

## The Heavens 291

### Chapter 291: A Thousand Pills Form a Cauldron!

Bitterness arose from deep within Chu Yuyan's heart. She thought about everything that had happened within her world of illusions. Then she looked up toward the two trial by fire candidates who were at the peak of the mountain.

One was Fang Mu, whose presence, she felt, was somewhat of an accident. For some reason, though, she also felt like she had known all along that it would happen like this.

Then there was Ye Feimu, Chosen of the Dao of alchemy. Were he not there, she would have been surprised.

"I lost..." she said with a sigh, then turned and began to walk down the mountain. This mountain could be ascended, but not descended. One step back signified forfeiture, and departure from the Celestial Land.

As her foot descended, her vision blurred. When everything grew clear again, she was back on the peak of Eastern Emergence mountain. She looked over at the alchemists of the East Pill Division, and then the Cultivators from the visiting Sects. Finally, she understood; these people could not see what had happened inside her world of illusions.

This was because as she turned her head to look at the screens projected by the pill furnace, all she could see was Fang Mu's thoughtful expression, not the world he was in.

"Welcome back," said Pill Demon with a slight smile.

Chu Yuyan suddenly wanted to weep. The realism of the world of illusions had lasted until the moment she returned to reality, and it was still hard to tell one from the other. Wordlessly, she walked over to stand next to Pill Demon.

After Chu Yuyan, the old man and the middle-aged man appeared in quick succession, also having admitted defeat. Their eyes were vacant as they walked toward the other alchemists and then sat down cross-legged. They seemed as if their souls had been lost, and all they could do was stare blankly.

Hushed discussions immediately sprang up.

“Just what exactly did they experience in the final test in the world of illusions? Why do they all look so confused?” Even the majority of the master alchemists of the East Pill Division were unclear about the details and began to make various speculations.

Seeing the questioning looks on their disciples' faces, the sub-Patriarchs from the various Sects began to discuss the matter.

“The world of illusions in the Violet Fate Sect's Celestial Land uses the heart as a seed upon which to grow illusions. Under the influence of this art, no one would be able to tell the true from the false, not even someone with a Nascent Soul Cultivation base. You can never come to your senses within the illusion; therefore, it is really another life.”

“Yes, exactly. While inside, previous and future lives don't matter, because it's a dreamland. As for telling the difference between reality and the dream, between the past lives and the future... well, few people nowadays could do that.”

“Upon waking, the illusions will shatter, and that is when they wake up. That's why they look so confused.”

It seemed as if they were simply discussing the matter, however, what they were actually doing was taking advantage of this East Pill Division trial by fire to train their disciples about the difference between reality and illusion.

After all, it wasn't often that a spectacle such as this could be observed; any enlightenment derived therefrom was nothing more than good fortune.

Li Shiqi muttered to herself for a moment and then quietly asked, “The illusion shatters the moment they wake up? What happens if someone gains enlightenment, but the illusion doesn't shatter? Would it be possible for them to gain even deeper enlightenment?”

Next to her, Tu Luo coolly responded, “For the moment, don't even contemplate the value of such enlightenment. If someone becomes clearheaded, and is able to prevent the world of illusion from collapsing, well... that would require incredibly powerful Spiritual Sense. In fact, it would require

Dao enlightenment! Therefore, something like that can only happen serendipitously, and not by choice. In my entire life, I've only seen one person do such a thing.”

Off to the side, the second Swordlord of the Solitary Sword Sect heard their interchange and added, “Furthermore, doing such a thing is incredibly dangerous. The more time that passes, the more likelihood by the time that person came to their senses, they would be lost, and never be able to emerge.”

As everyone engaged in their discussions, a rippling buzz filled the air as people noticed that Ye Feimu had awoken. They watched the screen as he looked over at Meng Hao. A dark look washed across his face. However, in the end, he chose to retreat, leaving the world of the Celestial Land and returning to the peak of Eastern Emergence Mountain.

The moment he appeared, calls of welcome could be heard coming from the mouths of the various alchemists he was close to.

“Congratulations in your efforts to secure the win, Furnace Lord Ye. Your rise to Violet Furnace Lord will bring about a true golden age for the East Pill Division!”

“Furnace Lord Ye, as Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, your efforts to secure the win are simply a formality. I'm just afraid that the visitors from the outside Sects might still be curious about the details of everything.”

“Congratulations Furnace Lord Ye....”

As one person after another spoke out from the crowd, Ye Feimu's expression was no longer proud. With a slight smile, he clasped hands to the crowd. As for the title of Pill Cauldron, he hesitated, neither endorsing it, nor offering any explanation. This, of course, created a feeling of tacit approval.

While everyone was looking at Ye Feimu, Furnace Lord Ye Yuntian gave a hearty laugh. He stood and looked approvingly toward Ye Feimu.

“Feimu, why don't you take out your pill furnace so everyone can see that you are qualified to be a Violet Furnace Lord!” Immediately, the eyes of the surrounding alchemists began to glow brightly.

An Zaihai's brow furrowed, but he didn't say anything.

Ye Feimu took a deep breath, and then once again, a proud expression covered his face. He smacked his bag of holding with his right hand to produce the pill furnace. It was none other than the one he had acquired within the world of the Mother of Furnaces. It had started out white, but was now violet, and emitted a violet glow which caused the glimmers of violet to reflect within the eyes of all the observing Cultivators.

Ye Yuntian looked at the violet furnace and immediately let out a loud laugh. He turned toward Pill Demon, clasped hands, and bowed deeply.

“Congratulations, Master,” he said excitedly. “It appears that this Violet Furnace Lord promotion has resulted in you acquiring a new apprentice, and that we have acquired a new Junior Brother. Feimu, why haven’t you bowed to your new Master yet?”

A glow of excitement also appeared in Ye Feimu’s eyes. He took a deep breath, and was just about to walk forward, when An Zaihai spoke up. “Junior Brother Ye,” he said coolly, “this is somewhat incongruous with protocol.”

The interchange between the two immediately caused the expressions of the six other Violet Furnace Lords to flicker. However, they didn’t reveal what they were thinking. The expressions of the Furnace Lords, however, all changed; naturally they could pick up on what was happening.

Ye Yuntian’s goal was all too obvious. That having been said, the Furnace Lords generally didn’t favor Fang Mu, and most of them liked Ye Feimu. Each and every one of them watched with various thoughts and ideas running through their heads.

As far as the ordinary master alchemists, not many of them understood what was going on. However, they could pick up on some of the clues. They watched on, speechless, waiting to see what would happen. The sub-Patriarchs from the other Sects were all experienced and astute; how could they not see what was going on?

In fact, they had begun to expect this development some time ago. Of course, they were more than happy to watch such a scene unfold.

Fatty watched on wide-eyed. He glared at Ye Feimu, and had long since begun to curse him inwardly.

Pill Demon was the big exception. From the very beginning, he hadn't said a single word. It was as if he hadn't heard or seen anything that had transpired.

As all eyes came to fall upon the scene, Ye Yuntian gave a slight smile. "Oh?" he said, a strange note in his voice. "Elder Brother An, Junior Brother doesn't really understand what you mean. Would you mind clearing up my confusion?"

"Ye Feimu wasn't the only person to step foot onto the peak of the mountain," replied An Zaihai calmly.

Ye Yuntian laughed loudly. "Oh, so that's the protocol you were talking about, Elder Brother An. Junior Brother would of course never overlook such a matter. However..." He was only half-way finished speaking when suddenly, a booming sound erupted from the screen depicting the world from the Celestial Land.

When the booming sound appeared, it was obvious that it was coming from within the Celestial Land itself. The entire Celestial Land was shaking, and the nexus of it all was none other than Violet East Mountain. Immediately, all of the spectators looked over.

Even Ye Yuntian's words were immediately drowned out by the boom.

No one noticed, but Pill Demon's eyes suddenly emitted an unprecedented glow, and a smile slowly spread out across his face. It was a smile of satisfaction, filled with emotion and contentment.

Back in Meng Hao's world of illusion, he continued to reside in Eastern Emergence County. Three more years passed. Meng Hao was currently ninety-nine years old, and had once again returned to his Master's grave. He looked at the gravestone, and his face filled with emotion.

"Heaven and Earth are just resting places for the myriads of living creatures. Time represents the passage of hundreds of generations of passing travellers." A smile broke out on Meng Hao's face. Life is a journey, every turn of which is filled with new scenery. This path that he tread now contained his mark. Whether the mark was shallow or deep didn't matter. That was because, it was his choice.

"Maybe my path hasn't even arrived." He shook his head. Perhaps in the future he would realize what his purpose in life was. For the moment, he still didn't know. Since he didn't know, he wouldn't force himself to choose. When traveling, it is never possible to know what unfathomable things might occur. That is what makes it beautiful.

A carefree smile broke out on Meng Hao's face. When it did, his white hair became black. His crooked frame straightened. His features were no longer ancient, but once again filled with the vigor of youth.

He took a deep breath, then looked at the gravestone and dropped to his knees to kowtow a third time!

The kowtow of Sunset Gazing!

With this kowtow, Karma was finalized, and the Master and apprentice relationship solidified. If you do not sever the bond, then neither shall I...

With this kowtow, Eastern Emergence County began to turn translucent behind Meng Hao, and then disappeared.

With this kowtow, the entire world around him began to disintegrate, leaving behind only the grave.

With this kowtow, a roaring sounded out between Heaven and Earth. Everything began to fall apart. Meng Hao... opened his eyes, and the world vanished. He saw the sky once again, the world of the Celestial Land. And there he stood on the peak of Violet East Mountain.

He looked off into the distance, and then took a step forward. As he did, ripples like that on the surface of water spread out. His body melted away. When he reappeared, he had left the world of the Celestial Land, and was now standing on Eastern Emergence Mountain, outside of the pill furnace.

His appearance garnered much attention, including a dark glare from Ye Feimu, and a cold smile from Ye Yuntian!

Everything was quiet for a moment, and then Ye Yuntian's cool voice echoed out.

"Just now I wasn't able to finish speaking. Elder Brother An, two people did step onto the peak of the mountain. However, when that happens, the resulting decision is not made by those two people, but rather, by you, me and the other Violet Furnace Lords, as well as all the Furnace Lords. We make the final decision. That is the protocol for the raising of a Violet Furnace Lord. Does this

explanation suffice, Elder Brother An?” Ye Yuntian smiled. An Zaihai, on the other hand, said nothing. He merely flicked his sleeve.

“According to Sect protocol, because two people stepped foot on the peak of the mountain, it requires a decision to be made on our part. Whoever receives the most support will become the Violet Furnace Lord. I am Violet Furnace Lord Ye Yuntian. Please, will all Fellow Daoists of the Violet Fate Sect bear witness today? I believe than Ye Feimu is more qualified than Fang Mu. As such, I select Ye Feimu.”

“Violet Furnace Lord Chen Xuyang selects Ye Feimu!”

“Violet Furnace Lord Shen Long selects Ye Feimu!”

“Violet Furnace Lord Yuan Daoming selects Ye Feimu!”

“Violet Furnace Lord Ma Feifeng selects Ye Feimu!”

In an instant, five Violet Furnace Lords had picked Ye Feimu as their choice. This caused Ye Feimu’s expression to fill with pride and excitement.

Lin Hailong hesitated for a moment. He thought for a moment as he looked at Meng Hao, not making his decision immediately. The Violet Furnace Lord next to him was a middle-aged woman. her expression was one of indifference, and she didn’t speak immediately either.

The disciples from the other Sects watched as all of this happened. The sub-Patriarchs watched with vague smiles, not speaking.

Behind the Violet Furnace Lords were the Furnace Lords, who now began to speak.

“Furnace Lord He Jin selects Ye Feimu!”

“Furnace Lord Sun Zexuan selects Ye Feimu!”

As the voices rang out, it seemed that the greater part of half of them all selected Ye Feimu.

An Zaihai's face was extremely unsightly. He was about to open his mouth to say something, when suddenly, Meng Hao's voice calmly filled the air.

"Violet Furnace Lord Ye, I would like to ask a question," he said. "Could you please explain exactly why I, Fang Mu, am not as qualified as Furnace Lord Ye?" His expression was as calm as always as he asked the question.

Ye Yuntian looked at him, and in a very impolite tone replied, "At the moment, it doesn't matter whether we discuss your skill in the Dao of alchemy, or your reputation, or even your ability to create new medicinal pills. In my judgement, you are less qualified than Ye Feimu in all of these areas. Even more importantly, Ye Feimu became famous in the Southern Domain ten years ago. Half a year ago, he concocted a ninety percent consummate medicinal pill. He is destined to become a Violet Furnace Lord. As for you, you lack such qualifications!" His words sounded almost like a reprimand, and in fact, as a Violet Furnace Lord, he was qualified to say such things to a Furnace Lord.

"Qualifications?" replied Meng Hao, glancing at Ye Yuntian for a moment. Then he flung his sleeve out in front of him. A medicinal pill flew out. Then ten. Then one hundred. Then one thousand....

