

The Heavens 421

Chapter 421: THAT Fishing Line!

Mo Fang's body exploded into pieces. However, his flesh and blood did not disappear, but rather congealed together. In the blink of an eye, it formed eight Flood Dragon heads. Another moment later, a three hundred meter long, eight-headed Flood Dragon was there in front of Mo Zi.

Mo Zi's eyes were bright red as he lifted his head back and howled. The Flood Dragon in front of him let out a roar as it sped toward the incoming Flying Rain-Dragon.

"Kill them!" cried Mo Zi frenziedly.

The eight-headed Flood Dragon was much different than an ordinary Flood Dragon and was just barely able to stand up to the pressure exerted by the Flying Rain-Dragon. It charged forward with a howl, then slammed into the Flying Rain-Dragon.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he watched on coldly. The surrounding Dragoneers observed the scene with shock. Outside of the golden shield, the members of the five great Tribes were panting. All of them were paying close attention to this battle of dragons!

A boom rose up into the sky, along with a miserable shriek. Three out of eight of the Flood Dragon's heads transformed into clouds of blood and gore as the Flying Rain-Dragon swallowed them up. The remaining five heads let out frantic cries and tried to bite the Flying Rain-Dragon. The Flying Rain-Dragon lifted its head up to the sky and roared. It sounded as if its dignity had been encroached upon! Its body began to grow larger until it was several hundred meters larger. Then it slammed once again into the Flood Dragon.

Everything shook as a massive explosion rippled out. The rest of the Flood Dragon's five heads let out shrieks, and its entire body trembled. Looks of terror appeared on its faces, and it was just beginning to retreat when a huge boom could be heard. The entire Flood Dragon began to explode into blood and flesh. In response, the Flying Rain-Dragon sucked all of it in and swallowed it in one huge gulp.

Mo Zi was scared out of his mind. His brain spun as he backed up.

“I forfeit!!” he cried, completely overcome by his terror. It was at this moment of crisis that a golden light swirled out toward him from the golden shield, preparing to pull him out of the platform.

The Flying Rain-Dragon roared again. Suddenly flames appeared, as if its body were about to burn up. The flames rose up into the sky as the Flying Rain-Dragon shot toward Mo Zi. The instant Mo Zi was about to be pulled out from within the golden shield, the Flying Rain-Dragon slammed into the golden light, blocking it.

“When Meng Hao wants to kill someone, nobody can interfere!” said Meng Hao coolly. He slowly lifted his right finger. Immediately the image of a Greenwood Tree became visible on his forehead. Wood-type power emanated out, following the direction of Meng Hao’s finger to shoot toward the golden shield.

Because the golden shield was made up of Wood- and Metal-type energy, the power of the Greenwood Tree caused it to begin to ripple and distort. The Flying Rain-Dragon stretched its head out. Just when Mo Zi was heaving a sigh of relief as he thought he was about to escape, everything went black.

That was because the Flying Rain-Dragon’s mouth had latched onto him.

A miserable shriek could be heard from Mo Zi, which was cut off by crunching sounds. The top half of Mo Zi’s body was swallowed down by the Flying Rain-Dragon.

This was what it meant to break the fangs!

The Flying Rain-Dragon slowly dissipated. The shocking scene immediately caused a huge commotion among the members of the five Crow Divinity Tribes outside of the golden shield.

“He’s... he’s a Grand Dragoneer!!”

“That dragon.... What kind of dragon is it? I’ve never seen a neo-demon like that before!!”

“Even the ancestral shield was powerless. Mo Zi obviously forfeited, but still got killed!”

Slowly, the eyes of all the Tribe members came to rest on Meng Hao.

The Greatfather of the Crow Scout Tribe stared in shock, panting. The Sky Priest quickly looked over at the Greatfather, who looked back. Both of them could see the astonishment in each other's eyes.

Both were thinking exactly the same thing: "Grand Dragoner! He must have been injured in the past, and that's why his neo-demon could only appear in illusory form. He's currently incapable of summoning its true form!"

They weren't the only ones thinking along these lines. Apparently the Greatfathers and Priests from the other Tribes were all coming to the same conclusion.

The Grand Elder of the Crow Scout Tribe took a deep breath as he looked at Meng Hao. No longer were his eyes filled with hostility and contempt. Instead, he now looked at Meng Hao as if he were looking at someone of similar status to himself.

Wu Ling was panting, her face flushed with excitement and hands clenched into fists. She was once again reminded that Grandmaster Meng was the most powerful person she could rely on in her attempts to raise herself and Wu Chen to prominence within the Tribe.

As for Wu Chen, his eyes were filled with zeal. In his eyes, Meng Hao wielded the might of the Heavens; there was no one whom he had esteemed more in his entire life.

As for the man-form Outlander Beast, he stood there with wide eyes, muttering to himself.

Everyone else had similar reactions. This was not to mention all of the people inside of the golden shield. Gu La took a deep breath, and his eyes filled with pain. At long last, he had resigned himself to his fate. A figure as powerful as Meng Hao was not someone who he could afford to provoke. There was really no other option than to just accept his lot. At the same time, he was actually somewhat happy.

"The Young Master has grown even stronger. It seems following him won't be such a bad choice." His eyes turned to the side thoughtfully as he considered how to perform some meritorious deed that would propel him up from being little more than Meng Hao's zookeeper.

It was at this moment, when everyone was still in the throes of shock, that the old woman, the white-haired old man, and the Dragoner dressed like a fisherman all made a move at the same

time. Their neo-demons roared as they shot toward Meng Hao, who was now without his illusory Flying Rain-Dragon.

Looks of greed could be seen in their eyes. As Dragoners, they were able to read between the eyes; they knew that something was wrong with Meng Hao's illusory dragon neo-demon. It couldn't exist for very long before disappearing. If they could kill Meng Hao, then they would be able to seize the rest of his neo-demons.

"He's an injured Grand Dragoner! He wields the might of a Grand Dragoner, however... he is not like the true legendary Grand Dragoners who are impossible to kill!"

"To run into an injured Grand Dragoner like this is actually good fortune for me!"

The three people who attacked did so in unison, clearly having reached a common understanding. As for Gu La, he had only been a part of the five Crow Divinity Tribes for a short time. The other Dragoner vassals were not very familiar with him, and therefore, did not include him in their decision.

As they attacked, Meng Hao turned, cold, killing intent radiating from his eyes. He waved his right hand, causing the Eyeless Larva totem tattoo to spring into action. Strands of silk flew out to surround him.

Meng Hao didn't move at all as the attacking neo-demons from the other three Dragoners screamed toward him.

"Shameless!!" shouted Wu Ling furiously, her expression one of anxiety. The others from the Crow Scout Tribe looked completely indignant. The Greatfather and the Sky Priest, even the Grand Elder, all flew up in the air to go rescue Meng Hao. Unfortunately, they were immediately obstructed by the Greatfathers and Priests from the other Tribes.

Meanwhile, up on the platform, Gu La watched as all of this was happening. His face flickered, and without hesitation, he sent his neo-demon horde whistling through the air toward the other three Dragoners.

At this critical juncture, a massive roaring sound ripped out through the air from the direction of Meng Hao. The source of this sound was none other than the strands of silk from the Eyeless Larva, which spun rapidly through the air. Suddenly, they shot outward in all directions, slashing through the incoming neo-demons and turning them into a cloud of blood.

Moments later, Meng Hao strolled out from within the sea of blood. Silk continued to spin around him as he looked coldly at the three who had just attacked him. As for them, their faces flickered and they began to step backward.

