and the Black Lands!

Luo Chong's face twisted, and his body trembled. Next to him, Xu Fei was panting. The other black-robed Cultivators from their group all looked very nervous, and were currently rotating their Cultivation bases.

The faces of the three azure-masked Cultivators immediately changed.

The skinny Cultivator had a grim expression underneath his mask. He stepped forward and said, “This is a personal matter between this kid of the junior generation and I, Yang. Outsiders need not interfere. It has nothing to do with the Black Lands. Fang Mu, you pup, it seems you're seeking to die. Very well, I shall help you!” His voice rang out, causing the surrounding Black Lands Cultivators to back up. In an instant, the only people floating in the air were him and Meng Hao.

This was to be their battleground!

“It seems you've put a lot of thought into how you want to die,” said the azure-masked Cultivator coolly. “If I didn't help you, I would feel bad.” Killing intent radiated out of his eyes. He lifted his hand, and suddenly a light yellow aura appeared. This was none other than his Core Qi!

This Qi had ever-changing forms, and currently it transformed into the image of a sword.

Meng Hao watched on with concentration in his eyes. This was a crucial battle for him. His Cultivation base was constantly rotating, along with that imperceptible Qi. It seemed to thirst for Meng Hao to make an attack, to grow stronger. When he did, it would transform into a charging force that would lead to a breakthrough in his Cultivation base!

Chapter 270: Battling Core Formation!

The azure-masked Cultivator, who was surnamed Yang, glanced coldly at Meng Hao. Meng Hao had left a deep impression on him; it was extremely shocking that not only was he not dead, he had actually made a breakthrough in his Cultivation base. It left the man with an uncomfortable sense of danger.

It was actually very humiliating. This was a late Foundation Establishment Cultivator, and yet he felt a sense of danger because of him. Beneath his mask, the man's face was grim. Almost the same instant that the words left his mouth, he began to move forward.

His foot descended, sending ripples out into the air. An indescribable roaring sound rose up which vibrated inside the hearts of the tens of thousands of Cultivators. Only the azure-masked Cultivator and Meng Hao were up in the air. The man's first step seemed to be reverberating around throughout the entire area, but in fact, was aimed directly at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's face was the same as ever. The roaring inside him wasn't bothersome in the slightest. His eight Perfect Dao Pillars rotated with power of the Violet Qi from the East technique, causing Meng Hao's body to glow with a violet aura. It spread throughout him and out, causing his azure garment to suddenly appear violet-colored!

The air around him filled with a violet glow, causing him to appear anything but ordinary to the surrounding Cultivators!

"Violet Qi from the East! That's the Violet Fate Sect's Violet Qi from the East!"

"Furnace Lords from the East Pill Division can cultivate that! He really is Fang Mu!" Everyone was completely focused on what was happening. Before, there had been some who suspected Meng Hao wasn't who he said he was. However, the buzz of conversation washed away any such doubts. After seeing the violet glow, everyone was certain about his identity.

"I let you go last time, and now you're back looking to die!" The azure-masked Cultivator gave a cold snort, then advanced further. His right hand suddenly lifted up, flashing an incantation and then pointing forward. It seemed like a very casual movement, but actually, this was not the first time the

azure-masked Cultivator had faced off against Meng Hao. Their battle a year ago had left quite the impression on him. That, combined with the sense of danger he currently felt, made him feel very uneasy. Therefore, he attacked with full force.

Howling sounds like those of phoenixes filled the air. In the blink of an eye, ten massive dragons appeared in front of the azure-masked Cultivator, followed by ten illusory phoenixes. Their appearance caused everything to begin to shake. They carried a frigid iciness with them that seemed capable of freezing everything around them. The azure-masked Cultivator waved his finger, sending them racing toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. His Cultivation base roared into action; his Perfect Dao Pillars fully rotated emitting boundless power to fill his body. The violet glow around him grew thicker, and his eyes filled with the desire for battle.

This battle was of utmost importance to him!

This battle was the key to completing the great circle of Foundation Establishment!

This battle was the result of a year of waiting! He had been defeated a year ago, and now, he would turn the tables and... battle Core Formation!

Meng Hao's right hand shot up, and he quickly used his thumb to slice his four fingers. Blood flowed down as he extended his hand forward.

One finger, two fingers... in the blink of an eye, five illusory fingers appeared. Meng Hao's vision turned the color of blood and a roaring filled the air as the five fingers formed together into the Blood Palm.

The massive, blood-colored palm emanated a reddish glow, along with a shocking killing aura. It was filled with the power of Meng Hao's eight Perfect Dao Pillars, as well as a violet aura, then shot forward with indescribable speed.

A roaring like that of thunder filled the sky. At the same time that the palm appeared, Meng Hao bit down on the tip of his tongue and spit out some blood. The blood drop shot out to merge into the Blood Palm.

“Blood Palm!” bellowed Meng Hao. His left hand lifted up and he quickly formed another massive Blood Palm, this one of a left hand. It also shot forward.

The power of the two Blood Palms, filled with blood from Meng Hao’s Cultivation base, began merging together. It was a shocking sight. It only took a moment for them to reach the ten phoenixes and ten dragons. They all slammed into each other.

A shockingly loud boom rattled out like thunder. The ten dragons and ten phoenixes howled. They were formed from the power of a Core Formation Cultivation base, and were virtually invincible. Meng Hao’s first Blood Palm immediately disintegrated.