In an instant, more than a thousand medicinal pills flew out. Meng Hao swirled his sleeve, and they rolled through the air. Each medicinal pill was clearly marked with the symbol of a cauldron. That symbol was exactly like the mark which had been branded into the Bedevilment Pill!

When the pills appeared, the air was filled with an intense medicinal aroma like nothing anyone had ever encountered before. Every single pill in this shocking display contained ninety percent medicinal strength. These were all ninety percent consummate pills!

These were all the highest value pills that Meng Hao had concocted after the Bedevilment Pill. He had concocted such pills often, in the hopes of finding an opportunity to sell them off one at a time. However today, he put them all on display, to shocking effect!

The medicinal pills floated in mid-air. The cauldron symbol instantly caused the minds of all of the alchemists to spin. Chu Yuyan immediately rose to her feet, an expression of disbelief on her face.

The minds of the disciples from the visiting Sects began to reel, even the sub-Patriarchs. Their eyes went wide and they stood up, their faces shining with shock.



The medicinal pills filled the air, and the medicinal aroma was as thick as fog, roiling out and filling the peak of Eastern Emergence Mountain. The grass in the earth struggled upward. Dark clouds filled the sky. Thunder crackled across the entire State of Eastern Emergence.

Even more surprising was that when Meng Hao tossed out the medicinal pills, they began to mass together in mid-air. Slowly, they formed together into the shape of an enormous cauldron, which gave rise to a resplendent glow that rose up with boundless radiance!

Meng Hao's cool voice rang out in all directions: "If you add in the fact that I'm Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, then would you say I'm qualified enough?"

Chapter 292: Pill Cauldron Fang Mu

Over a thousand medicinal pills swirled together to form a cauldron. Medicinal aroma filled the area. In an instant, everyone began to breathe heavily, shocked by the sight of the giant cauldron. Everything was quiet.

Lin Hailong shot to his feet, staring at Meng Hao, eyes glowing with unprecedented brightness.

Next to him, An Zaihai, who already knew the true identity of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, couldn't help but be shocked by the sight of the cauldron formed from ninety percent consummate pills.

The other Violet Furnace Lords were gobsmacked. This many ninety percent consummate pills, all of them marked with a cauldron symbol, clearly indicated Meng Hao's identity. As of now, no one would be stupid enough to deny that he was Pill Cauldron.

If he wasn't Pill Cauldron, how could he possibly have so many ninety percent consummate pills?

If he wasn't Pill Cauldron, then how could he have shockingly created something out of nothing within the third region?

Thinking of everything that had happened, and then being faced with the pill cauldron floating in mid-air, everyone could clearly see that the famous Grandmaster Pill Cauldron was none other than Fang Mu.

Ye Yuntian's face was pale white as he staggered back a few paces, panting. His eyes overflowed with disbelief. He knew that Ye Feimu wasn't Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, but no matter how he'd

thought things through, he'd never anticipated that Fang Mu could possibly be the owner of that mysterious identity. In fact, he had harbored other speculations regarding the identity of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, and was dogged in his conclusions. But now, everything had been turned around. Ye Yuntian's mind spun!

The name of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron resounded throughout the entire Southern Domain, to such an extent that he was included among the other three Grandmasters. In fact, many people believed that Grandmaster Pill Cauldron really was the fourth Grandmaster of the Southern Domain.

Such an identity, such knowledge, were like a shocking, resounding slap across Ye Yuntian's face, stinging, burning, causing his mind to buzz.

He thought about what he had just said, and the question Fang Mu had asked him regarding qualifications. Now, the words he had said... made his face burn even hotter. He was so ashamed he felt like finding a hole to crawl into.

If Grandmaster Pill Cauldron wasn't qualified to be a Violet Furnace Lord, then who in the world was? Were the current eight Violet Furnace Lords even qualified...?

Ye Feimu's body shook, and his face was devoid of any trace of blood. He looked as gray as death as he stared mutely at Meng Hao and the giant pill cauldron floating in the air. His mind was blank, as if he had completely lost the ability to even think.

He had known all along that he wasn't the mysterious Pill Cauldron. As more and more people speculated that he was, he had always felt as if he should tell the truth, but instead maintained his silence.

He needed that identity to help propel him into being a Violet Furnace Lord. Therefore, when Chu Yuyan came asking about it, he said nothing, and thus, gave implicit approval.

In truth, he held deep admiration in his heart for Grandmaster Pill Cauldron. As such, he had always felt twisted inside about the matter.

Now, he was stunned to learn that Fang Mu was the mysterious Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, which made his mind go completely blank.

Chu Yuyan trembled and her mind spun. This development was just simply impossible for her to accept. Her mental image of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, and Fang Mu's appearance, had never once overlapped in her mind. In fact, she had believed Ye Feimu to be Grandmaster Pill Cauldron.

But now, facing the pill cauldron of medicinal pills, seeing Meng Hao's tranquility and calmness, and hearing his words echo in her ears, her face filled with blankness and disbelief.

She couldn't understand how the Fang Mu who had irritated her from the first day she saw him years ago, was actually Pill Cauldron, who she secretly esteemed so much. There was no way for Chu Yuyan to accept this; she could only stare awkwardly.

Now, the expressions of all of the Furnace Lords who had supported Ye Feimu changed, filling with disbelief. Grandmaster Pill Cauldron was much more important than their ordinary relationship with Ye Feimu.

Supporting Ye Feimu was nothing like supporting Grandmaster Pill Cauldron. In the hearts of the master alchemists of the East Pill Division, Grandmaster Pill Cauldron occupied a revered place similar to that of Pill Demon.

Therefore, though they had supported Ye Feimu, things had now changed in an instant. Now that Fang Mu's identity was revealed, his words echoed in the air like a shocking clap of thunder, resonating into the minds of the Furnace Lords to the point of detonation.

All of the Furnace Lords stared mutely, breathing heavily, their faces filled with acute astonishment.

No one spoke, but their minds all buzzed with similar thoughts.

“So Furnace Lord Fang Mu is the real Grandmaster Pill Cauldron...”

“So many ninety percent consummate pills. Only Grandmaster Pill Cauldron could concoct so many. Fang Mu... really is Grandmaster Pill Cauldron!!”

In addition to the members of the East Pill Division, the Cultivators from the outside Sects all had expressions of incredulity on their faces.

Patriarch Violet Sieve from the Black Sieve Sect stared in shock. Suddenly, he thought back to when Fang Mu had concocted pills for them back in the Sect, and then he realized why they had been so effective. Fang Mu was no ordinary Furnace Lord, he was... Grandmaster Pill Cauldron!

Han Bei's narrow mouth was opened wide, as if she couldn't breathe. She stared dully at Meng Hao; Grandmaster Pill Cauldron's reputation was just too great. It resounded like thunder in her ears! And now it turned out that all along, Fang Mu was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron!

Fatty was panting, and his expression was one of intense admiration.

As for Chen Fan, Li Daoyi and Li Shiqi, as well as all the other disciples from the visiting Sects, they simply stared, their minds shaking because of the revelation of Fang Mu's identity.

Even the sub-Patriarchs were staring thoughtfully, their eyes shining with strange expressions. They could very well imagine how after this day, the name of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron would thoroughly fill the entire Southern Domain.

When that happened, Fang Mu... might not be like the sun in the sky above the Southern Domain, but he would certainly be nearly as illustrious!

"Violet Furnace Lord Ye," said Meng Hao coolly, staring the pale-faced Ye Yuntian straight in the eye, "is my status high enough?"

Ye Yuntian wanted to say something, but considering that Fang Mu was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, all the words became stuck in his throat. How could he have the face to say anything?

"I support Furnace Lord Fang Mu!" An Zhai said suddenly. Next to him, Lin Hailong did not hesitate for a moment. He immediately repeated An Zhai's words. After that was the middle-aged woman. Next, all of the Violet Furnace Lords who had supported Ye Feimu sighed in their hearts, and then voiced their support for Fang Mu.

After that, were the Furnace Lords. Roughly ninety percent of the nearly one hundred Furnace Lords all echoed words of support.

"I support Grandmaster Pill Cauldron!"

“I support Furnace Lord Fang Mu!”

Their voices echoed out, layer upon layer, transforming into a cacophony that filled the air.

Chapter 293: Legacy Apprentice

Ye Feimu smiled sadly as he looked at Meng Hao. The sense of loss within his heart had reached the ultimate level. In order to fulfill his desire to become a Violet Furnace Lord, he had neglected his cultivation, and had spent all of his time stubbornly pursuing the Dao of alchemy.

He had always believed that with enough persistence, his skill in the Dao of alchemy would assure his place as a Violet Furnace Lord. Ye Yuntian had given him this affirmation; even some of the other Violet Furnace Lords had approved.

“Why... why did he have to show up...? Why does the Violet Fate Sect’s East Pill Division have to have Ye Feimu AND Fang Mu...?” With a bitter laugh, he staggered backward and coughed up a mouthful of blood.

It wasn’t that he was unconvinced; the instant he learned that Fang Mu was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, he knew it all to be correct. He couldn’t blame others for supporting Fang Mu. He could only laugh, and bitterly at that.

He proudly told himself that if it wasn’t for his opponent’s strength, and the fact that he was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, then Ye Feimu, who was at the peak of the East Pill Division Furnace Lords, would be second to none. He would definitely have succeeded, and taken first place in the Violet Furnace Lord promotion trial by fire.

Now, however, he was defeated. He could even imagine the scorn with which people would look at him later in the Sect. It would not be scorn regarding his Dao of alchemy, but scorn because of his tacit implication that he was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron.

Therefore, he could only laugh bitterly, utterly disheartened.

Blood seeped out of the corners of his mouth. “My Dao of alchemy, can’t be defeated.... One loss, I can accept, or even two, but repeated failure... will destroy my Dao of alchemy. No. What has been defeated is not my Dao of Alchemy, but myself!” He wiped the blood from his mouth, and his eyes once again shone with determination. “My Dao of alchemy will never be defeated. It is

unprecedented, one of a kind, original in Heaven and Earth! This is my great Dao of alchemy!” His breathing was ragged as he looked over at Meng Hao.

Chu Yuyan said nothing. She gradually suppressed the trembling of her mind as she stared at Meng Hao. An unparalleled bitterness rose up in her heart. She had long since been defeated. She realized that from the moment she had stepped into the world of the Celestial Land... she had lost.

If Fang Mu had not been there, nor Ye Feimu, then she definitely would have become a Violet Furnace Lord. She still wanted to prove herself, but as of now, there was no chance.

In the Violet Furnace Lord trial by fire, only one alchemist could become a Violet Furnace Lord.

Miss this one opportunity, and no matter what stunning achievements you made later, you could only live with regret. There would never be a second chance at the trial by fire.

“Just like my Dao of alchemy, which seeks to find that missing spark of life. Today, that spark of life has completely vanished, and there is no way to find it again. Just like my Dao of alchemy....” Within her bitterness, blood seeped out of the corners of her mouth. The pain she felt inside was because of the Dao of alchemy.

Everyone was silent. Ye Yuntian looked agonized, incapable of saying anything further. He felt stabbing pains in his heart, and he could only think that Ye Feimu’s path was now over. His future was nothing more than a grave.

The surrounding Cultivators observed the scene with various thoughts in mind. They all had their own concept regarding the path of the Dao of alchemy; this was because everyone had a different concept of what stubbornness meant. Everyone had their own path.

It was not easy to compare such things. After all, what was defeated was not just an individual, but a Dao of alchemy. Because endurance became impossible, collapse was inevitable.

As silence filled the area, a light sigh could suddenly be heard, seemingly from very far away. Grandmaster Pill demon slowly rose to his feet. His gaze swept over the alchemists. Everyone whose gaze he met slowly lowered their heads, their faces filled with respect.

Eventually, his eyes came to rest on Ye Feimu.

“The Dao of alchemy is invincible,” he said. “Even more invincible, is the determination to cultivate the Dao of alchemy. If that determination exists, then even after ten thousand defeats, your Dao of alchemy will always be there. You have done well. Ever since you joined the Sect, you have consistently pursued your own path.

“Your path is winding, and full of thorns and thistles, making it slow to traverse. Only with never-ending determination can you have the courage to face defeat, and yet proceed onward to reach your goal. Walk such a path, and your path will be invincible. Fear not defeat. Fear giving up!”

Ye Feimu’s body trembled as he stared blankly at Pill Demon. Silently, he clasped hands and bowed deeply. “Many thanks for your enlightenment, Patriarch.”

“You may be a Violet Furnace Lord,” said Pill Demon coolly. “From this day forth, you are my novitiate.”

Ye Feimu trembled, and his face filled with excitement. This was his dream, finally becoming a reality. The path had been winding, but to become a Violet Furnace Lord had been the most important pursuit in his life for many years.

The minds of the surrounding alchemists of the East Pill Division were reeling as they watched. None of them knew what to say as Pill Demon’s gaze next fell upon Chu Yuyan.

“You have searched for a Dao of alchemy that embraces life, life like that which we live. You wish to find that spark of life which doesn’t exist. It is exceedingly hard to reach the peak of such a Dao of alchemy. It is not a winding path, but a very difficult one.