It was at this point that the old woman's eyes flickered with anger. Suddenly, the giant Cyclops Ape which she had held in reserve charged in attack toward Meng Hao.

"Wild Giant?" said Meng Hao, his voice indifferent. Immediately, the Wild Giant roared and dashed forward. It directly picked up the giant Cyclops Ape and then viciously bit into the creature, sending blood spraying everywhere. As the Cyclops Ape screamed, the old woman's face twisted. She was about to try to retreat when a white flash of light appeared. Suddenly, Big Hairy was standing behind her, his eyes cold and grim. Without hesitation, he savagely bit down onto the woman's neck.

She wanted to struggle, but then the Black Bat appeared. Its fangs sank into her, and she let out a bloodcurdling scream as her life force was sucked away. In the blink of an eye, she was turned into a withered corpse.

Even as this was happening, the transcendent, white-haired old man atop the white crane shot toward the golden shield in an obvious attempt to flee the platform. As soon as he appeared outside, he looked back at Meng Hao, his face pale. He then let out a sigh of relief.

Back atop the platform, Meng Hao ignored the man and began to walk toward the old fisherman. However, at the same time, he said, "Parrot?"

Immediately, the large man who was standing among the Crow Scout Tribe members outside the shield let out a roar and charged toward the old man who had just emerged from the shield. The man's cry of alarm turned into a miserable shriek as he was torn to pieces. As for the white crane, its cries were even more bloodcurdling.

Back on the platform, the other weaker Dragoneers were all fleeing. The only ones who remained were Meng Hao, Gu La and the old fisherman.

The old fisherman's face was ashen and filled with astonishment as Meng Hao strode toward him. It was as if Meng Hao's feet were trampling upon his heart and mind. He felt an increasingly intense pressure, and was well aware that he could not flee in this situation. He also knew that even if Meng Hao was an injured Grand Dragoneer, he still was not someone who could be provoked.

However, the fisherman also knew that this was a critical life-or-death moment. The fight to survive lit his eyes. He waved his right hand, causing his enormous earthworm to let out a vicious shriek. At the same time, the countless earthworms within the magical silt suddenly flew up and attached themselves onto the giant earthworm. Now they were tentacles, making the giant earthworm look even more ferocious.

At the same time, the old fisherman spit up a mouthful of blood and then began to perform an incantation with both hands.

“Occult Karma Magic!” he cried. Immediately, the enormous earthworm lowered its head, opened its mouth and did something that came as a complete shock to all the onlookers.... It swallowed the old fisherman whole. After that, the top of the earthworm’s head began to bulge, and suddenly the face of the old fisherman appeared there.

“I can’t hope to fight back against a Grand Dragoner,” he cried. “But this Occult Karma Magic that I acquired years ago allows me to merge my body with a neo-demon and become a new life form! Even if you are a Grand Dragoner, you can’t fight me now!”

Meng Hao’s expression flickered, and he immediately retreated, an expression of unprecedented seriousness filling his face. His Cultivation base was now in full rotation, and his eyes shone with a bright gleam. What he was looking at was, not the old man, but something else in up in the air!

What had caught his attention was actually... the Occult Karma Magic!

Within this Occult Magic, Meng Hao could sense the aura of the Ji Clan!

Suddenly, a gigantic vortex appeared up in the sky, within which a silver string appeared that looked very much like a fishing line. It shot down toward the old man who had merged with the earthworm.

Instantly, everything went silent. Meng Hao noticed with astonishment that everything, including the Greatfathers, were all completely motionless. It was as if everything in the entire world had been frozen in place!!

It was like everyone in the world had become fishes on the chopping block, just waiting for that fishing line to hook them and take them away.

Apparently, he was the only person in the world capable of seeing this silver thread.

Chapter 422: Karmic Severing

The world was silent. Nothing moved. Even the golden shield seemed to have become part of this perpetuity; the rays of light shining out from it also stopped moving.

The members of the five great Tribes in the area were all like clay statues, absolutely motionless.

Even the old man who had used the Occult Karma Magic to merge into the gigantic earthworm was frozen in mid-air like a statue, a maniacal laugh plastered onto his face.

The only things that could move were Meng Hao and the silver line in the air!

A profound sense of danger appeared in Meng Hao's mind. One of the main reasons he had been forced to flee the Southern Domain and go into hiding was the Ji Clan. And yet here again they appeared in the sky above the Western Desert.

Silver light floated lazily off of the line as it whistled down from up above. Ripples emanated out that seemed capable of ripping apart the very air. As it turned out, Meng Hao was not the target. Instead, the line hooked up the old earthworm man. This all happened in front of everyone present, although it seemed they weren't able to see it happening.

Meng Hao started to breath heavily. He didn't dare to move. He stood in place, watching, trying to look exactly like everyone else. He remained completely motionless, attempting to not even think.

He could see that at the end of the silver line was a hook. The hook was currently stabbing effortlessly through the body of the earthworm, piercing all the way through. It was almost like the old earthworm man was now bait on the hook....

Meng Hao's mind spun and his heart was pounding.

"It's not a thread, it's a fishing line, the same type you would use to go fishing!!" Meng Hao remained motionless, but was able to clearly see everything happening. After the old earthworm man was completely stabbed through by the hook, he was suddenly wrenched up into the sky.

Suddenly, an archaic voice could be heard from up above, where the fishing line originated from. In a leisurely tone, it said, “So, it turns out there are Cultivators in the Western Desert who practice Occult Karma Magic. Turned your body into bait, huh? I guess I can use you to go fishing. Maybe I can snag a big fish from the Western Desert. Since you’re fish bait now, you have no need for Karma.”

As the voice echoed out, Meng Hao was astonished to find that he could suddenly see threads attached to the bodies of everyone present. They were faint, indistinct and flickering, and seemed to contain fate itself. If you looked closely, all of the threads seemed to be connected to each other.

Regardless of neo-demon or Cultivator, even the mountains and rivers, all things in the world, were filled with vast quantities of these threads. They spread out, connected together, even to the earthworm man up in the air. Everything and everyone was connected together into something like an enormous, living web.

Anything seen or remembered caused a merging of Karma strings, connecting everything.

“Henceforth, let your Karma be extinguished,” said the ancient voice in the sky. Suddenly, Meng Hao could see that the threads attached to the earthworm up in the sky were suddenly beginning to collapse and be destroyed!

As these threads of fate were being eliminated, it caused a huge chain reaction. All of the other threads connected to everything else—mountains, rivers, the land, the neo-demons, the Cultivators—began to tremble.

Even more shocking to Meng Hao was that the surrounding Cultivators were all trembling, and their faces were pale. The threads attached from them to the earthworm began to shatter into pieces. It wasn’t all the threads attached to everything; rather, any connection or memory they had regarding the existence of the old earthworm man, was collapsing.

Now it seemed as if the balance of Karma had been disturbed. By forcibly erasing the Karma that had been sown, it affected the rest of Karma in all creation.

It was at this moment that Meng Hao’s mind began to tremble; he had just noticed that the threads attached to his own body were trembling and seemed to be on the verge of collapsing. An unspeakable power seemed to be spreading out through the world. It seemed any vestige or memory of the old earthworm man was being completely wiped out.

Even as his mind reeled, the Demon Sealing Jade suddenly began to vibrate inside his bag of holding. A warm, gentle power emanated out from it to envelop Meng Hao's entire person. It appeared as if the threads attached to Meng Hao were collapsing, but in truth, as that massive power washed over him, the memories of the old earthworm man were not wiped away.