As it did, the blood from Meng Hao’s Cultivation base burned away. The second Blood Palm roared in. There was a massive boom as six dragons and seven phoenixes were exterminated!

The remaining four dragons and three phoenixes screamed through the air toward Meng Hao, slamming into him, submerging him. However, the roaring sound soon dissipated, and the ripples in the air ceased. Everything became calm again, and Meng Hao emerged, the violet light emanating from his body rising up to the heavens.

A bit of blood seeped down the corner of his mouth. His eyes were violet-colored, as were all the veins in his body, and a powerful aura emanated from him. All of this demonstrates that Meng Hao had just used his own power to stand up against the magical technique of a Core Formation Cultivator!

Violet Pupil Transformation flowed rapidly through Meng Hao’s body, healing his injuries. Meng Hao didn’t care about the injuries, of course. The desire for battle grew even stronger within his eyes as he stared at the azure-masked Cultivator.

Beneath the mask, the man’s face was extremely unsightly. He knew that his opponent was not ordinary, and had experienced an increase in his Cultivation base. But how could he possibly have predicted that the increase would be so shocking?

This first exchange of blows between the two opponents caused the surrounding Southern Domain Cultivators to reel in shock. This included Wang Lihai, Han Shandao, and all the other Chosen.

“Foundation Establishment battling Core Formation!!”

“Fang Mu is in late Foundation Establishment, but his divine abilities and magical techniques are almost the same as a Core Formation expert with no Core Qi!! But... that azure-masked man from the Black Lands hasn't utilized his Core Qi yet....” The buzz of conversation filled the air. Before, they had voiced their support for Meng Hao in the belief that he dared to battle Core Formation because he had some treasured item.

The shocking scene which had unfolded in front of them, however, had nothing to do with any treasured item, but rather, a magical technique!

This clearly showed that he was by no means weak. He had directly resisted a Core Formation Cultivator's magical technique. Granted, his opponent hadn't employed Core Qi, but even so, Meng Hao was clearly qualified to challenge Core Formation!

Meng Hao advanced, lifting his right hand. As he did, the violet light emanating from his body seemed to transform into liquid, which flowed toward his hand. There, it coalesced into something that looked like a blinding, violet sun.

His eyes glittered brightly as the power of his eight Perfect Dao Pillars catalyzed the Violet Qi from the East technique. As the Violet Pupil Transformation healed his body, Meng Hao used the power of Violet Qi from the East to unleash the most powerful magical technique he had learned.

“Violet Qi Guillotine!”

The Qi in Meng Hao's hand transformed into a long, violet-colored blade. The curving blade expanded out, trailing wisps of violet smoke, seeming to take all of Meng Hao's violet aura with it. Soon, it was dozens of meters long. Suddenly, it shot forward with indescribable speed toward the azure-masked Cultivator.

“What an insignificant skill,” said the azure-masked Cultivator with a cold snort. “You overestimate yourself.” To be pestered by a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, even one with clearly extraordinary abilities, was nothing more than a humiliation to this man. From the moment their battle had begun, he had felt shame.

He was filled with intense desire to kill Meng Hao. A virtually imperceptible light glittered in his eyes as his Core Qi suddenly appeared. The light yellow light roiled out, and within could be seen the indistinct shape of a sword. It emitted a fierce sword aura, along with an icy coldness.

Even as Meng Hao's Violet Qi Guillotine approached, the azure-masked Cultivator's Core Qi exploded out. The sword shot forward, transforming into a blinding beam of light.

It slammed into the Violet Qi Guillotine, and a booming roiled out. The strands of Violet Qi trembled, then collapsed into pieces. The blinding sword continued on, speeding directly toward Meng Hao's head.

Meng Hao's pupils constricted as a sudden sense of intense danger filled him. Even as the Core Qi sword destroyed the Violet Qi Guillotine and shot toward him, a greenish-blue shield appeared around him. This was none other than his protective jade pendant.

A boom filled the air as the azure-masked Cultivator's Core Qi sword collapsed into pieces. When that happened, the azure-masked Cultivator let out a grunt and slapped his bag of holding. Immediately, a black flying sword appeared in his hand. He tossed it up, fusing it with Core Qi. The process seemed to backfire somewhat, diminishing his Core Qi momentarily before it restored itself.

"In terms of stances, how could I possibly meet defeat a second time!" The man's eyes filled with ridicule as he waved his right hand. From the Core Qi above his head, the black sword shot out toward Meng Hao.

"Let's see how long your Nascent Soul Cultivation blood can resist for this time!" The black sword emitted a piercing shriek as it approached Meng Hao.

Suddenly a massive boom filled the air, and Meng Hao was shoved backward. His expression never changed, though; in fact, his desire for battle grew even more intense. At the moment, Meng Hao could clearly sense the Qi inside of him that would help him break through in his Cultivation base. It was fairly bursting with activity, constantly rotating, faster and faster. He could sense the imminent appearance of his ninth Dao Pillar!

"Almost there, but not quite enough battle Qi!" His eyes shining brightly as he watched the flying sword slam into the shield, which then filled with cracks. As he retreated, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a large collection of bottles.

The azure-masked Cultivator's eyes were grim as he sent another black flying sword slamming into Meng Hao's greenish-blue shield. He wanted the shield broken as soon as possible, and to do so, had already wasted several of the specially crafted life swords.

“Once your Nascent Soul blood protection is gone, you’re dead,” he said coldly. “It will only take one slash of my Core Qi sword.” His voice was filled with intense killing intent.