“In fact, sometimes, there is no spark of life. When that happens, what will you do? The path of your Dao of alchemy lies not in pill concoction, but in refinement of the heart. You have always been my apprentice. But unlike the others, you are my Personal Apprentice. You... also may become a Violet Furnace Lord.” As Pill Demon’s voice sounded out, tears began to stream down Chu Yuyan’s face. She immediately bowed low to Pill Demon.

Each and every one of the alchemists of the East Pill Division was speechless. Only the Violet Furnace Lords seemed to want to speak up, but held their tongues.

Lin Hailong hesitated a moment. He was the most senior of the Violet Furnace Lords. Bracing himself, he opened his mouth. “Master, according to the custom of the trial by fire for promotion to Violet Furnace Lord, only one person can be selected....”

“Ever since Eternal Mountain left, you have made no progress in your Dao of Alchemy. You haven’t moved at all since that year. Do you know why?” Pill Demon calmly looked over at Lin Hailong. “I haven’t told you all these years, because I wanted you to realize it for yourself. But you still don’t understand. Is custom... really that important?”

Feeling a bit awkward, Lin Hailong forced a smile onto his face and said, “But... the custom was begun by you, Master.”

“Since I began the custom, then naturally I can change it. Let it be so!” He flicked his sleeve, paying no further attention to Lin Hailong and turning to look at Meng Hao.

Lin Hailong heaved a sigh of relief in his heart and immediately stepped backward. Actually, he only spoke because there were outsiders present to observe the ceremonies. Being the most senior of the Violet Furnace Lords, he was required to say at least something, even if it was in a roundabout way.

Pill Demon looked at Meng Hao. “Using the body as the pill furnace, and the heart as the pill formula. Refining the sun and the moon, refining the ancientness of the stars. Such a Dao of alchemy....” He paused for a moment. “Master looks forward to finding out where your future path will lead.” A smile broke out on his face.

As he spoke, the onlookers could tell that there was something different about his words. This was because, Pill Demon was calling himself Master!

“Violet Furnace Lords become my novitiates, and thus only need to kowtow one time. Since you are Pill Cauldron you can become my Personal Apprentice with two kowtows.

“However... I already accepted a hefty apprentice’s fee from you, so from today on, I will have a second Legacy Apprentice. Now, kowtow before me three times!” As he smiled at Meng Hao, the kindness in his eyes overlapped with those of the Master from Meng Hao’s world of illusion.

Meng Hao had a strange expression on his face. The words “apprentice’s fee” suddenly made him recall his 200,000,000 Spirit Stones....



Before he could say anything, though, Pill Demon raised his right hand and flicked his sleeve. Immediately, ripples appeared in the air, surrounding Meng Hao and then disappearing into his body.

“Hailong,” said Pill Demon. “Please assist Master in receiving all the friends from the other Sects. Announce to all the Southern Domain that I have accepted Fang Mu as my Legacy Apprentice!”

As his words filled the air, everyone stood up and clasped hands toward the Heavens. Lin Hailong trembled inwardly when he heard the words, and his vision came to rest on Meng Hao. The other Violet Furnace Lords were the same. They all knew what a Legacy Apprentice was.

Envy shone in Han Bei’s eyes. She knew that from this day forward, Fang Mu would be different than anyone else in the Southern Domain.

Fatty sighed inwardly, reminding himself how the oldest brother was the most awesome. This time, he had worked his way into being Pill Demon’s Legacy Apprentice.

When it comes to apprentices, there are three levels, novitiate, Personal Apprentice and Legacy Apprentice.

Novitiates only receive simple advice, although they are permitted to ask questions. Personal Apprentices follow the Master by his side. They receive instruction verbally and by example. Personal skills are passed down, including some secret techniques.

Legacy Apprentices are the most important of all. They receive a lifetime of knowledge; they are the hope for the future, the hope to pass on everything. Nothing will be held back from such an apprentice. Such an apprentice is even more important than a son!

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In the deepest corner of the Violet Fate Sect, within the East Pill Division, is a squat mountain. The mountains which surround it are much higher than it; however, this mountain seemed to be embodied with a profound air of dignity, as if it were the most senior of all the mountains.

This mountain was actually the pinnacle of all the mountains of the East Pill Division!

Located on this peak of mountains was a building, which Pill Demon led Meng Hao to. The instant Meng Hao saw it, he gaped. The building looked exactly like his Master's house from the world of illusion.

Pill Demon pushed the doorway open and walked inside, back facing Meng Hao. As he walked, he explained, "You experienced the kowtow of Innocence. You walked the kowtow of Roaming. In the end, you chose to perform the kowtow of Sunset Gazing. With these three kowtows, you took me as your Master."

Meng Hao followed, watching the old man's back as he walked along. Suddenly, he realized that this man didn't seem like a stranger at all. The life he had lived in the world of illusions was overlapping with reality. Meng Hao suddenly clasped hands and bowed deeply toward Pill Demon.

"Apprentice greets Master," he said.

"In the Celestial Land, Master told you that you would only need to perform two kowtows. The first kowtow was broken up into three parts. Master has sown Karma, and because you did not break it, neither shall I! As for the second kowtow, I didn't explain it back then.

"Now the time has come for you to understand. The second kowtow will come if the day ever arrives in which I return to the dust. Then you must kowtow to break our Karma, so that our fates are no longer intertwined. I will give you a lifetime of favor as your Master; all you must give me, is the ability to smile before I die. That smile will be because I know that my legacy from this life will be passed on.

"If in the course of being my apprentice you choose the same path as my first Legacy Apprentice, Liu Rufeng, and leave me, then there will be no need for the second kowtow.

"Your feet belong to you, and the path lays beneath your feet. The choice will be yours to make in the future." Pill Demon suddenly turned to look at Meng Hao.

"However," he continued slowly, "if I were to tell you that I am unable to dispel the poison of the Resurrection Lily, would you still be willing to take me as your Master?"

Chapter 294: Complete Legacy!

Meng Hao looked at his Master silently for a moment. Then, he quietly said, “At first, I came because I wanted to get rid of the poison. After I joined the Sect, I stayed because of the Dao of alchemy!”

Pill Demon gazed at Meng Hao for a long moment. Finally, a look of contentment appeared on his face, and he smiled.

Slowly, he said, “From your first day in the Sect, Master felt the aura of the Resurrection Lily. Later, when I saw you, I understood the situation. There are three ways that you can dispel the poison. One is for it to merge with you, after which, you will no longer be you. The second is for you to devour it, then it won’t be it!

“As for the third... it is to use your own Dao of alchemy to dispel the poison yourself. Karma exists within Heaven and Earth. The Resurrection Lily in your body is the cause of the Karma. Other than you, no one else can dispel it. The reason is because no one else is you. The fact that no one else can dispel the poison but you, is the result of the Karma.

“On this path, the first is the passive, the second is the active, and the third is the most active method, that of using your Dao of alchemy. I presume you understand the meaning of my words.”

Meng Hao was silent. The poison had been within him since the State of Zhao, pestering him all the way until now. He had been unable to dispel it for that entire time. When he first joined the Violet Fate Sect, he’d had no understanding of the Dao of alchemy. However, thanks to his constant cultivation, he had gained more enlightenment regarding the poison, as well as some bit of hope. Hearing Master’s words now, though, caused him to sigh in his heart.

“This poison is nothing,” said Pill Demon. “With your skill in the Dao of alchemy, you’ll be able to dispel it sooner or later. Master can see that the Resurrection Lily has somehow been suppressed. Strange. Right now it’s as if it’s asleep. However, the power of suppression seems to be gradually weakening....”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. Calmly, he said, “Master, if I must dispel the poison myself, then, can I ask, in your experience, have you ever known someone else to successfully do so in the past?”

“One person,” replied Pill Demon. “He lived by the Milky Way Sea, and his name was Reverend Silverlamp. His Cultivation base was unfathomable. He came to me seven hundred years ago, looking for a method to dispel his poison. I said the same thing to him that I told you. Three hundred years later he returned to me to repay my kindness. He had successfully dispelled the poison.”

Meng Hao was thoughtful for a moment, then gave a slight smile. “If that person could dispel the poison, then I will definitely be able to use my Dao of alchemy to do the same.”

His voice low, expression somber, Pill Demon continued, “If Master forcefully assisted you in dispelling the poison, it would harm the cycle of Karma. That would not benefit you at all. However, under my tutelage, your Dao of alchemy will eventually reach the point where you can dispel it yourself! The poison of the Resurrection Lily gave you the power of nature talent. If in the future you dispel the poison, then you will be able to assimilate its full power. In that case, you can turn one of the most ultimate poisons under Heaven, into a rarely seen treasure!

“Such a treasure will enable you to open up your path to the Heavens. Having this poison within you might seem like a disaster, but one aspect of the disaster is unprecedented good fortune!” He suddenly changed the subject. “After the three kowtows, you became my Legacy Apprentice. Therefore, Master has three gifts for you.” He raised his arm and flicked his wide sleeve. Immediately, everything around them swirled into a riot of colors.

“The first gift is a batch of Outlander Pills. The name comes from the expression ‘a night of outlandish tales.’ A pill such as this has never before appeared in the Southern Domain. I created it during alchemic enlightenment three years ago.

“This batch contains three pills in total. Consuming one pill will cause the Resurrection Lily to slumber for one hundred years, will increase your longevity by one hundred years, and will allow you to make progress in your Cultivation base; if you face any sort of blockage, it can help you to break through. These three pills will help you, my apprentice, to reach the Nascent Soul stage with no problems!

“In total, it will also give you three hundred years of extra time to dispel your poison. If you have not succeeded after three hundred years, then I will concoct another batch of pills for you, and will continue to do so until the day you dispel the poison.”

The words entered Meng Hao’s ears and sank all the way to his heart. He looked at his Master, and could feel the sincerity in his words, as well as a kindness and love.

Three years ago, Grandmaster Pill Demon had concocted pills during alchemic enlightenment, just for him. Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Many thanks, Master!”

“Master’s second gift for you is a legacy technique of the East Pill Division. The name is Spirit Summoning Incantation. It can be used to refine a pill up to six times, although, with sufficient latent talent and Cultivation base, the limit of six can be broken! Again, this is a legacy technique of the East Pill Division. To date, I have only ever passed it on to two people. You, and your former Elder Brother Liu Rufeng.” With that, Pill Demon reached up and pushed down onto Meng Hao’s forehead.

Instantly, Meng Hao’s body trembled, and an icy coldness swept through him. A long passage of text appeared in his mind; it seemed abstruse and profound, but after scanning over it, Meng Hao seemed to have gained complete enlightenment.

“This is a legacy technique which may not be passed on to anyone other than a Legacy Apprentice. There is no complicated process to understand how to employ it; as long as you master the fundamentals, you can use it. Later, you must pass it on to another, and so it will go from generation to generation.” A profound look gleamed in Pill Demon’s eyes.

“The last of my three gifts is a precious treasured item of the East Pill Division. The East Pill Everburning Flame!” He flicked his right sleeve again, and the mountainside split open. A rumbling sound filled the air as a massive fissure appeared.

Within was a flight of steps that seemed to descend down into the depths of the earth. Pill Demon and Meng Hao, Master and apprentice, walked downward. They walked for a very, very long time.

Eventually, they were deep down in the earth beneath the Violet Fate Sect. Meng Hao’s mind trembled as he looked ahead. In front of him was an enormous limestone cavern.

Within the cavern were three enormous, half-burned black joss sticks. Strands of black smoke emanated up from them to swirl and float about. In addition to the smoke floating around the cavern, greenish flames also burned everywhere.

Above the three joss sticks floated a black pill furnace, approximately three meters tall. It seemed as if it were being supported by the smoke and fueled by the flames.

Pill Demon looked at the pill furnace, and his eyes shone as if he were recalling some memory. It was a complicated expression which lasted for only a moment before he sighed lightly.

“This incense is not of this world. The smoke never disperses and the incense never ceases burning; this is the East Pill Division’s Everburning Flame! It has been burning for more than twenty thousand years.... It is a legacy which cannot be extinguished. Instill it into your heart, and it can become an alchemic flame!

“After you reach Core Formation, fuse this flame into your Violet Core, and it will ignite. Thereafter, whenever you concoct medicinal pills, you will not need to use Earthly fire. This is your personal alchemic fire, with which you can refine all objects in Heaven and Earth. In the entire East Pill Division, only you and I are qualified to use this legacy fire.

“The Everburning flame is always here, as am I.” This last line was uttered by Pill Demon in a murmur, making it difficult for Meng Hao to hear clearly. As he spoke, Pill Demon was staring at the joss sticks, the smoke and the flame, and it seemed as if he wasn’t even speaking to Meng Hao.

After a moment, he looked toward Meng Hao. “You will stay here in secluded meditation. When you have assimilated the will of the fire into your heart, then you may emerge.” With that, he turned and slowly strode up the stairs, eventually disappearing.

Meng Hao thought about everything for a long time, then sat down cross-legged. He looked down at the pill bottle in his hand. Inside were the Outlander Pills Master had concocted for him. Meng Hao could hardly imagine how precious the pills were.