Suddenly, the earthworm man up above transformed into a beam of light that shot up into the sky and then disappeared.

Finally, the previously still world once again began to move.

As things returned to normal... everyone shuddered.

The golden light once again emanated up around the platform. Gu La had a look of confusion on his face, which was quickly replaced with happiness. With a loud shout, he proclaimed his forfeiture, after which he was enveloped by golden light and pulled off of the platform.

Nothing existed in his memories regarding the old fisherman. He only remembered Meng Hao's fabulous victory over the other Dragoneers.

Outside of the golden shield, the Greatfathers of the five great Tribes were completely recovered. All of them had different expressions as their gazes came to focus on Meng Hao. Their memories did not contain anything regarding the old fisherman either. It was as if the old fisherman... had never even existed.

"The Crow Scout Tribe has recruited a Grand Dragoneer!"

"The Crow Scout Tribe must have paid a hefty price in preparation for this Ancestor Rite Competition. Otherwise, they would never have been able to convince a Grand Dragoneer to work for them!"

As the buzz of conversation rose up from the members of the five great Tribes, Meng Hao stood on the platform, his face ashen. Nobody that he could see looked even a little bit different than from before. In fact, it seemed as if... none of them were even aware that everything had stopped moving moments ago.

Furthermore, they had no reaction whatsoever to the sudden disappearance of the old earthworm man. Apparently, his life did not exist at all within their memories.

It seemed as if all the causes and effects of the old man's Karma had been completely severed from everything, the neo-demons, the mountains, the rivers and even the land. Not a trace remained of him in any consciousness whatsoever.

Meng Hao looked around, panting, face pale. An unprecedented feeling of fear filled him. "Now that is death... true death. To be erased from the memory of anyone you ever met, as if you had never existed in the world.... So that... that is the Karma Line of the Ji Clan!"

Suddenly, Meng Hao recalled the fishing rod in his bag of holding, the one he had acquired when he slayed one of the sons of Ji. Now he understood the function of that rod.

He also realized that if that fishing line had come for him, and hooked him instead, then perhaps all traces of his own existence would have been erased from the world.

"The Ji Clan...." Meng Hao's face was pale. He waved his right hand to collect up his neo-demon horde, then strode off of the platform. The Wild Giant accompanied him as he left.

Meng Hao paid no attention to the gazes and words directed toward him. Instead, he looked up into the sky, his face unsightly. Of course, no one could understand what he was feeling. Even the parrot seemed unaware of what had just happened.

Perhaps this wasn't because the parrot wasn't powerful enough, but rather because it didn't care enough about the old earthworm man to notice. Perhaps it had even been willing to allow it to happen.

Maybe it would have been different if the Karmic Severing was directed at someone important to it.

Finally Meng Hao looked back at the members of the five Crow Divinity Tribes who stood around him. As of now, everyone had to admit that the Crow Scout Tribe had clearly won the right to be the first to enter into the Crow Divinity Holy Land.

Using their bloodline powers along with a special technique, the five Tribes of the Crow Divinity fully opened the Crow Divinity Holy Land.

The Crow Scout Tribe members cheered as the Greatfather and the Sky Priest politely clasped hands and offered thanks to Meng Hao.

After that, all of the Crow Scout Tribe members, along with Meng Hao, turned into colorful beams as they shot toward the golden light. Up ahead, the tall platform was fading away, replaced by two massive doors that were slowly opening.

In front of the doors, the Greatfather clasped hands to Meng Hao and the man-form Outlander Beast. “Many thanks, Grandmaster Meng and Fellow Daoist Out. In accord with our promise, you may follow the Tribe members to enter the Pool of Destiny!”

Meng Hao nodded distractedly as he looked at the opening doors.

“The Karma Line of the Ji Clan is so powerful. Being destroyed by it actually erases every trace of your existence. Wow...” Meng Hao was lost in thought as the massive doors opened within the golden light. When they were about half opened, Meng Hao suddenly felt a tremor running through him. He couldn’t stop his face from flickering.

That was because he had suddenly been struck with a new realization.

“Oh no! The Karma Line severs Karma, completely erasing it. It prohibits anything from remembering what was severed. That is a complete erasure. However... if someone happens to remember something about the person who was erased, that would mean that the technique was incomplete, not perfect. Essentially, it means the technique failed.... Not good!”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Meng Hao’s face completely fell. He could imagine a situation in which whoever it was that employed the technique detected the fact that it had in fact failed. He had little time to continue thinking about the matter. His body flickered as he shot toward the huge doors.

Almost the instant he flew forward, the entire world suddenly grew still. Suddenly, the fishing line which had so recently disappeared... could be seen again up in the sky. This time, it was shooting down toward Meng Hao!

“So a little fish slipped through the net,” said the archaic voice, chuckling. “You dare to spoil my Karmic Severing? Thankfully, you left some clues behind that I noticed, nor are you capable of

causing my technique to backfire against me. The Heavens are large and the Earth is wide, but do you really think you can escape me?"

Around Meng Hao, everything was silent and unmoving!

Chapter 423: A Fortunate Chance

Meng Hao had practiced Cultivation for many years. From the day his journey began on Mount Daqing all the way until now, he had experienced many deadly situations. However, this particular crisis was the greatest he had ever experienced by far!

The consequences of killing one of the sons of Ji had been enormous. Recently, he had sensed signs that the Mastiff might be beginning to awaken, which gave him a bit of confidence. Except now....

Having seen the old earthworm man's death, Meng Hao knew that there was absolutely no way for him to fight back against this unheard of Karmic Severing!

His face was pale as he realized that everything around him was once again completely still. The members of the five great Tribes, the neo-demons, even the clouds in the sky were completely motionless. Only the fishing line and Meng Hao could move.

He shot as quickly as possible through the golden light, passing through the massive doors with all the speed he could muster. He exploded with the power of the great circle of the Gold Core, vanishing inside.

However, even as Meng Hao entered the doors, the fishing line came in after him. The speed with which it moved was incredible as it followed him.

This door was no teleportation device, but rather a passageway. When Meng Hao emerged from the other side, he saw that he was surrounded by mountains.

These mountains were a murky golden color, and a faintly discernible pressure could be felt from them. In the distance in front of him were a collection of mountains that had no peaks, but rather, gaping holes at the top. What appeared to be scorching heat billowed out from the holes; these were volcanoes!

In total, there were seven of them, all linked together. This place... was the Crow Divinity Tribes' Holy Land, and also the domain of the Golden Crow.

After entering, Meng Hao didn't pause for even a moment. However, even as he shot forward, the air around him started to fill with what looked like cracks.

The cracks emanated a fearsome Qi. Meng Hao got the feeling that if he ran into one of them, his body would most likely be torn into pieces.

Meng Hao could actually sense a strange Qi filling this entire volcanic realm. It was strange and multifarious, as if countless neo-demons were present.

As Meng Hao flew forward, he suddenly caught sight of a black wind off in the distance. It seemed as if it sensed his encroachment into this area, and was flying to intercept him. This black wind was actually composed of countless black crows. There were more than a thousand of them, blotting out the sky as they flew. Their speed was incredible, and as they neared, Meng Hao could see that their eyes were bright red and filled with frenzy.

In fact, from the Cultivation base ripples emanating out from the more than one thousand crows, Meng Hao could tell that they were level 7, comparable to the early Core Formation stage. There were even ten of them who were level 9!