He put the pill bottle into his bag of holding, and then closed his eyes. Within his mind floated the Spirit Summoning Incantation. Within were techniques to refine a pill three, four even six times. By using this technique on an ordinary pill, it was possible to transform it into a consummate pill.

The power of such a technique caused Meng Hao’s mind to shake. This was a divine ability of the Dao of alchemy, congruous in cultivation terms to the Sublime Spirit Scripture!

You could say that with this pill concocting technique, Meng Hao truly was a sort of Grandmaster in the field of pill concoction. Skill in this technique was not something that anyone could cultivate. Starting with the fourth refinement, any flame other than the East Pill Division’s Everburning Flame would not be sufficient to employ the technique.

In the entire East Pill Division, only Pill Demon and Meng Hao could use the Everburning Flame and employ the fourth refinement. Only they were qualified.

Meng Hao took a deep breath as he opened his eyes. Now he understood why Master had instructed him to stay here and gather the East Pill Everburning Flame into the depths of his heart.

“This is a complete legacy,” he thought, looking at the joss sticks, the smoke, and the greenish inextinguishable flames. “The flame and the technique complement each other. Without one or the other, it would be impossible to reach the pinnacle....”

Time passed by. In the blink of an eye, three months had passed. During those three months, Meng Hao never left the limestone cavern. However, the promotion of three Violet Furnace Lords had caused a shocking commotion throughout the Southern Domain.

Many people were saying that, of the past ten Violet Furnace Lord promotions, this was the most incredible by far!

Thanks to word being spread by other Sects, Chu Yuyan’s Dao of alchemy, as well as her skill in pill concocting, became the talk of the Southern Domain. It was said that she fully deserved to become a Violet Furnace Lord.

Her name spread throughout the great Sects, as did the expression ‘Violet Furnace Lord Chu Yuyan.’

Above her, and causing even more of a stir, was of course Ye Feimu. He was stunning to the extreme, as was the potency and invincibility of his Dao of alchemy. He concocted one pill to create ten thousand stairs up the mountain. The stories spread until everyone in the Southern Domain had heard of him.

Considering he had already garnered impressive fame in the past, now that he had become a Violet Furnace Lord, his name was thoroughly prominent. In fact, he could be considered a pillar of the Violet Fate Sect.

Most shocking of all, was none other than Fang Mu!

He was Grandmaster Pill Cauldron, Legacy Apprentice of Grandmaster Pill Demon. He had risen to prominence in the western region of the Southern Domain, where he had slain a Black Lands Core Formation Cultivator. All of this caused Fang Mu to instantly become the most talked about person in all of the Southern Domain.

More and more people viewed him as the fourth Grandmaster of the Southern Domain.

Word spread of how, atop the peak of Eastern Emergence Mountain he had formed the enormous pill cauldron of a thousand medicinal pills. When people heard the story, their blood boiled, causing even more people to talk about how he was the fourth Grandmaster.

In the Violet Fate Sect's East Pill Division, the honorable Fang Mu was second only to Grandmaster Pill Demon. All of the Cultivators in the East Pill Division recognized this.

Many people took Meng Hao to be the Dao Child of the East Pill Division, equal even to the Dao Child of the Sect itself, or perhaps even a bit higher in reputation.

It was at this time that a great change occurred to the corpse which had fallen from the sky to land in the Southern Domain all those years ago. Magical symbols appeared on its skin, then floated out into the air, creating refracted reflections of themselves. There were some who recognized what this text was. It was one of the three classic scriptures... the Dao Divinity Scripture!

The Sublime Spirit Scripture, the Dao Divinity Scripture and the Heaven Severing Scripture. Three classic scriptures, each one capable of arousing terrifying waves of peril. Even people from the Western Desert and the Eastern Lands employed various shocking methods and powers to teleport to the Southern Domain because of it.

Furthermore, upon the appearance of the scripture, the force preventing people from nearing the corpse suddenly vanished. The corpse, which was as large as a mountain, was now approachable.

The Solitary Sword Sect paid quite a price to acquire a hair from the corpse's head. According to the rumors, they refined the hair into a precious treasure which could shock Heaven and Earth!

Grandmaster Eternal Mountain from the Golden Frost Sect employed all the power of the Sect to acquire a blood sample from the corpse. Supposedly, the pill he concocted with it was almost a Celestial Pill!

As word spread of the various events, the Southern Domain was thrown into a thorough commotion. More and more Sects and Clans dispatched forces to the Immortal's Corpse.



At the same time, an increasing volume of shrill calls could be heard from within the Rebirth Cave. Soon, they turned into sustained roars. Furthermore, a black wind emerged from within the cave to sweep around the area surrounding the corpse.

Throughout the years, countless Cultivators who were nearing death had entered the Rebirth Cave, hoping to be reborn. As to whether those people were alive or dead, no one was sure. But based on the resulting legends and stories, the Rebirth Cave had slowly come to be just like the Ancient Temple of Doom; one of the three Danger Zones!

After more than ten years had passed during which the corpse was under investigation, the bizarre life force within the cave was finally on the move, and revealing its avaricious will.

Figurative storm clouds roiled over the Southern Domain.

Chapter 295: Green Mark

As more news spread about the Immortal's corpse, the Violet Fate Sect gradually began to pay closer attention to the matter. The first to be dispatched were some Chosen from the Violet Qi Division, along with a Sect Elder. It was at around the same time that other of the great Sects and Clans also sent their forces there.

At the same time, more and more Southern Domain Cultivators gathered in the region of the Rebirth Cave, hoping to eke out some good fortune there.

The momentous events in the Southern Domain went so far as to attract the attention of the Western Desert. Actually, years ago, when the corpse had just fallen from the sky, Western Desert Cultivators had arrived to investigate. Because of the new rumors spreading about the corpse, large amounts of Western Desert Cultivators once again appeared.

Even the Eastern Lands viewed the developments with importance and sent Cultivators.

Eventually, the Cultivators gathering around the Rebirth Cave and the Immortal's corpse found out something very bizarre. The Cultivation base of any Nascent Soul Cultivator who approached the corpse would be severely suppressed. If they continued to push forward, it would eventually be pushed down to the Core Formation stage.

Core Formation Cultivators, on the other hand, experienced no hindrances whatsoever.

Even more bizarre was that any Cultivator who touched the corpse, which resembled something like a small mountain, would immediately disappear, teleported away. Most would be teleported back into the area a short while later.

When recounting their experience, everyone described things differently.

One person saw a river, another saw buildings, palaces and temples. One caught sight of precious treasures, but was unable to acquire them. Another described seeing Celestial Pills, and one person, pill formulas carved onto stone walls. Even more far-fetched was someone who claimed to have seen a battlefield, deep in the middle of which was a coffin!

There were all sorts of descriptions, none exactly alike.

All of this made the Immortal's corpse even more fantastic, and caused it to attract even more people to come investigate.

In a period of a few months, the Violet Fate Sect had already dispatched five groups of people. Starting with the fourth group, it wasn't just the Violet Qi Division who went, but also alchemists from the East Pill Division.

This was because the Cultivator who had seen pill formulas was none other than a Violet Qi Division disciple. After returning and telling his tale, it only took a few days for the East Pill Division to include alchemists with the fourth group dispatched.

The leaders of this particular group was none other than Ye Feimu, An Zaihai and Ye Yuntian.

Three Violet Furnace Lords emerged simultaneously, along with experts from the Violet Qi Division. This was the fourth wave sent to enter the region of the Immortal's corpse.

A month passed, and more bizarre events occurred. The various Sects and Clans continued to dispatch more people, now, even eccentrics of the Patriarch level appeared.

It was at this time that the Violet Fate Sect began organizing the fifth group of people to travel to the Rebirth Cave.

By this time, Meng Hao had been in secluded meditation for half a year. It was three days after the fifth group left, led by Chu Yuyan and Lin Hailong, that he finally emerged.

When he walked out from the subterranean cavern, his body was somewhat weak. However, his eyes were filled with profundity much deeper than before. There was no evidence on him that he possessed the Everburning Flame. However, if you looked deep into his eyes, you couldn't help but think that there was some massive conflagration deep therein.

Meng Hao had already melded the East Pill Everburning Flame into his mind and heart. Once he broke through from Foundation Establishment and formed a Violet Core, then he could transform it, and cause the Everburning Flame to ignite, and never be extinguished!

After emerging from meditation, Meng Hao could immediately sense the storm winds which flitted about the Sect. After some inquiries, he learned about the phenomena regarding the Immortal's corpse which had begun half a year previous.

Meng Hao actually knew much more about the Immortal's corpse than most others. On more than one occasion, he had gotten the feeling that the corpse had fallen into the world... because it was searching for him.

This speculation caused him to hesitate, and hold back from nearing the thing.

Hearing the various stories regarding the corpse caused Meng Hao to think about the matter quietly for a while. Then, he went to pay a formal visit to his Master. Afterward, he decided to once again go into secluded meditation, this time, to concoct a Three Mortalities Pill and break through to Core Formation.

At the moment, Meng Hao was thoroughly within the great circle of Foundation Establishment. The only road for him now was the one leading to becoming a Core Formation Expert.

After that, he could cultivate Core Qi, and then he could truly rise to prominence. Then, even Core Formation Cultivators would have to be careful around him. Many new paths would open up.

You could say becoming a Core Formation expert is truly becoming a Cultivator!

The breathing exercises that Cultivators practice are actually a way of preparing for the path of Core Formation, and counts as just the beginning. During Foundation Establishment, a foundation is laid;

the more solid it is, the more powerful the result will be in Core Formation. In fact, Core Formation... is the first true explosive power upon the path of cultivation.

Core Formation Cultivators can use Core Qi to make magical techniques reach the pinnacle of power. Beyond that pinnacle, such techniques become divine abilities. Divine abilities are techniques that really only Nascent Soul Cultivators can master.

“Charge through to Core Formation!” thought Meng Hao. His eyes gleamed with stubbornness as he sat cross-legged in his Immortal’s Cave. He waved his right sleeve, and a black pill furnace materialized. As soon as it did, the face of a youth appeared on its surface. It stared hatefully at Meng Hao, its eyes filled with venomous hatred as it screamed a noiseless scream.

It was still filled with rage because Meng Hao had taken it out from the world of the Mother of Furnaces.

Meng Hao eyed the materialized youth on the surface of the black pill furnace. Then, he snorted coldly. The spirit of the pill furnace was unable to tell the difference between good and bad. Whenever Meng Hao used it to concoct pills, it was always filled with resentment.

“Since it seems you are seeking to die, I’ll help you to understand what it means to live a life worse than death. It won’t be long before you’re pleading with me to help you.” With that, he grabbed the black pill furnace, and, ignoring the fierce struggling on the face of the youth, as well as the noiseless screaming, he directly placed it into the blood-colored mask.

“Elder Ultimate Vexation, this is the spirit I spoke of a while ago. I joined this Sect just to capture this bully. May I prevail upon you to convert it?”

The meat jelly was currently perched atop a listless, ingratiating Li Clan Patriarch, leaning over and looking down at him. When it heard Meng Hao’s words, it began to tremble, and its eyes shone with a brilliant light. Filled with excitement, it immediately looked at the black pill furnace which Meng Hao had delivered to it.

“Fear not,” said the meat jelly with a smile. “You may be immoral, you may be incorrect, but you can rest at ease. The great, handsome, kind-hearted Ultimate Vexation will help bring you back from the path of wickedness!” It hopped over next to the black pill furnace....

Meng Hao retracted his Spiritual Sense, ignoring the spirit of the furnace. Instead, he pulled out the Ten Thousand Refinements furnace and some medicinal herbs. After a moment's thought, he devoted himself fully to pill concoction.

He would concoct the Three Mortalities Pill, which was required to be able to break through from Foundation Establishment to Core Formation.

The diligence with which Meng Hao focused on concocting the medicinal pill he needed for his breakthrough does not need to be described in detail. He took a full half a month, which, considering it didn't involve alchemic enlightenment, was actually quite a long time for him, something that didn't happen very often.

Half a month later, he looked down at the Three Mortalities Pill in his palm, and took a deep breath. Then, he started to duplicate it. Early in the morning of the next day, Meng Hao unhesitatingly consumed a Three Mortalities Pill and began to circulate the power of Violet Qi from the East in an attempt to form a Violet Core.

Days passed. Meng Hao lost track of how many Three Mortalities Pills he consumed. He had never imagined that using the ten Dao Pillars of the Perfect Foundation to form a Violet Core would be such a difficult process.

A month went by, and Meng Hao was completely immersed in using the Three Mortalities Pill to reach Core Formation. However, after a month of attempts, he had not succeeded. He was only a bit away, but no matter what he did, the only thing he could do was produce violet Qi. Every time he tried to form it into a Core, he failed.

Failure after failure caused Meng Hao to begin to regret having borrowed such a vast amount of Spirit Stones from the Sect after becoming a Violet Furnace Lord. Watching them flow away like water caused him intense pain. However, there was nothing he could do about it.

“Based on this rate of success, could my chances of success with ten Dao Pillars really be one in a thousand?” Meng Hao sighed. That thought was quite frightening. Without the copper mirror, his Cultivation base would never be able to progress beyond Foundation Establishment.