Meng Hao's face flickered. However, it was at this point that the silver fishing line shot out into the Crow Divinity Holy Land. It emanated an intense rumbling that spread out with the power of stillness. Soon, everything within the Crow Divinity Holy Land... began to grow quiet and still.

The grass stopped swaying, and the cracks appearing in the air suddenly seemed to have been slowed to a standstill. As for the approaching flock of black crows, it stopped moving completely. Even the waves of heat erupting from the volcanoes ceased moving.

However... up ahead, in the centermost of the seven volcanoes, was a location that seemed to be a point of freedom within all the stillness!

"There's life force there!" thought Meng Hao, his eyes glittering. He immediately began to fly in that direction.

Behind him, the silver line pursued at incredible speed. At its end could just barely be seen the glint of what must be a hook!

This takes some time to describe, but happened extremely quickly. Meng Hao exploded forward with all the power of his Cultivation base. He used the Bloodburst Flash without hesitation, causing him to flicker in and out of the air as he moved. He moved in jumps of hundreds of meters, not holding anything back in this moment of grave crisis.

In the blink of an eye, he was directly next to the flock of motionless black crows. He was just about to continue on his way, when suddenly he felt a tremor in his heart.

“Because of the presence of the fishing line, everything has stopped moving, even these neo-demons. You could say that this is the kind of opportunity that comes around only once in a thousand years. In the entire time that the Crow Divinity Holy Land has existed, something like this has most likely never occurred.... It would really be far too much of a shame to let this opportunity slip by. It’s a risk... that I’m willing to take!”

His eyes shone with a bright light that transformed into determination. Immediately, he waved his right hand toward the motionless crows. They had absolutely no control of themselves as they turned into beams of blackness that shot into his bag of the Cosmos.

That having been accomplished, he once again proceeded forward.

Behind him, the fishing line neared!

Panting, Meng Hao bit the tip of his tongue and then sprayed some blood out of his mouth. His body flickered as the Bloodburst Flash activated, propelling him off into the distance. His face was pale, but he didn’t hesitate at all. In an instant, he had reached an area that grew thick with grass. There, he could see a group of seven or eight poisonous wasps hovering motionless in mid-air. Behind them was a gigantic wasp nest which was surrounded by dozens more wasps.

Seeing them, Meng Hao gritted his teeth, then waved his right hand. Immediately, the wasps and the wasp nest were gathered up. Then, he Bloodburst Flashed again.

“This is an extremely rare opportunity, I have to take advantage of it!!” Meng Hao was shouting inwardly, but at the same time, somewhat conflicted. This was a moment of extreme, grave danger, perhaps the most critical he had experienced since he had begun practicing Cultivation. However...

this moment of crisis had transformed this Crow Divinity Holy Land into an unprecedented bit of good fortune!

This good fortune had caused everything in the area to become motionless, allowing Meng Hao free access to a variety of neo-demons. Such an opportunity caused even Meng Hao's heart to begin to pound.

That was especially true... when he happened to look into the mouth of one of the motionless volcanoes. There he could see an enormous lizard, half emerged from the volcano. It was dozens of meters long. Meng Hao was now even more conflicted.

"Put everything on the line!" he roared. His body flickered as he shot toward the lizard. With the wave of a right hand, he collected it into his bag of the Cosmos. Then, he spit some more blood out of his mouth to shoot away at incredible speed. At this moment, it was almost like Meng Hao had forgotten about the danger to his life. Whenever he saw a neo-demon he would shoot toward it and collect it up.

One neo-demon horde and super-powerful neo-demon after another, things which had existed for countless years within the Crow Divinity Holy Land, creatures which no one had ever been able to collect even throughout all the years in which the five Tribes had offered sacrifices to the Ancestor, dangerous beasts which normally could only be avoided with special techniques... were all completely motionless, making it extremely convenient for Meng Hao to seize them.

A group of more than one thousand green mosquitos were sitting stock still within the mouth of a volcano, apparently just on their way inside to fight a gigantic crocodile that was half submerged in the lava inside.

The mouthparts of the mosquitos emitted a mysterious glow, and their bodies were ferocious looking, covered with countless fur-like spikes. They were completely shocking in appearance.

As for the crocodile, it was bright red, with two pitch-black eyes. It lay half-submerged in the lava, emanating shocking ripples.

"How... how many neo-demon hordes are in this place?!?!" thought Meng Hao, his eyes widening. The twisted feeling inside of him could not be any more intense. Behind him, the silver line whistled toward him with increasing speed. It was no less than a hundred and fifty meters away.

“Dammit!” Meng Hao’s eyes were red as he once again utilized the Bloodburst Flash. He reappeared at the mouth of the volcano, where he waved his right hand. Immediately, the mosquitos and the shocking red crocodile were sucked into his bag of the Cosmos.

His body flickered once again as he fled away. By now, the silver line was about a hundred meters away from him, and moving even faster through the air.

The sense of grave crisis was incredibly intense. Meng Hao’s eyes were completely bloodshot, and he now had no time to consider any surrounding neo-demons. Instead, he continued to head forward toward the apparently active volcano which was his goal.

Except... even as he neared it, he noticed that up ahead was, shockingly, a burial mound!

The burial mound was covered in cracks, making the coffin inside clearly visible. Inside the coffin was a corpse which was half human and half beast, completely bizarre in appearance.

What set Meng Hao panting, however, was that laying on top of the corpse’s chest was a wooden sword!!

The instant he saw the wooden sword, his eyes went wide. Meng Hao could tell that this corpse was not in fact dead. In fact, its eyes were open. Also, despite the stillness everywhere, he could still sense a threatening aura coming from it, and a powerful pressure similar to the Spirit Severing stage.

“This is the third wooden sword I’ve found!” he thought, breathing heavily. Having seen the sword, he knew that he must have it. Including his duplicate sword, it would increase the number of wooden swords he had to four.

As for the origin of this sword, Meng Hao wasn’t sure. But his intuition told him that considering it cost two thousand ultra high-grade Spirit Stones to duplicate, it was obviously beyond ordinary. As for why it hadn’t manifested its true majesty, perhaps it was because he hadn’t acquired enough of them yet.

Meng Hao had the intense sensation that if he did not take advantage of this peculiar situation, then he would never again have a chance to snatch the wooden sword from this bizarre corpse.

Feeling both miserable and happy, he bit down viciously on his tongue, changing directions and shooting toward the corpse. As soon as he neared the burial mound, his hand shot in through one of the cracks and grabbed the wooden sword. As he wrenched it out, he could faintly hear a snarl of profound rage coming from the corpse.

There was no time for any further examination. Meng Hao's body flickered as he shot toward the volcano in the very center. Almost in the exact moment that he entered it, the pursuing silver line did the same.

Chapter 424: Severing Meng Haos Karma

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The archaic voice boomed out from the sky to echo about within the volcano.

“Flee to the remotest corners of the Earth and you will still be incapable of evading me!”

Meng Hao was only about ten meters ahead of the silver line, his face pale.

It really seemed as if what the voice said was true. Meng Hao... was incapable of evasion!

There was lava inside this volcano, as well as one location deep within that appeared to be a cistern. The rock surrounding the cistern had been chiseled into stone steps, which in turn formed a pool of water.

Meng Hao neared, he passed through multiple restrictive spells. These restrictive spells were set up to prevent anyone not of the Crow Divinity Tribe from nearing. Any outsider who attempted to approach without the help of a Crow Divinity Tribe member would be killed.

However... Meng Hao was being followed by the fishing line. As it neared, it caused everything to cease moving, even all of the bizarre and fantastic things inside of the volcano.

The restrictive spells were also static now, and any hindering power was rendered useless. Meng Hao shot forward with all of the speed he could muster. From ancient times until now, he was the first outsider to ever come to this place alone!

This event was unprecedented. As Meng Hao neared the Pool of Destiny, waves and ripples could be seen on its surface. However, Meng Hao had nothing to be happy about. His eyes radiated

despair. Earlier, he had hoped that there would be something here he could use to fight back against the silver line, which was why he had headed in this direction.

Unfortunately, it seemed that the pond was the only thing here.

“Nowhere to go....” His gaze flickered about, and he sent his Spiritual Sense billowing out. After confirming that there really was nothing else in the area besides the Pool of Destiny, he gave a wan smile.

“The Pool of Destiny.... It seems I have nowhere to go and no other options. Well, if I’m really going to perish, then I’ll go out fighting. And I’ll do it in this Pool of Destiny!” His eyes shining with vicious determination, his body flickered and he stepped foot into the Pool of Destiny.

The very moment that he did, the silver line finally reached him. It wrapped him up immediately, binding him tightly!

As soon as the line touched him, Meng Hao’s mind filled with a roaring sound, and he felt as if his soul was about to fly out of his body. It was as if his mind and his body were completely split apart. A sensation of icy coldness appeared within his soul. He suddenly had the sense that a deadly crisis was imminent.

“As I said, you’re not strong enough to hide from me. Do you really think you can measure up to the people in the past who tried to evade my grasp? When I’ve hooked your Karma, everything is over!

“Eee? Hold on... you already have traces of Karma from the Ji Clan? It’s faint, and it looks like you’re almost on the verge of completely erasing it. Since it’s still here, though, I think I’ll just take a look and see who you are. Let’s see.... Meng Hao.... Killed one of the sons of Ji.... Wanted by the Ji Clan. Oh, so it’s you.... I guess it’s just your destiny to run into me here. I might as well settle the Karma you have with the Ji Clan.

“I am Ji Nineteen. I shall bequeath thee with... the Ji Clan’s Karmic Severing!” Meng Hao’s body was trembling. He felt as if his consciousness and his body were being ripped apart. His soul felt as if it were in fetters as if some massive force were preparing to wrench it out of his body.

He was filled with confusion, and his Cultivation base vanished. Even his Demon Sealing powers disappeared. It was as if he was nothing more than a mortal, so weak that he could do absolutely nothing to fight back.

The only thing he was aware of were the words spoken by the archaic voice, which echoed about in his head.

“Karmic Severing....”

He could vaguely see a vast assortment of faint, flickering threads connected to his body. These threads were his fate and Karma, massed together and stretching out into the air, connected to who knew what.

Suddenly, Meng Hao could see that deep within him, a power was spreading out to these threads, and to his very life force....

“SEVER!” said the archaic voice. The instant the word came out of his mouth, the world shook as if it were being struck with lightning.

Meng Hao’s body trembled violently as he watched the threads connected to his body beginning to collapse, as if some intangible blade were beginning to chop through them. They shattered, causing a chain reaction which destroyed even more of the threads. It was impossible to say whose memories these threads connected to, but in this instant, they were falling into pieces.

It didn’t matter how much distance was involved, the threads were destroyed. The effect began to spread about throughout all the lands of South Heaven.

In the Western Desert, outside the golden light, everything was completely still. All the members of the five great Crow Divinity Tribes suddenly shivered. Their faces went pale and filled with blankness. Within their memories, any trace of Meng Hao was erased, almost as if it were completely severed away.

Wu Ling, Wu Chen, Wu Hai, all of the Tribe members from the five great Tribes suddenly had not even a scrap of a memory of Meng Hao within their minds.

Mo Li and old devil Wang, even Yan Song and Eccentric Li Tao all trembled as the Karma threads connecting them to Meng Hao were destroyed.

It was like a gigantic invisible blade was slashing down. As it headed toward the man-form Outlander Beast, it met up against a powerful force that struggled back against it. The man's body shook, but in the end... the blade descended nonetheless.

The voice of the parrot suddenly came out of the man's mouth in a faint roar: "Ji Clan Immortal, this time Lord Fifth will not forget!!"

The blade swept past, slicing across Gu La, erasing Meng Hao's existence. It spread out toward the Black Lands. As for the stillness, it did not touch the Black Lands; it was limited to the area in the Western Desert surrounding the Crow Divinity Tribes. At the moment, Black Lands Palace Dao Child Luo Chong was sitting cross-legged in meditation. His body suddenly shook, and he coughed up a mouthful of blood. He looked up, an expression of confusion on his face.

In the Church of the Golden Light, the members of the congregation all began to tremble and cough up blood. Perplexed looks appeared on their faces, as if they had forgotten something, but weren't sure what.

The invisible blade swept across the Black Lands, erasing any vestige that Meng Hao had ever been there. It continued on toward the Southern Domain.

Currently, Fatty was contentedly filing away at his teeth and holding a pretty girl in his arm. He was murmuring something to her when suddenly his body trembled and his face flickered. He then coughed up seven or eight mouthfuls of blood. His face was ashen as he looked around in confusion.

"What's wrong?" asked the girl, looking alarmed as she rubbed him gently.

"Nothing.... It seems like... like I just forgot someone.... Weird."

During this moment, it wasn't just Fatty who was affected. Chen Fan and all the other people within whose memories existed the image of Meng Hao, suddenly coughed up blood and then looked around in confusion.

As of this moment, all traces of Meng Hao that existed within their memories were blotted out. All Karma threads of theirs which were entangled with Meng Hao were crushed.

As of now, their lives did not contain anyone who went by the name of Meng Hao, or of Grandmaster Pill Cauldron.

“Dammit, just how famous is this guy in the Southern Domain!?” said the archaic voice, sounding shocked. “There are so many people connected to him by Karma!” He sounded flustered and disbelieving. The art of Karmic Severing is a magic which consumes energy in correlation to the amount of connections that are severed. It was definitely an astonishing technique, but one needed to be careful when using it.

Xu Qing sat meditating in her Immortal’s cave in the Black Sieve Sect. It was evening outside. Suddenly she opened her eyes and let out a soft sigh. Her hand reached into her robe, where a small pill bottle was stored, within which was a Cosmetic Cultivation Pill.

It was at this moment that a tremor ran through her and she coughed up not one, but a total of nine mouthfuls of blood. Her face was pale, and she was shaking violently.

She could feel the existence of Meng Hao within her memories beginning to shake and collapse, forcibly being erased.

“NO!!” she cried. Her hair was instantly thrown into disarray, and she began to flash an incantation gesture to fight back. The only result was more coughing up of blood.

“Meng Hao.... Meng Hao....” Her Cultivation base began to rotate rapidly, as she prepared to use all the strength she could summon to resist.

However, even as her Cultivation base began to move, she said, “Meng Hao.... Who’s that?”

She sat there mutely, a blank expression on her face. She tried to remember who Meng Hao was, and why she was rotating her Cultivation base. She could tell that her heart was in the process of breaking, and unconsciously reached up to her face. She felt tears.

“Why do I hurt so much?” she thought. “Why am I crying?”

Throughout the Southern Domain an invisible Karmic storm raged. The raging tempest was strongest in the Violet Fate Sect. Everyone in the entire Sect trembled and coughed up blood.

Chu Yuyan's face was pale, and her fists were clenched tightly. She laughed bitterly as she felt her memories changing; Meng Hao was being completely wiped away. She quickly lifted her hand up and then bit her tongue. Spitting the blood onto her finger, she began to write two characters onto the wall next to her: Meng Hao.