He sat thinking for a while, his brow furrowed, considering Li Daoyi and the others, and their breakthrough at the Dao Geyser.

“It must have something to do with my ten Dao Pillars,” sighed Meng Hao. He didn’t completely give up; based on his speculation just now, even if he only had a one in a thousand chance, that meant there was still hope.

“The first step is to form a Violet Core. Then after I concoct the Perfect Gold Core pill, I can form a Gold Core. For me, the Core Formation stage will involve a huge jump in power. Once I’m at Core Formation, I can wear the blood-colored mask and employ the Blood Immortal’s divine abilities! Also, according to what the meat jelly said, after I reach Core Formation, the parrot will appear....” Meng Hao’s eyes filled with determination as he thought these things.

“I must form a Violet Core!” He flicked his sleeve, and was about to go borrow some more Spirit Stones when, suddenly, his entire body trembled.

It wasn’t just him that was shaking, it was everything around him. More than half of the Southern Domain was vibrating, and the center of it all was none other than the Immortal’s corpse, where nearly one hundred thousand Cultivators had gathered in the vicinity of the Rebirth Cave.

The vibration came from the chest of the corpse, as if its heart were beating. It emanated out in all directions, rocking the earth, sending out ripples through the land. As it spread, it touched mountaintops, sweeping through one Sect after another.

The location of the Violet Sect Fate was not incredibly far away, so it was also affected. Many people heard it, and their hearts shook. Meng Hao suddenly paused, lifting his hand up to feel his chest.

He could feel the vibrations which filled everything. Suddenly, his expression changed, because at that moment he realized that, to him, the vibrations sounded like a beckoning.

In his estimation, it was a beckoning that came from none other than the Immortal’s corpse, which he had been trying so hard to avoid!

Filling the beckoning was an archaic voice that sounded directly into Meng Hao’s mind.

“You.... I know your bloodline. I know where you’re from....”

“You.... Do you want to know why you could see me in that other world all those years ago...?”

“You.... Do you want to know what world that was...?”

“I came here for you, and I’ve been waiting a long time. Come to me. Come to me here.... You will know the truth about everything!”

The voice sounded ancient, as if it were floating through countless years of time, filled with ancient Qi. As it echoed within Meng Hao’s mind, it caused his blood vessels to surge. Blood pumped rapidly through his body. Suddenly, on the back of his right hand... a greenish mark appeared!

Chapter 296: Another Encounter with... Ji!

The mark looked like a magical symbol. It didn’t exist on top of his skin, but rather inside his flesh. Meng Hao was not unfamiliar with it; the moment he had reached Foundation Establishment, he had seen this exact same mark.

Today was the second time!

Meng Hao looked at the mark, his mind buzzing.

After a long time, the shaking disappeared. The strange sign which had filled half of the Southern Domain caused even more attention to be drawn to the Immortal’s corpse.

Meng Hao stood there within his Immortal’s cave for a long time before he lifted his head. His eyes were now filled with a sharp light.

“Just... who is he? Why was I able to see him that year? Why did he fall into the Southern Domain? And why is he able to affect my blood flow, and give rise to this mark.... Was the mark placed upon me by him that year? Or was it part of me all along, there within my flesh from the beginning?” Meng Hao silently thought about the night his father and mother went missing, and the violet wind which had blown outside.

If Meng Hao remembered correctly, when that wind arose, it had swirled around his body. He remembered that it was no ordinary wind, but that it contained some type of power.

Meng Hao thought for a long time, all the way until it was dark outside. A bright light began to shine in his eyes, as well as resolve.

“Regardless of whether this person’s words are true or false... I’m going!” Determination gleamed in his eyes. Great reward only comes by taking risks. Cultivators cultivate self-confidence! When a decision has been made, it must be pursued with determination, and without the slightest thought of wavering!

He flicked his right sleeve as he walked out of the Immortal’s cave.

Several days later, the sixth group of Cultivators left the Violet Fate Sect. It consisted of thirty people, who transformed into thirty prismatic beams that shot off into the air. In front of this group was none other than Meng Hao.

He wore the robe of a Violet Furnace Lord, and his long hair whipped about behind him as he shot forward. All of the people behind him looked at him with expressions of veneration, regardless of whether they were from Violet Qi Division or the East Pill Division.

Together, they shot off into the distance at top speed.

Meng Hao was quiet during the entire trip. He didn’t speak; within his mind spun the echoing beckons of the Immortal’s corpse.

This sixth group of Violet Fate Sect Cultivators teleported three times and spent half a month before arriving in the vicinity of the Rebirth Cave. Once more during that time period, the vibration echoed out.

When the vibration hit them, everyone dropped to the ground, where they sat cross-legged. Only Meng Hao floated in mid-air, looking off into the distance. Once again, he felt the beckoning.

“Come to me.... I’m here... waiting for you.... All the truth... all the answers....”

Meng Hao’s mind spun. Of the hundreds of thousands of Cultivators in the region of the Rebirth Cave, the voice within the beckons could only be heard by Meng Hao. His eyes glittered even more relentlessly than before.

There are three Danger Zones in the Southern Domain: the Primordial Dao Lakes, the Ancient Temple of Doom and finally, the Rebirth Cave. At a glance, it looked like an enormous depression



in the ground. Multitudinous volcanoes could be seen in the area, so many that they were impossible to count. They seemed to never end.

What was visible was the black sky, and the thick black fog that covered everything.

This was the region of the Rebirth Cave.

According to the legends, people who were nearing death could enter the Rebirth Cave at the right moment, and if they succeeded, could get a chance to live another life!

Whether this was true or false, since ancient times, many, many almighty Cultivators, unwilling to pass into death, had entered the Rebirth Cave. Throughout the countless years, only three people had ever emerged successfully.

Without exception, after leaving the Rebirth Cave, those three people never once talked about what had happened inside. Eventually, they had disappeared, never to be heard from again.

Despite that, the legends regarding the mysteries of the Rebirth Cave continued to grow more and more exaggerated. Regardless of anything, stories about the Rebirth Cave had been circulating for tens of thousands of years, which was sufficient to show that... it had some astonishing properties.

Meng Hao understood that by proceeding forward, he would be entering the region of the Rebirth Cave. Upon entering, the level of danger would be extreme.

As for the Immortal's corpse, it had fallen directly in front of the Rebirth Cave, no more than fifty kilometers away.

Currently, the vibrations were slowly fading away. As they did, one figure after another shot up from the ground into the air.

Currently, hundreds of thousands of Cultivators from all over the Southern Domain were gathered in a thousand kilometer radius of the Rebirth Cave, forming a perimeter around it. In this area, the Cultivators had established temporary strongholds representing the various Sects and Clans.

Every stronghold contained members of the elder generation of the various Sects. It seemed that every day, more people from a variety of Sects entered this huge region. Many would face the

danger and approach the corpse, hoping to seize some good fortune. Some came back, some never did.

Because of the accumulation of so many hundreds of thousands of Cultivators, it was impossible to avoid the eruption of various feuds. Therefore, magical battle was not uncommon, and every day at least a few people were killed.

As for the great Sects and Clans, they were under the protection of the elder generation; there was a bit of chaos, but it was kept under relative control.

After the shaking vibration faded away, Meng Hao led the group of dozens of Violet Fate Sect Cultivators into the area. This of course attracted quite a bit of attention, and many people looked over to see what was happening.

When they saw Meng Hao, and recognized his Violet Furnace Lord's robe, a great buzz of discussion rose up.

“That's Fang Mu from the Violet Fate Sect!”

“That's the Dao Child of the East Pill Division, Fang Mu!”

Meng Hao heard some of these words, but his expression was always the same as ever. He continued onward, leading his group further inward toward the area near the Rebirth Cave.

As they flew along, he scanned the area with Spiritual Sense. He could immediately sense a vast amount of Cultivators there. There weren't as many as outside the inner perimeter, perhaps only around ten thousand.

Compared to the area outside, inside the perimeter, the fog was denser, thicker, exerting pressure on Spiritual Sense and making it more difficult to hear and see.

Eventually, Meng Hao caught sight of an enormous basin. Hovering in mid-air above the basin was a roiling black fog that rose up high into the sky.

Beneath the fog, the basin had a perimeter of about 500 kilometers. It was enormous, and within that enormity, was the Southern Domain's mysterious Rebirth Cave.

This was the nucleus of the Rebirth Cave. Surrounding this nucleus were a dozen or so pillars of light which rose up into the sky. Each and every pillar undulated shockingly, making it impossible for anyone to not notice them.

They embodied shocking power; the existence of these more than ten pillars of light made the huge area surrounding the Rebirth Cave seem a bit less dangerous.

Many of the strange creatures that lived in the area hid away, and would not emerge to harm people.

Each one among the dozen or so pillars of light was fixed at a stationary point. There, large groups of Cultivators sat cross-legged, meditating. Only the five great Sects and three great Clans were capable of creating strongholds like this near the nucleus of the Rebirth Cave region.

As Meng Hao approached, he immediately caught sight of one of the pillars of light that was violet-colored, and emanated an oppressive, pressure-filled energy. Because of this violet pillar of light, not a scrap of black fog could be seen anywhere nearby. Even the ground was a violet color because of it.

Wu Dingqiu [1] was there inside, as well as Chu Yuyan, An Zaihai, Lin Hailong, and the other Cultivators from the Violet Qi Division. There were roughly a hundred people, all sitting cross-legged, eyes closed in meditation.

Included in the number were two old people, meditating cross-legged in the very center of the glowing pillar. They wore long, white robes, and their countenances were ancient. Meng Hao could sense a fearsome pressure contained within their bodies.

Wu Dingqiu was obviously much weaker than these two old people, by about an entire stage!

“Spirit Severing stage...” Meng Hao took a deep breath. As he continued toward them, his eyes flickered about, glancing toward the other pillars of light. He saw the Solitary Sword Sect, the Black Sieve Sect, the Golden Frost Sect, the Blood Demon Sect, as well as Cultivators from the three great Clans including Han Bei, Chen Fan, Zhou Jie, Wang Lihai, Li Daoyi and others. [2. Okay here’s a quick refresher. Han Bei, sexy schemer. Chen Fan, protective talkative brother. Zhou Jie, possessed Dao Child. Wang Lihai, brother of Wang Tengfei. Li Daoyi, fought Meng Hao in the Blood Immortal Legacy]. Meng Hao’s gaze finally came to fall upon a white-robed woman in the Black Sieve Sect group.

Xu Qing.

He stared at her for a moment and then looked away. There were other pillars of light. One was orange-colored, and filled with an air of potency and dignity. Sitting cross-legged within were a few dozen Cultivators upon whose skin were tattooed depictions of various totems. They were tall, and did not look like people from the Southern Domain.

“Western Desert Cultivators...” thought Meng Hao, his eyes narrowing. This wasn’t his first time seeing Cultivators from the Western Desert. The first time he’d arrived in the center of the Southern Domain, he’d seen these strange, tall Cultivators.

Meng Hao also knew that the actual name of the Western Desert was the Barbarian West. In fact, that was the name that was written on the map he’d seen years ago. However, the people from the Western Desert felt that the word Barbarian was too belittling, and therefore took up the name Western Desert. At one time that had corresponded with the original name of the Northern Reaches, which had long ago been called the Northern Desert. Despite this, there were still people who called them Western Devils.

As he proceeded onward, Meng Hao’s gaze fell upon two other pillars of light. One of them glowed with a light as blue as the sky. Next to it, a large flagpole had been stabbed into the ground. Floating in the wind was a flag embroidered in gold with the character...

Ji!

When he saw it, Meng Hao’s pupils constricted, and he began to breathe heavily. There were over ten Cultivators sitting beneath the pillar of light, meditating. One of them was a young man with thin lips, a lofty air, and impatience written on his face. He seemed to have sensed Meng Hao’s gaze. He turned and looked over, then gave a cold snort. Contempt flickered within his eyes.

The cold snort immediately entered Meng Hao’s mind, causing him to pause momentarily. He quickly rotated his Cultivation base to disperse the uneasy feeling.

“Core Formation stage.” His expression was the same as usual as he looked away. The young man’s eyes flashed as he examined Meng Hao for a moment, and then ignored him.

Meng Hao next looked at the other beam of light, which was a greenish color and emanated terrifying power. The Black Sieve Sect’s pillar was also greenish, but this color was different, deeper.

Beneath the green pillar, three people sat cross-legged. One was a middle-aged woman, another was an old person, and the third was young woman. The young woman wore a green robe, and her long hair cascaded down over her shoulders. She was rather beautiful, but she also possessed a cold, proud air. She seemed to be the kind of person that had a short temper, and wasn't easy to approach.

As he looked over everyone, Meng Hao stayed calm and collected. He led his group directly toward the Violet Fate Sect's violet pillar of light, and as he neared, quite a few people opened their eyes vigilantly. When they saw Meng Hao, expressions of respect filled their faces.

As for Chu Yuyan, a complicated look appeared in her eyes. Ye Feimu simply lowered his head silently.