However, after she wrote the character Meng... her hand stopped moving and a look of bewilderment appeared on her face.

“What was I writing?”

Pill Demon sat in his short mountain, looking off into the sky. It wasn't clear what he was thinking, but as the invisible blade neared him, he sat there and sighed.

“So, this day has finally come, has it...?” He shook his head bitterly, but a brilliant light shone in his eyes. He lifted his right hand, within which appeared a medicinal pill. The pill emanated an archaic Qi, and was clearly incredibly old.

“If you sever my apprentice's Karma,” he thought, “then I will absolutely never give in and become an Immortal of the Ji Clan!” With that, he closed his eyes and watched in anguish as everything within his memories that existed regarding Meng Hao was turned into nothing but ash.

The pill in his hand emanated shocking aura, which caused these drifting pieces of memory ash to suddenly be reformed a new, unaffected.

“Dammit, he has something like that as his Master!!” echoed the archaic voice. It sounded furious. “It's a pity my Cultivation base isn't sufficient. If it were, then everything would be wiped out!”

The blade continued to sweep across the Southern Domain. However, when it reached the Rebirth Cave, the cold voice of a woman could be heard.

“A false Immortal from the Ji Clan. Do you truly dare to try to wipe out my memories? Screw off!”

The sound echoed out into the air. The archaic voice, filled with disbelief and alarm, weakly responded. “He's even connected to that figure in the Rebirth Cave! Dammit! Dammit! Who else does this guy know? How come his Karma is so hard to sever!?”

Chapter 425: The Severing Cannot Continue!

Out on the Milky Way Sea floated an island. If you looked at the island from up above in the sky, it had the appearance of a turtle. This island had been quite a mystery in the Milky Way Sea during past years. It floated about here and there, surrounded by mists.

Suddenly the floating island stopped, and an astonishing bellow of rage could be heard from within.

“SCREW OFF!! Bastard! I just fell asleep, and now you come bothering me? You think I want those memories of that twerp Meng Hao? Dammit! SCREW OFF!!”

Patriarch Reliance’s thunderous voice echoed out, kicking up huge waves on the Milky Way Sea.

The archaic voice anxiously said, “How could something like that even exist!?!? How do I accomplish this severing? How?!?!”

He sounded completely flustered and exasperated, shaking because of Meng Hao’s very existence. On another island in the Milky Way Sea was a stooped old man who was currently standing in front of an artist’s easel, painting a picture of the tall, strapping man who stood in front of him.

In the middle of making a brushstroke, the old man suddenly frowned and looked up into the sky. A profound glow suddenly appeared.

“People who exist in my memory cannot have their Karma severed by the Heavens of Ji,” he said softly. He lifted his right hand into the air and then waved his paintbrush. A drop of ink flew out which then merged into the air.

Suddenly, the entire sky in the region turned completely black.

A miserable shriek could be heard echoing out from the void. The voice was none other than that of ancient Ji Nineteen.

As the shriek filled the air, all of the Cultivators who were affected by the destruction of the Karma threads suddenly shook. The threads connecting them to Meng Hao, suddenly began to recover. They returned from absolute destruction to form once again. In fact, because they were being reformed out of destruction, they were even stronger and more tenacious than before.

Chu Yuyan's face was pale white. Her closed eyes opened, and she looked silently at the character 'Meng' written on the wall. She slowly lifted her hand up and wrote the character 'Hao.'

Pill Demon put away the medicinal pill and looked wordlessly off into the distance. However, his eyes were filled with staunchness and determination.

Fatty rubbed his head as he thought confusedly about past events. Suddenly, his body trembled and he gasped. There were now many more memories of the past. His face flickered as he recalled Meng Hao.

Chen Fan was the same, as was the entirety of the lands of the Southern Domain. In the Black Lands and the Western Desert, all of the Cultivators whose Karma threads had been affected, were suddenly recovered.

Xu Qing gnawed at her lip silently. She looked at the pill bottle in her hand, and her eyes filled with deep anxiety. She now remembered everything that had happened, and was filled with coldness. She could only imagine the loneliness she would experience if Meng Hao's image did not exist within her memories.

Within her silence, she clenched her teeth. She knew that power was the only way to truly resolve problems. She was now more determined than ever to fully fuse with the memories of Matriarch Phoenix, and increase the level of her Cultivation base.

Back in the Western Desert, in the Crow Divinity Holy Land, within the depths of the volcano, Meng Hao stood trembling in the Pool of Destiny. He, too, heard the miserable shriek. As it echoed about, he opened his eyes to see the silver fishing line turning black. The blackness spread, and as it did, the line turned into smoke and ashes. The ash and smoke spread out amidst the shriek.

The sound of the shriek caused Meng Hao's eyes to glow with coldness. He hadn't been able to see what had happened just now, but he had witnessed the severing of the Karma of the old earthworm man. He could only imagine the death he had just experienced.

Killing intent radiated out from his eyes as he caught sight of an indistinct figure in front of him. It was the image of a Cultivator surrounded by black flames, screaming as he struggled to disappear from this place.

The indistinct figure was repeatedly calling out a name. "Shui Dongliu, it's Shui Dongliu..."

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. His left hand raised up and placed the blood-colored mask onto his face. Massive, frenzied power exploded from his Cultivation base. Blood Qi emanated out in waves as he charged forward.

Blood Finger. Blood Palm. Blood Death World!

They all appeared, causing massive roaring to fill the air as they descended upon the illusory figure. Meng Hao's killing intent soared as he waved his hand again. The Lotus Sword Formation appeared; as it rotated, the power of Time rippled out.

"DIE!" shouted Meng Hao, his voice ice cold. His hand flickered an incantation and he pointed forward.

The Violet Qi Guillotine, Violet Qi Garrote, Violet Gibbous Moon exploded out with a roar, causing violet light to billow up.

"Without a face, a single word, the flames of war unify!" Meng Hao lifted up his left hand and pressed down onto the mask. Immediately, a gigantic face appeared. It opened its mouth and spoke a voiceless word. A roaring sound filled the air as it shot toward the illusory figure.

As the miserable screaming continued, Meng Hao charged forward, slipping on the Fang Clan glove. He punched, and a massive rumbling could be heard. Meng Hao's killing intent soared as he punched over and over again, more than a hundred times.

Each of these fists contained incredible power. Rumbling sounded out without end, and the illusory figure seemed to be on the verge of bursting into pieces. It appeared to have been sealed, rendering it incapable of making any moves whatsoever; even its Cultivation base was weak beyond compare. It was still trying to disappear and escape, but Meng Hao performed another incantation, and the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex appeared.

As the figure suddenly stopped moving, Meng Hao's face distorted with the desire to kill. None of his magical arts seemed to have any effect on this figure. And yet, Meng Hao was not willing to let him escape.

He had killed one of the sons of Ji, and he wasn't afraid to kill this Ji Nineteen. That was especially true considering that if he didn't kill him right now, when he was at his weakest, then the man would no doubt cause endless troubles in the future.

Gritting his teeth, Meng Hao pressed down again onto the blood-colored mask.

“Flag of three streamers!” he growled. This was the most powerful magical item he possessed!

Considering the current level of his Cultivation base, he could, with effort, wield one streamer. This time, it didn't appear in illusory form, either. As soon as the words left his mouth, power filled the area as a long, blood-colored streamer appeared. As soon as it left Meng Hao's hand, Heaven and Earth shook. It shot forward, wrapping around the figure of Ji Nineteen, dragging him.

Ji Nineteen let out a horrified scream filled with shock, fear, and disbelief.

“This... this is... the Mountain and Sea Emperor's Banner!” He cried out in alarm as roaring shook his body. Suddenly, what had been illusory, only partly in the same world as Meng Hao, was now forcibly dragged out. There, standing directly in front of Meng Hao, was an old man.

He was clearly in very sore straits; his face was covered with a burning, black ink, and his aura was in absolute chaos. Currently, it seemed he was being forcibly repressed, and was now only able to wield the power of Core Formation.

His face was filled with astonishment. He could scarcely believe that he had actually been pulled into this world.

“Impossible! It can't be the Emperor's Banner. The legendary Emperor's Banner was destroyed....”

“What Emperor's Banner, b*tch!?” said Meng Hao, his face contorted with fury as he thought about how he had just basically died. Then he recalled what Shui Dongliu had said years ago, that people he remembered could not have their Karma severed by the Ji Clan. He was certain that without Shui Dongliu, he would most likely be dead.

In his fury, he unthinkingly imitated the parrot's wording. With that, he clenched his hand into a fist and punched. A boom filled the air, and the old man let out a cry.

“You trifling mortal, do you dare to injure me? You....”

BOOM!

“Do you dare to kill me!?!?”

BOOM!

Meng Hao struck out repeatedly with his incredibly powerful fist, pummeling the old man until his body was on the verge of exploding. However, the man’s Cultivation base was fundamentally intrepid. Despite being attacked in such a way, his body was recovering rapidly.

“Puny mortal, you injured me and dragged me out from the world of Ji. But just wait until I’m fully recovered. I’ll kill you with my bare hands!”

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered with coldness, and retracted his right hand. He glared coldly at the old man, which caused the old man to stare in shock. Then, the old man began to laugh coldly.

The instant he began to laugh, however, Meng Hao’s right hand flickered an incantation and then he pushed down onto the old man’s forehead.

“It would be a pity to kill you. However, your blood, along with the blood of that son of Ji that I killed, can help me to create my Blood Spirit!”

“My recovery will quickly outpace whatever tiny injuries you inflict on me,” said the old man, his tone vicious. Suddenly, Meng Hao waved his hand, and the Lotus Sword Formation appeared. Rippling power of Time flowed out, relentlessly pounding against the old man.

The old man’s face fell, but he let out a cold snort nonetheless.

“If it were twice as powerful, maybe it could affect me. But that level of Time power is simply not enough!”

“Not enough?” asked Meng Hao, his eyes flickering icily. He instantly produced his four wooden swords and stabbed them into the man’s body to hinder his recovery.

The old man was inherently tyrannical and haughty, but the instant he saw the four wooden swords, and especially when they stabbed into him, he had no choice but to scream miserably.

“Dammit! Dammit! Those are... Immortal Murdering Swords!! You, you, you... just who are you?! How can you have so many!! Although they’re not completely unsealed... they really are Immortal Murdering Swords!!” His injuries suddenly worsened, and his recovery slowed down to a crawl. Thanks to Meng Hao’s many forms of torment, Ji Nineteen was in an incredibly wretched predicament.

“There’s still more time to cause you suffering!” said Meng Hao, coldness flickering within his gaze.

Meanwhile...

In the Great Tang in the Eastern Lands exists a luxurious mansion. Sitting inside was the girl with the explosive temper that Meng Hao had met that year, Fang Yu. She was currently wiping some blood off of her mouth; how could Ji Nineteen ever have imagined that the effects of his Karmic Severing would reach all the way to the Great Tang in the Eastern Lands, and Fang Yu?

Fang Yu’s face filled with fury, and she rose to her feet. She was about to walk out the door when suddenly a woman’s voice could be heard, shocking and furious to the extreme. It came from the restricted area in the back of the mansion.

“JI CLAN!!”

When she heard the voice, Fang Yu’s face flickered. She saw someone flying out from the restricted area toward her. It was an elegantly dressed middle-aged woman. Her face was beautiful, but grim. As soon as she appeared, everything grew dim, and the air itself began to vibrate. The land quaked, and cracks appeared on the surfaces of the nearby buildings, despite the restrictive spells that protected them.

“Mom....” said Fang Yu, trembling. She feared no one in the world more than she did her mother.

“You, come with me!” said the woman. This woman was none other than the woman who had appeared in the Song Clan back in the Southern Domain. Her eyes radiated killing intent as she turned toward the Ji Clan mansion which existed in the Great Tang of the Eastern Lands.

“Mom, don’t do anything rash. Dad said before that....”

“Don’t talk to me about your dad. Are you coming or not?!” The woman’s phoenix-like eyes radiated intense killing intent.

Chapter 426: Just This Once!

Moments later, a massive roaring sound filled this luxurious mansion in the Great Tang of the Eastern Lands. The entire mansion shook, and then began to crumble into pieces. Large groups of people quickly emerged, although they seemed quite calm. In fact, some were even having pleasant conversations in low tones. Some held books, and there was even one man who had an abacus, and was walking and making calculations at the same time.

Everyone seemed completely unperturbed. There was only one conclusion that could be reached.... This mansion often experienced such thunderous collapse....

As the mansion fell apart, the beautiful woman and Fang Yu transformed into beams of light that shot off in the direction of the Ji Clan Ancestral Mansion.

A sigh could be heard from within the collapsing mansion as a middle-aged man in scholar’s clothing emerged, shaking his head. He looked at his wife and daughter disappearing in the distance and then sighed again, but did nothing to hinder them.

As she flew through the air, the beautiful woman’s face was filled with killing intent. She moved with shocking speed. Next to her, Fang Yu looked nervous, but she was actually quite excited inwardly.

After a bit of time, the two of them neared a sprawling walled city, the entirety of which was pitch black. It was square in shape, like a giant seal that had been pressed down into the land.

Located within the city was an imperial palace, which from a distance, looked magnificent. Palatial structures sprawled around it, and in front was a large square in which could be seen eighteen dragon statues that emanated shocking auras.

This imperial palace had only one main gate, which was completely gold. Protruding from the surface of this gate were 3,927 golden nails. Each of these nails was completely out of the ordinary, and obviously could be considered a precious treasure.

The gate was also carved with soaring clouds and auspicious beasts. Everything was gold, making it look like some sort of Celestial gate.

This was the number one ancestral mansion of the Ji Clan in all of the Great Tang of the Eastern Lands. In total, they had nearly one hundred, each one of which looked like an imperial palace, although it wasn't. After being erected, these palaces stood mightily for years, never weakening. They were like a figurative shield for the entire Clan.

In any case, surrounding this imperial palace, the Ji Clan members had also erected an enormous wall.

The approach of Fang Yu and her mother send out shocking ripples through the air, as well as a screaming wind. Immediately, the Cultivators within the Ji Clan noticed this.

“Halt immediately!”

“If you take a step further you will be executed without hesitation!”

Fang Yu looked over at her mother anxiously. “Mom, don't do anything rash...”

Even as the words left her mouth, the beautiful woman lifted up her right foot and violently kicked the city gate. Immediately, a roaring sound echoed out in all directions as the entire city shook. The gate immediately collapsed into pieces, crumbling downward into dust. A gale force wind swept out, carrying the rubble with it.

“What gall! You dare to make a move against the Ji Clan!?!?”

As the gate collapsed, howls could be heard within the city and crowds of people appeared, shooting through the air toward the gate. “Are you looking to die!?!?”

“Mom, don't be rash, you must not under any circumstances be impulsive...”