Wu Dingqiu was the guy who made the bet with Eccentric Song about the spear. He was also present when Grandmaster Eternal Mountain visited the Violet Fate Sect, and Meng Hao competed against FattyOkay here's a quick refresher. Han Bei, sexy schemer. Chen Fan, protective talkative brother. Zhou Jie, possessed Dao Child. Wang Lihai, brother of Wang Tengfei. Li Daoyi, fought Meng Hao in the Blood Immortal Legacy

Chapter 297: Still Somewhat Pleased With Himself

Wu Dingqiu, who sat there cross-legged, suddenly opened his eyes. After he caught sight of Meng Hao, his face filled with a smile and he nodded. Considering the level of his Cultivation base, and his status within the Violet Qi Division, for him to treat a Foundation Establishment Cultivator in such a fashion was enough to see what position Meng Hao occupied in the Violet Fate Sect.

You could say that Meng Hao even exceeded Wu Dingqiu. If Meng Hao's Cultivation base was any higher, Wu Dingqiu would have been required to rise to his feet.

Meng Hao had been a part of the Cultivation world for years now, and knew that the best way to conduct oneself was without arrogance. He immediately clasped hands and bowed to Wu Dingqiu, which of course caused the man's smile to grow even wider.

Meng Hao's Cultivation base was weak, but his position was high. Because of his lack of arrogance, it caused Wu Dingqiu's favorable impression of him to grow even stronger. Smiling, he said, "Grandmaster Fang, allow me to introduce you to these two Patriarchs." This was a situation of giving a plum in exchange for a peach.

Meng Hao also smiled. Having been introduced by Wu Dingqiu, Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply to the two ancient-looking Patriarchs within the violet pillar of light.

“Junior Fang Mu of the East Pill Division pays respects to the two Patriarchs.”

Sitting there cross-legged within the violet pillar of light, their faces covered with wrinkles, they seemed the very picture of intense power. As Meng Hao bowed to them, they opened their eyes slowly, looking him over, their vision filled with abstruseness. They seemed to be committing Meng Hao’s aura to memory.

“Your Cultivation base isn’t sufficient,” said one of them coolly, his eyes closed. “To the greatest extent possible, do not venture outside. Stay here, and you’ll be fine.” The other Patriarch smiled at Meng Hao, eyes filled with praise.

Meng Hao knew that their good will was all because of his Master.

After Meng Hao payed his respects to the Patriarchs, Wu Dingqiu led him to greet more Cultivators from the Violet Qi Division. All of them treated Meng Hao with utmost politeness. Be it with their words, or the way they carried themselves, they showed complete respect.

Even the Core Formation Cultivators were very respectful to him.

Wu Dingqiu introduced Meng Hao to the Violet Qi Division Cultivators, but as for the East Pill Division disciples, no introductions were needed. One by one, they approached Meng Hao to offer him their respects.

When Meng Hao approached Lin Hailong, An Zaihai and the others, it was noticed by the forces from other Sects in the area. Many gazes fell upon them, most of which lingered on Meng Hao. The expressions of the onlookers instantly changed into shock; clearly most of them had guessed who Meng Hao was.

Meng Hao greeted Lin Hailong, An Zaihai and the others with clasped hands. He looked toward Chu Yuyan and nodded, smiling. He also gave Ye Feimu a glance, then sat down cross-legged.

He was also a Violet Furnace Lord, but he was Grandmaster Pill Demon’s Legacy Apprentice, which was a very high position. According to Sect rules, he was actually higher than a Violet Furnace Lord.

However, Meng Hao knew that his Cultivation base wasn't very high, so he didn't want to show off. Therefore, he sat next to An Zaihai, subtly placing Lin Hailong in the center position. Old Lin Hailong was an astute person, so how could he possibly not understand what Meng Hao was doing? He smiled and shook his head, not saying anything to break the facade.

An Zaihai chuckled. Looking at Meng Hao, he lowered his voice and said, "Elder Brother Lin is just another Violet Furnace Lord. He only cares about the Dao of alchemy...." Before finishing, he stopped, giving Meng Hao a look. He knew that Meng Hao was a smart person, and would be able to ascertain the meaning of his words.

"Don't worry, Elder Brother An, I understand." Meng Hao could tell that An Zaihai was trying to make sure that he didn't brood over the events from the day that Meng Hao was raised to Violet Furnace Lord. Meng Hao smiled, then looked around the area, his eyes eventually coming to rest on the flag with the Ji character on it.

No one knew it, but when he first laid eyes on the flag, his heart was shaken by great waves. Of course, he had covered it up well, not letting the tiniest shred of a reaction be seen.

However, deep in his heart, the character Ji was surrounded by many unfathomable mysteries.

The flag of three streamers was sealed with the surname Ji!

The lifelong wish of the Blood Immortal of Ancient Doom was to refine the blood of the Ji clan into instruments of blood slaughtering!

Furthermore, in the ancient Blessed Land where the Heavens were round and the Earth was square, when he had stood next to the square cauldron that wished to reverse the order of the Cosmos, Meng Hao had experienced a vision in which the cauldron refused to exist under the same sky as the name Ji!

There was also the legend of the ancient World Tree, which had destroyed itself in the starry sky.

All of these things seemed to have connection to the name Ji. There were countless ties that caused Meng Hao to tremble uncontrollably. This was especially true now, after seeing the name with his own eyes, branded onto that flag.

Having noticed what Meng Hao was looking at, An Zaihai was silent for a moment, then quietly said, "That's the Ji Clan from the Eastern Lands!" It seemed almost as if he was worried others might hear, and thus lowered his voice in caution. He seemed to be jumpy when talking about the name, even filled with dread, as if he were an ant discussing an elephant.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered imperceptibly. When he heard the fear in An Zaihai's voice, he looked over at him.

"I don't know much about their Clan," continued An Zaihai, his voice still low. "Everything I know is what I've heard from Master. The Ji Clan from the Eastern Lands is the number one clan in the lands of South Heaven.... Their base, of course, is in the Eastern Lands, and no one knows exactly how deep their power runs. However, you must absolutely, positively never forget that the Ji Clan is by no means, under any circumstances, to be provoked!"

His voice was so low that only Meng Hao could hear his words. "There actually aren't very many Clan members, but any one of them should be considered beyond provocation. This is especially true of any Quasi-Array Sons of Ji. Every one is inestimably highly ranked. The one you saw just now..."

"If my guess is correct, he is definitely one of the Sons of Ji, of the Quasi-Array of the Ji Clan. If he were not, he wouldn't be of the Core Formation stage, considering how young he is. Ji Clan members, especially those of the Quasi-Array, are all Chosen. Every generation must undergo a variety of intense training regimens to prepare to fight for one of the one hundred spots available for true Array Clan members. I only know this much, which Master happened to casually mention once."

Meng Hao sat there thoughtfully. He, too, only had a very basic understanding of the Ji Clan. Based on all of his experiences related to Ji, he was sure that they possessed fearsomely deep resources, perhaps infinitely beyond what anyone understood.

His voice low, An Zaihai glanced over at the green pillar of light, and the three people sitting cross-legged therein, and continued, "You must not provoke those three any more than you should the people from the Ji Clan. They are another of the most powerful Clans in the lands of South Heaven. Fearsome! You came to the scene a bit late, so you don't know all the details of everything that's happened. I personally witnessed one of the Ji Clan Cultivators address that girl as a member of the Fang Clan, and he looked scared [1]. Think about it! What sort of profound background must those three have in order to inspire fear into the Ji Clan? They must also be from the Eastern Lands."



Thanks to An Zaihai's explanation, Meng Hao now had a general understanding of the various forces in the area. He continued to look around, and as he did, his eyes suddenly locked with Xu Qing's.

Neither said a word; everything was spoken through the look they exchanged. Their gazes quickly separated, but not before both understood everything that needed to be understood.

Han Bei, Wang Youcai, Li Shiqi, Li Daoyi, Zhou Jie, Wang Lihai, Han Shandao, Chen Fan as well as Song Yunshu from the Song Clan, along with beautiful, bitter Song Jia, were all familiar to Meng Hao. All were present among the forces of their various Sects and Clans. Scanning over everyone, Meng Hao didn't see Fatty anywhere.

Time passed by. Meng Hao wasn't sure what everyone was waiting for, but he didn't see anyone leave the area of the pillar of light.

Eventually, the black fog up above grew even darker. It was at this moment that Chu Yuyan approached Meng Hao and sat down next to him. She looked at him intently.

Meng Hao had always felt that her intuition was far too keen. However, he kept his expression the same as ever as he looked back at her.

When their gazes met, Chu Yuyan didn't look away.

"From the year you arrived in the East Pill Division," she said softly, "I felt annoyed every time I looked at you. I've never been able to figure it out. However, perhaps... it's possible that I saw you somewhere before in the past!"

Meng Hao's expression looked the same as it always did. However, inside, his heart pounded with shock. He sighed again inwardly because of Chu Yuyan's frightening thinking ability.

"Where exactly did we see each other before?" she said suddenly, staring into Meng Hao's eyes as if looking for some clues.

After a long moment, she could tell that Meng Hao was not going to reply.

She looked at him intently. “I don’t care if you’re Pill Cauldron or Fang Mu,” she said, one word at a time. “I know that you have another identity. You’re not willing to talk about it, so I won’t ask. But one of these days I’m going to find out. I’m going to find out... who you are!” There was a trace of radiance within her stubbornness. It was faint, but Meng Hao could see it clearly. It was a glow that sprang up when she first talked about Grandmaster Pill Cauldron.

“Impossible...” he said to himself. Although he had never experienced the type of relationship that could exist between a man and a woman, he was no longer an ignorant youth, and was capable of picking up on much of such interactions.

That glow in her eyes was very similar to the glow that had been in Xu Qing’s eyes when they had parted outside the Black Sieve Sect.

Meng Hao felt a little bit guilty, but also a bit proud. Chu Yuyan had been pestering him for years, even when she was engaged to Wang Tengfei. For her to change in this way, actually made him feel somewhat pleased with himself.

He cleared his throat, deciding that it was time to prove whether or not his speculations were correct. He lifted his right hand. Chu Yuyan watched, stupefied, as he reached out to place his hand onto her beautiful face.

Immediately, her face turned crimson and her eyes went wide. Clearly she had never imagined that Fang Mu would possibly be so rude.

Before he could actually touch her, he pulled his hand back, then looked at her and sighed.

As he sighed, Chu Yuyan’s face grew even redder. Fury blossomed in her phoenix-like eyes. She glared at Meng Hao, clearly on the verge of flying into a rage from shame.

It was at this moment that, suddenly, a shocking roar filled the entire area surrounding the basin. Immediately, the two Violet Fate Sect Patriarchs opened their eyes. The Patriarchs in the other nearby beams of light similarly opened their eyes.

In almost the same instant, all of them, nearly twenty people, flew out toward the basin. Wu Dingqiu’s eyes began to glow and he spoke to the surrounding Violet Fate Sect disciples.

“It’s starting again. The Patriarchs from the various Sects will suppress the area surrounding the Rebirth Cave. We must move as quickly as possible. Remember, the Violet Qi Division will cooperate with the East Pill Division. We must acquire a sample of blood from the corpse!”

Chapter 298: The Corpse Moved!

Wu Dingqiu’s eyes glittered as he leaped into the air and began to fly forward. “East Pill Division disciples, do not touch any part of the corpse!” he cried. “Violet Qi Division, follow my lead. We will have the time it takes an incense stick to burn! Let’s take advantage of that time to acquire some of this Immortal’s blood!”

The Violet Qi Division Cultivators flew into the air with him. The East Pill Division Cultivators around Meng Hao also began to shoot into the air to follow.

Chu Yuyan glared viciously at Meng Hao for a moment. Then she turned her supple waist and flexed her long legs. As she turned, her robe pulled tight around her firm rear end, which Meng Hao couldn’t help but notice. She, along with Lin Hailong and the other alchemist Cultivators all shot off toward the basin surrounding the Rebirth Cave.

Of course, that is exactly where the Immortal’s corpse was located.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. He was no longer thinking about the matter regarding Chu Yuyan. Instead, as he flew up into the air, he focused his thoughts. Flying next to him was none other than Ye Feimu.

Ye Feimu was quiet for the space of a few breaths, then began to explain to Meng Hao what was going on, “There is nothing blocking the way to the corpse. However, if you touch it, you will instantly be sucked into a strange realm. Some people return from it, others don’t. Every day at about this time, the strange power of the corpse suddenly drops by half. Therefore, when this happens, the bizarre life within the Rebirth Cave will emerge.

“Therefore, the Patriarchs from the various Sects will go ahead to stand guard, giving the rest of the Sect disciples a window of time. Unlike some of the other Sects, all we need is a sample of blood. As for the Violet Qi Division, it’s possible they have some other goals. However, they will cooperate with us. After we get some blood, then we can focus on other priorities.

“The reason so many alchemists and Violet Furnace Lords are here is because the blood from the Immortal’s corpse is actually invisible. The instant it leaves the corpse, it dissipates into Heaven and

Earth. Only us Cultivators of the Dao of alchemy can take advantage of that instant to use pill concoction techniques to capture and refine the escaping blood.”

Ye Feimu’s explanation was extremely detailed. Once he finished, he lowered his head and increased his speed as he proceeded forward. It seemed the only reason he had been hanging back was to explain these things to Meng Hao.

Meng Hao could sense the ease in tension between them. However, a bit of challenge still existed within his words, as if he wanted to warn Meng Hao that he would be waiting to see who would be the first to refine some of the Immortal’s blood.

Meng Hao had not come here for any blood sample, though. He had come because of the beckoning voice. Everyone else might be unaware, but Meng Hao knew that this person... was not dead at all!

Many thoughts flowed through his head as he transformed into a beam of light that shot forward. He flashed through the air, soon catching sight of Li Daoyi, Zhou Jie, Xu Qing and the others. All of them were converging on the basin.

What most captured Meng Hao’s attention was the young man named Ji. His Cultivation base was at the peak of the early Core Formation stage, and he was surrounded by seven or eight guards, all of them old men. He moved forward, his entire body exuding a lofty and proud air. Completely disregarding all of the surrounding Southern Domain Cultivators, he sped off into the distance.

At the same time, the young woman surnamed Fang shot forward, her face filled with cold indifference, her entire body emanating blinding silver light. The beams of light shot off of her like sharp arrows, causing anyone who looked at her to feel stabs of pain.

The Ji youth and the Fang girl were both matchlessly stunning. Whether intentionally or not, they had long since become the focus of attention in the area. Next to them, anyone, be they Chosen or Dao Child, were like ants. The difference in status was just too great. This of course caused the Southern Domain’s Chosen and Dao Children to feel somewhat recalcitrant. However, keeping in mind the warnings of their various Sects, and fearsome power of the two, they maintained their silence.

The Western Desert Cultivators were also present. They were big and tall, and their bodies were covered with totemic tattoos. As they flew forward toward the basin, their totems shone with rays of bright light, clearly beyond ordinary.

A short amount of time passed, and soon, the moment of opportunity arrived for any Cultivator who neared. It didn't matter what purpose the various Sects had, all their disciples charged forward.

In fact, many of the disciples from the other Sects outside of the main periphery, had calculated the time and were now charging forward too.

Meng Hao focused himself, accelerating for the space of about ten or more breaths. Suddenly, he felt as if a wind were blowing up against him. The wind carried with it the stench of decay, and as it passed over him, he felt his skin becoming sticky, as if he were covered in sweat.

The bizarre wind of decay penetrated into his flesh, piercing through him, causing his expression to change. He could immediately sense that everyone around him was feeling the exact same thing.

At the same time, the aura of the Nascent Soul Cultivators from the various clans began to weaken, as if it were being violently suppressed. Meng Hao recalled being told about this phenomena when he first arrived.

It didn't take long for Wu Dingqiu's Cultivation base to be suppressed down to the great circle of Core Formation. His face was pale as he led everyone forward through the black fog, closer and closer to the mountain-like corpse.

The instant Meng Hao caught sight of the corpse, he saw that it really was the size of a small mountain. Its skin was gray, and covered with brands that looked like magical symbols. The symbols seemed to squirm bizarrely, and emitted glowing light.

The five-colored light twisted up into the air, but was obscured by the black fog, making it difficult to see clearly. However, the closer he got, the clearer it became. The magical symbols were obviously grouping together into a larger text.

As the Cultivators from the other Sects approached and saw the magical text, someone cried out, "The Dao Divinity Scripture!" More and more Cultivators neared, and more than half of them sank to the ground cross-legged to stare at the scriptural text.

Some of the Violet Fate Sect disciples also stopped and sat down cross-legged to stare at the magical symbols. Meng Hao glanced over, frowning slightly. In that slight glance, he suddenly realized that his Spiritual Sense was showing signs of disorder.

He immediately focused his vision, looking toward the corpse. Disciples from other Sects who were clearly more interested in the corpse itself were now nearing it.

As he approached, its sheer vastness filled his vision. Wu Dingqiu led the Violet Qi Division disciples, clearly fearful of the strange teleportation effect. All he intended to do was break the skin of the corpse and extract some blood. Suddenly, the beckoning feeling once again appeared, floating deep within Meng Hao's mind.

“Come.... Come to me.... I've been waiting a long time for you.... The whole truth, all the answers, will be explained to you, my heir....”

The beckoning filled Meng Hao's whole body, causing him to tremble. Looking around, it was clear that no one else could hear the sounds which he was now hearing in his ears, the calling.

The instant he began to look around, a roaring sound suddenly began to fill the air, coming from the corpse itself. At the same time, the ground began to shake. The entire Rebirth Cave basin began to quake violently.

A thunderous sound echoed out, causing the surrounding Cultivator's expressions to change immediately.

“It moved!!” cried someone from one of the other Sects. “I just saw the corpse's hand move!”

“That's impossible! This corpse has been dead for years. How could it possibly move!?”

“I saw it too! The corpse's hand moved a bit.... It couldn't have been an illusion....”

Meng Hao began to pant. He too had just seen the supposedly dead corpse move its right hand!

He knew that he wasn't mistaken. After all, he had known from quite some time ago that this supposed corpse... was actually alive!

As gasps of astonishment filled the air, and the thunderous sound filled the air, all eyes instantly swivelled to look toward the corpse. The corpse... slowly lifted its enormous hand into the air. The speed with which it moved seemed slow, but within the blink of an eye, the hand had reached up

high, as if it were going to place its hand on its head. Instead, its hand suddenly descended at high speed toward the ground.

This caused everyone's scalps to go numb, and to gape with wide eyes. Just as everyone was about to shoot backward in retreat... the hand slammed into the ground.

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

An indescribably loud sound shattered the air. The ground quaked, and the sky drained of color. At the same time, the black fog shot up into the sky. The earth rippled into great waves, sweeping out as if it were an attack.

Bloodcurdling screams filled the air. Everything went dim, and was thrown into chaos.

The shocking boom resonated out, and the ground heaved. The faces of the various Sect Patriarchs who were leading the way to the Rebirth Cave immediately fell. At the same time, the fog floating in the sky began to seethe violently, then shoot back toward the ground.

Next, an incredible, indescribable gravitational force sprang into being. It emanated out from the corpse, immediately beginning to drag everything in the area toward the corpse. The nearby Cultivators had no time to avoid it, and were instantly snagged by the force and sucked in. As soon as they touched the surface of the corpse, they disappeared.

Li Shiqi, Wang Youcai, Li Daoyi, Wang Lihai, Zhou Jie, Chen Fan, all of them were instantly grabbed by the wild gravitational force. In the blink of an eye, they were sent tumbling toward the corpse, and then disappeared, teleported to who knew what strange place.

Next to Meng Hao, Chu Yuyan and Ye Feimu, as well as the rest of the East Pill Division and Violet Qi Division Cultivators, were incapable of evading. All of them were sent spinning toward the corpse, and then disappeared.

To Meng Hao, it felt as if some enormous hand had grabbed him and was dragging him toward the corpse. There was nothing he could do to prevent it. His expression, however, was calm. He could tell that the force which was grabbing him contained no evil. If it did, then considering its abilities, even if he tried to escape far way, he still wouldn't be safe. This he knew.

“Well, you've called for me three times already, I might as well go along!” His eyes shone brightly. After feeling the beckoning three times, and hearing the words contained therein, he had long since understood that he absolutely must come here!

The importance of Heaven and Earth is superseded by the importance of one's father and mother.

The matter of his parents had weighed on his heart from the very beginning. He had an intense feeling that this was his chance to get some answers!

The instant he touched the corpse and vanished, Meng Hao saw the Ji Clan youth and the young Fang woman also being sucked in and vanishing.

After that, everything went black....

Chapter 299: Destroying Totems in the Maze

In the same instant, the world in front of him was no longer black, but filled with grayish light. Meng Hao could clearly tell that just now, his body had been affected by a teleportation spell.

The teleportation had moved him somewhere, although he wasn't sure exactly where.

When things became clear, Meng Hao looked around. Immediately, his brow furrowed.

He saw an ancient wall, which was flecked with spots of blood that had been there for who knew how many years. Looking overhead, it seemed as if the wall stretched up into the Heavens themselves. Apparently, it was endlessly high.

There wasn't just one wall, but two, forming a corridor. Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He didn't go forward down the corridor, but rather, flew straight into the air.



He shot upward for a while. However, even after focusing the power of his Cultivation base into his eyes, he still was incapable of seeing the tops of the walls.

“They have no end....” he thought, slowly floating back down. He didn’t land onto the ground, but rather floated there in mid-air.

This place had a stifling air; it seemed that there were only two paths to pick from, either forward, or backward.

Meng Hao thought of the other Cultivators who had touched the corpse, and of the things they had talked about. Upon returning, each had described different scenes. One saw mountains, another a river. One saw buildings, another, Celestial scenes. One even saw a battlefield.

Meng Hao thoughtfully lifted his hand into the air, and then struck out seven or eight times. A roaring filled the air as a black-colored palm appeared that looked as if it were formed from roiling mist. It shot forward toward one of the walls.

Considering its incredible speed, it only took a moment before it slammed into the wall. No sound could be heard; it was like the palm had been sucked in by the wall. There wasn’t even the tiniest mark left now.

Meng Hao’s face sank.

Just now, he had only attacked with fifty percent power. However, considering he was of the full circle of Foundation Establishment, he could easily smash a wall into powder. However, this wall didn’t even tremble.

After a moment’s thought, Meng Hao set his jaw. Eyes glittering, he shot forward. If he couldn’t fly up, and the walls were unbreakable, then he might as well go forward.

He whistled through the air at top speed, heading forward. Before he got too far, the two walls on either side of him began to grow wider apart. The area in front of him grew larger, and another wall appeared, causing the path to split into two.

When he saw the path split ahead of him, realization flickered in his eyes.

“A maze....”

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the maze, Li Daoyi shot forward, grim faced, as did Zhou Jie, Wang Lihai, Xu Qing, Han Bei and the others. All of them were inside the maze.

So was the young man from the Ji Clan as well as the girl surnamed Fang. All of them were in different areas of this huge maze.

So far, no one had encountered any of the others, which made everyone come to the conclusion that they were alone inside.

In the past, whoever had returned after touching the Immortal's corpse, described being teleported to different places. Never had there been a repetition.

Days passed. Meng Hao's expression was calm. He had encountered many junctions in the path, and never once did he hesitate. He would pick a road and proceed forward without thinking too much about it.

“Considering you called me here, well... I'm not going to go looking for you. You'll show up eventually.” He flew along calmly for several days. One day, a five-path junction appeared up ahead of him. Meng Hao glanced it over, and was about to pick the center path, when suddenly his eyes flickered, and he retreated backward.

At the same time, he lifted his right hand, quickly slicing his index finger as he shot back, and then waved it toward the intersection.

Even as he moved backward, a black streak like lightning shot toward him through the air. If he hadn't retreated just now, he definitely would have been seriously injured.

Instead, his finger attack just now erupted with billowing killing Blood Qi. It slammed into the incoming black streak.

An explosion filled the air. As it rang out, Meng Hao's face grew grim, and killing intent flickered within his eyes. He fell back three more paces and then came to a stop. He lifted his hand again, and as he did, Violet Qi swirled around his body. The Qi flowed toward his hand, transforming into a long, violet-colored blade.

Suddenly, he moved forward without hesitation, and as he did, he waved his hand ahead in a chopping motion.

A rumble filled the air as a flash of violet light slashed out from his hand, transforming midair into a curved, three meter long arc. Wisps of Violet Qi continued to emanate out from Meng Hao, melding into the curved shape.

This was... the Violet Qi Guillotine! [1. Meng Hao learned the Violet Qi Guillotine way back in chapter 242]

Filled with the power of a Perfect Foundation, ten Dao Pillars and Violet Qi from the East, this was a deadly magical attack.

The Violet Qi Guillotine looked like a crescent moon as it shot through the air toward the intersection. As it entered the crossroads, the air distorted around it, rippling. The emptiness twisted, making what had seemed like a void before look as if it were covered with a veil that was now being lifted up. Suddenly, a figure became visible.

It was a middle-aged man. He was more than three heads taller than Meng Hao, and incredibly muscular. He wore a simple garment, and visible on his skin was a depiction of a three-headed flood dragon totem!

This was a Cultivator from the Western Desert!!

Now that he had been revealed, he suddenly lifted his right arm and opened his mouth with a shout. A black glow emerged from his forehead. The totem covering his body began to glow with a black aura, and in front of him, an incredibly realistic image of a three-headed flood dragon appeared. Roaring, it shot forward and tore into the Violet Qi Guillotine.

A boom filled the air, rocking everything. Meng Hao watched as the Violet Qi Guillotine began to disintegrate, transforming into wisps of Violet Qi that dissipated into the air. At the same time, the three-headed flood dragon also began to break up into pieces. The Western Desert Cultivator's face was unsightly as he stared in shock at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao gave a cold snort, lifting his hand and waving it forward.

“Violet Qi Garrote!” As he waved his hand, the Violet Qi in the area suddenly stilled. Then it began to twist, extending, transforming into countless threads that circled around the Western Desert Cultivator. It rapidly surrounded him, emitting sharp whistling sounds. Suddenly, Meng Hao clenched his hand into a fist, and the strands of Violet Qi contracted.

This technique was something Meng Hao had learned after becoming a Violet Furnace Lord. This was the second form of the Violet Qi Guillotine, a technique from the Violet Qi Division. In addition to this second form, there was a third form called Violet Gibbous Moon!

The Western Desert Cultivator’s face was dark as the Violet Qi Garrote closed in around him. He gave a cold harrumph, then began to lift his right arm, upon the back of which suddenly appeared a totem.

This totem was simple; it was a red fist, about the size of an infant’s hand. However, in the blink of an eye, a roaring power exploded out from the body of the Western Desert Cultivator.

The hand of his upraised arm clenched into a fist and punched downward.

The fist hit nothing but air, but as it did, layers of ripples surged out. The piercing shriek of an infant could be heard, and as it echoed out, the ripples slammed into the surrounding Violet Qi. Immediately, the Violet Qi began to disintegrate.

The face of the Western Desert Cultivator was pale. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. He looked toward Meng Hao with fear in his eyes.

“You’re an alchemist from the Southern Domain’s Violet Fate Sect,” he said, retreating backward. “I never imagined that you would have a Cultivation base such as this. Sir, I was rash just now. I’ll take my leave.” A third totem appeared on his left arm, but it appeared to be only half completed, not a full totem. The Cultivator’s body began to grow blurry, as if he would disappear into the air.

“A bit rash?” said Meng Hao, his eyes glittering with killing intent. If he hadn’t dodged at just the right time, he would have been beheaded. Even as the words left his mouth, he shot forward.

“You Southern Domain Cultivators really don’t know when to give up!” said the Western Desert Cultivator with a cold snort. “It’s obvious that we’re both in the Pseudo Core stage. You used full power just now! Clearly we’re an even match!” Ferocity suddenly filled his face.

His expression had changed because as Meng Hao advanced, he began to rotate his Cultivation base, causing power to explode out. This power was even greater than that from before, causing everything in the area to shake.

Meng Hao lifted up his right hand and extended three fingers!

A shocking three fingered Blood Palm appeared. It transformed into a murderous Blood Qi which shot toward the Western Desert Cultivator.

“Live through this three finger strike and you can leave!”

The face of the Western Desert Cultivator flickered, filling with astonishment. The blurriness surrounding his body instantly disappeared; he couldn't possibly maintain his invisibility. He lifted his hand and tapped his forehead; the three-headed flood dragon totem, as well as the blood-colored fist totem, both appeared and shot forward.

Meng Hao's three-fingered blood palm slammed into them.

The resulting massive boom echoed out in all directions. The Western Desert Cultivator let out a blood-curdling scream. His body shook as the fist totem shattered. Blood sprayed from his mouth as the three-headed flood dragon totem disintegrated. He retreated backward several paces, his face pale. Before he could say a single word, a single Blood Finger slammed into his forehead.

A tremor ran through his body, and he toppled to the ground, dead.

Meng Hao approached. He looked down at the dead Western Desert Cultivator, whose name he didn't even know. He knelt down next to the body and fished out a bag of holding. His eyes shone with thoughtfulness.

“So, it seems I'm not alone in this place.... These Western Desert Cultivators have some strange techniques. They're as different from those of the Southern Domain as black is from white.... If not, a single Blood Finger would have been sufficient to slay a Pseudo Core Cultivator.” Giving a final glance to the Western Desert Cultivator, he noticed that the totem on the man's arms were fading and transforming into black ink.

Chapter 300: An Ancient Starry Sky

“The Western Desert....” Meng Hao frowned. On this side of the Milky Way Sea was the Western Desert and the Southern Domain; in the middle of the two were the Black Lands, which weren’t very large.

The Black Lands were the only passageway between the Southern Domain and the Western Desert. Other places had long since been sealed by Patriarch Cultivators from either of the two major powers, creating two continents or territories.

Throughout history, there had been two great, world-shaking wars between the two continents. During those two great wars, all of the Sects of both the Western Desert and the Southern Domain had participated. Such wars were not the type between two Sects or Clans. They were major wars between both of the enormous powers.

The aggressor in both wars was the Western Desert!

The Western Desert’s cultivation resources were extremely limited; furthermore, the climate was abominable and the spiritual energy scarce. Despite all that, it produced many outstanding individuals. Thus, in the midst of all the hardships, the Western Desert’s power grew greater and greater.

In the Western Desert, cultivation was not the focal point; the most important thing was survival. There, the law of the jungle was even more brutal, many times more so than in the Southern Domain. Under such circumstances, Cultivators with talent, who stood out like awls sticking out through a bag, were generally much more powerful than their Southern Domain counterparts of the same level.

They envied the Southern Domain’s riches and fertility. Thus, they went to war!

The two wars were what had given shape to the enormous sealed demarkation between the West and the South.

Meng Hao lifted his hand; a Flame Sea surged out, completely burning the Western Desert Cultivator’s body into ash. Eyes flashing, Meng Hao transformed into a beam of light and proceeded onward, even more vigilantly than before.

Time slowly passed by. Within this maze were not just Cultivators from the Western Desert, but also locals from the Southern Domain. When they ran into each other, sometimes they would help each other, other times fighting would erupt. Everything was quite chaotic.

In the outside world, the Patriarchs from the various Sects had returned to their pillars of light.

By now, anxiety could be seen on their faces. A month had already passed, and not one person had returned.

A phenomenon such as this had never occurred in the past. Previously, upon touching the corpse, people would be teleported away, but at the most, they would be gone for half a month, and then would be teleported back. Either that or... they died!

Another change from before was that a month ago, a shield had sprung up around the corpse that prevented anyone from nearing it. No one could get past the shield, not even Spirit Severing Patriarchs.

However, they could sense that the shield was some type of aura which was emanating from the corpse. It was easy to speculate that this aura was... life force!

This supposed Immortal was not dead! He still had one breath left!

The Southern Domain was shaken to the core. Even more Patriarchs arrived, but none of them were able to do a single thing. The only other option for the short term was to use some precious treasures to burst open the shield. However... it was obvious to them that even without the use of precious treasures, the shield would naturally dissipate within another month.

Also, the Sects could not help but notice that the majority of the life slips of their various disciples were still intact, and had not been shattered. Obviously, most of the disciples were alive, although in danger. For the moment, the best thing to do was to wait.

After all, even though no one spoke it out loud, how could the Patriarchs not see that the shield was less of an obstruction, and more of a protection? The mass disappearance of all the disciples was dangerous, but could also be viewed as a stroke of good fortune.

This was obviously... a legacy!

Within the maze, the Chosen and Dao Children were using a variety of methods to attempt to find exits. None had succeeded so far. However... more than a few had acquired various bits of good fortune.

For example, at the moment, Chu Yuyan was breathing heavily. She had just reached the end of a fork in the road. Up ahead was a huge wall covered with pill formulas. Each and every one sent her mind reeling.

Li Shiqi reached an area filled with buildings. She stared out at them for a while before realizing that she was surrounded by phantom figures that were walking to and fro.

It was as if she had discovered some strange world in which she was simply an observer.

The young man from the Ji Clan, the Quasi-Array Cultivator, stood proudly with hands clasped behind his back as he looked out over a huge battlefield. The endless wreckage surrounding him didn't cause his expression to change in the slightest. He strolled aimlessly for a while until a coffin appeared in front of him.

As for the young woman from the Fang Clan of the Eastern Lands, her expression was cool as she walked through a Celestial land. White cranes flew overhead and the surroundings were incredibly beautiful.

Li Daoyi, Wang Youcai, Han Shandao, Chen Fan as well as Xu Qing and Han Bei, were all in various regions of the maze. As it turned out, the scenes they were witnessing were the very same scenes that had been seen by others who had entered the maze previously!

After traveling for many days, Meng Hao's path finally reached an end, as he emerged into a new world.

More accurately, it was a vast field of stars!

Endless, uncountable stars, emitting glorious starlight. Everything was quiet; not the slightest sound could be heard. Meng Hao walked amongst the stars, looking around. As he did, he sensed the power of Time; he could feel the vestiges of archaic ancientness in this place.



The ancientness felt like the decay of more than a hundred thousand years. It was filled with an incomparable exhaustion, as if it were struggling to find a single breath within which pulsed the will to live.

This field of stars felt unfamiliar to Meng Hao. The starry sky that he normally saw when he looked up at night... was completely different!

There didn't seem to be even a single star that was the same. These heavenly bodies emanated ancientness; after gazing upon them, it was clear that this was not the night sky of the Southern Domain. Meng Hao felt a tiny sensation, as if he were somehow melding together with these stars. When the feeling rose up, a profound sense of confidence and hope suddenly floated in his heart.

It was a strange feeling.

Meng Hao knew that every person who was teleported from the corpse into this place, and then returned, all saw something different. However, all of the places that people had seen before, were now being revisited by the people currently inside. Except for this starry sky....

From beginning to end no one, neither those who had lived, nor those who had died, had laid eyes on this scene.

Meng Hao was the only one!

As he contemplated matters, Meng Hao suddenly looked down toward his feet. He could sense that far beneath him was a particular heavenly body that was emitting some sort of beckoning power. He felt himself being rapidly pulled toward it.

The speed was hard to describe. He saw the heavenly body growing larger and larger, until it filled his entire field of view. He saw clouds, and then a sea, and then land.

The land stretched out limitlessly. Meng Hao could see mountain peaks and rivers, and then, suddenly a particular mountain appeared in front of him. It was nighttime, and overhead, the stars were visible. Without thinking about it, Meng Hao compared the sky to that of the Southern Domain. His heart trembled.

It was true! This starry sky was absolutely different!

The stars were clearer, as if there were nothing obscuring their glory; their ancientness, their archaicness, was clearly visible. It was impossible to tell how long they had hung there in the sky.

All of the stars were strange. Not a single one was a star that existed in the sky of the Southern Domain.

“These are the ancient stars which exist in my memory,” said a calm voice from behind Meng Hao. Meng Hao slowly turned. He wasn’t sure when, but at some point a middle-aged man had appeared there, sitting on top of a boulder.

The man wore a simple but elegant robe. His long, black hair flowed over his body. He was handsome, with a bit of a heretical aura in his face. He looked different than the corpse Meng Hao had seen back from the Tower of Tang; however, if you looked closely, you could see that it was the same person.

Surprisingly, a small campfire burned in front of the man. Above the flames, he was roasting... a snake-like creature.

“Sit,” said the man coolly.

Meng Hao stood there thoughtfully for a moment, then approached and sat down. He looked at the bizarre snake roasting over the fire. It had claws, and despite being charred, it wasn’t completely dead yet; it was still struggling.

Even more shocking to Meng Hao was that the snake had horns like that of a deer. He stared at it even closer; its body was almost as black as a piece of coal, but even still, he could pick up some clues. He suddenly gasped.

“This is....”

“A White Dragon, that’s all,” said the man casually. “It has a limitless Cultivation base that brings it close to the first level of the Immortal Realm. I ran into it on the Eighth Mountain. It was hungry and wanted to eat me. However, I was also hungry.” Meng Hao wasn’t sure how powerful the first level of the Immortal Realm was, nor exactly what the Eighth Mountain was. However, he was able to sense that this White Dragon was shockingly powerful.

“Want to have a bite?” asked the man, looking at Meng Hao. He lifted up the White Dragon, which was about the length of an arm, and then quickly chopped it into two pieces. “Do you like the head more, or the tail?” he asked.

Meng Hao hesitated, causing the man to laugh scoffingly.

“Uh... I’ll have the head,” Meng Hao said finally.

“You sure know how to eat, kid,” replied the man, handing over the front half of the White Dragon.

Meng Hao took it, feeling somewhat trepidatious. He looked over as the man took a large bite from the tail part of the White Dragon. After the first bite, he took another, then another, crunching the creature into pieces as he did. Meng Hao took a deep breath, eyeing the front half of the White Dragon. Telling himself that this was just an illusion, he placed it into his mouth.

Crunch, crunch, he began to eat it. The head was very crispy, and the flavor was actually quite delicious. His eyes lit up and he quickly consumed the entire thing. Soon, the whole front half of the White Dragon was in his belly.

“Good?” asked the man with a laugh, looking at Meng Hao. “I used to eat one every year.”

“It doesn’t taste bad at all,” said Meng Hao, looking a bit embarrassed.

“Actually, you know what tastes even better than White Dragons? Flying Rain-Dragons, just like the one you have inside of you. Boil them into a soup, and the flavor is amazing. Unfortunately, Flying Rain-Dragons are quite rare. Once they grow up, tangling with them is very difficult. If I’m lucky, I might pursue one for thirty thousand years before being able to have some of that soup.” The man licked his lips and looked down toward Meng Hao’s dantian.

The look in the man’s eyes caused Meng Hao to take a deep breath. This was because he had suddenly noticed that his first Dao Pillar, the one with the Flying Rain-Dragon Core inside of it, was suddenly trembling in intense fear.