“Shut up!” cried the beautiful woman, glaring at Fang Yu. She clenched her right hand into a fist and then slammed it into the ground, which rippled like seawaters as a massive boom echoed out. Cracks spread out in all direction, ripping the ground apart in shocking fashion.

The woman, radiating killing intent, shot toward the incoming Cultivators. All it took was a single punch from her, and they went flying off one by one like kites with their strings cut. They tumbled through the air, crying out miserably.

The woman was like an explosively violent dragon. Everywhere she went, everything shook. It was like a whirlwind that none of the nearly thousand approaching Cultivators could do anything to stop.

Fang Yu stood off to the side. She continued to call out to her mother to not do anything rash but her face radiated a killing intent quite similar to her mother’s, along with excitement. It got to the point where she ran over and, anyone who her mom had already taken care of, she would take care of again.

After the space of a few breaths passed, the sky suddenly grew dim. The city wall seemed on the verge of being completely destroyed, and the land itself was covered with countless cracks. Finally, the city wall collapsed into dust. The beautiful woman transformed into a whirlwind that swept out toward the imperial palace.

In the blink of an eye, she reached the Celestial gate of the imperial palace, and the enormous plaque which glowed with golden light and was covered with the more than three thousand nails, as well as auspicious animals. Suddenly, a roar could be heard from within the city as dozens of figures shot out. Their Cultivation bases emanated shocking power as they emerged.

“Madam Fang, are you here as a representative of the Fang Clan to declare war on the Ji Clan!?” One of the approaching figures was a white-haired old man who spoke with a grim voice. Next to him was none other than Ji Eleven, whose face was written with astonishment. He stared in shock at the mother-daughter pair as they approached.

“I’m not here representing the Fang Clan. I’m here as a mother, representing myself!” The beautiful woman’s jaw was set, and her phoenix-like eyes radiated killing intent. She punctuated her words by once again slamming her fist down onto the ground.

Heaven and Earth filled with roaring, and it seemed like the air would collapse. A black wind spread out in all directions, slamming into the approaching group of dozens of Ji Clan members.

Their expressions immediately flickered. At the same time, Fang Yu urgently said, “Mom, don’t do...”

Before she could finish, the beautiful woman charged toward the Celestial gate of the imperial palace and punched it directly with her fist.

When the blow landed, a shocking boom rang out that shook nearly half of the entire Eastern Lands. This Celestial Gate of the Ji Clan had stood here in its majesty for who knew how many years. But now, cracking sounds rang out as, layer by layer, it began to completely disintegrate. As it transformed into crumbling fragments, the more than three thousand golden nails shot toward the imperial palace, to slam into the eighteen dragon statues which were actually in the process of coming to life.

Rumbling filled the air, and the eighteen dragons let out miserable shrieks. Their bodies were unable to withstand the attack, and they exploded. By this point, half of the palace was a wreck, and the entire city was in an uproar.

“... anything rash...” finished Fang Yu. She stared mutely at her mother, and the destroyed golden gate.

“Meng Li!! Are you crazy!?!?” [1]

Howls of rage could be heard from the approaching group of a dozen or so old men. Their eyes radiated killing intent and fury, but also a bit of helplessness.

“You dare to harm my son?! I will dismantle this entire Ji Clan Ancestral Mansion and cut down your South Heaven Gate! Others fear you Ji Clan people, but not me!” The killing intent boiling in the woman’s eyes seemed to have no end. She had suppressed it for a long time, but could do so no longer. She strode directly in through the crumbling main gate.

Fang Yu hurried after her. The mother-daughter team passed through the Celestial gate, and suddenly they were in a different world.

In front of them, a mountain range spread out, completely white in color. From a distance, they looked like they were covered with snow, but if you looked more closely, you would see that they were in fact made from jade.

The entire mountain range was the same, and at its very highest point was a simple house. The house was encircled by palatial structures, and half way down from the house could be seen an enormous gate-like bridge. It was richly ornamented with jade and marble, and on its surface, three characters were carved in flowing script that made the words look like flying dragons and dancing phoenixes.

“South Heaven Gate!”

Steps were carved into the jade mountain that led under this bridge, all the way down to the bottom of the mountain where a lake existed. The reflection of the imperial palace above could be seen on the surface of the lake. No waves existed on its surface, making the reflection very realistic. If you didn't look very closely, you might not even be able to tell the difference between the two. The mountain and the reflection of the mountain in the lake were almost identical.

“Mom....” said Fang Yu as soon as they entered. Normally, she was quite audacious, but as of this moment, she was a bit taken aback. Everything that had happened up to now was incredibly shocking. She looked at her mom, almost in a daze.

The beautiful woman gave a cold snort as she looked up at the white jade mountains. At this point, a bit of dread could be seen even in her eyes. However, the dread quickly vanished, wiped away by fury and killing intent. She took a deep breath, during which time, a terrifying, frenzied power suddenly rose up within her.

Her hair whipped about, and her eyes glowed brightly. Everything around her changed, and even the sky grew blurry as a massive pressure radiated out. Shockingly, she now had a sword in her hand!

And this sword... was a wooden sword!

It was not the same as the four wooden swords that Meng Hao had acquired. Instead, it was covered with characters written in an ancient style.

Sunder!

Gripping the sword tightly in hand, the beautiful woman swung it toward the South Heaven Gate up on the mountain. The sword strike caused the sky above to turn black, and the ground to turn into nothingness. It was as if all of the power in the world were being sucked into this one sword and

transformed into cascading Sword Qi. This shocking Qi whistled through the air directly toward the South Heaven Gate.

It was at this exact moment that the dozen old men neared. They were filled with fury, but as soon as they saw the sword, their faces filled with shock.

“Dammit! Immortal Sundering Sword!!”

“You crazy Meng! You, you, you... you dare to wield that Immortal Sundering Sword here on Planet South Heaven!?!?”

The speed of the Sword Qi was such that it arrived at South Heaven Gate in the blink of an eye. However, at some unknown time, directly next to South Heaven Gate, a young man had appeared. Based on his appearance, he was not very old; however, his body radiated an intangible ancientness.

He looked at the incoming Sword Qi, and then at the beautiful woman. Shaking his head, he did nothing to block it. The Sword Qi slammed into South Heaven Gate, causing the entire structure to shake and then collapse into pieces.

The South Heaven Gate had stood from the moment the Ji Clan arrived on Planet South Heaven, and represented their position of rulership. This was the first time it had ever collapsed.

The young man looked at the collapsing gate and then coolly said, “For the sake of your father, Senior Meng, I won’t go too hard on you. Go ahead and vent your anger. But... it will only be just this once!”

The young man waved his sleeve, and everything in the world began to grow blurry, and everyone began to disappear.

Before she completely disappeared, the beautiful woman’s voice rang out throughout the entire world, filled with determination and staunchness.

“I will issue a warning too,” she said, "and it had BETTER be just this once!”

Earlier she was called “Madam Fang” and here she is called Meng Li. In Chinese culture, women don’t change their name upon marriage. However, they can be addressed with their husband’s

surname if used with the right title. In Chinese, her name is 孟丽 mèng lì - Meng is a surname, the same as Meng Hao's. Li means "beautiful"

Chapter 427: Greenwood Tree Ancestor Awakening!

"It doesn't matter whether we're talking about family love or one's temper," the young man said lightly. He smiled slightly. "Everything is Karma. Sooner or later, everything becomes empty after it has been severed and annihilated." With that, he waved his right hand. Time almost seemed to flow in reverse as the crumbled South Heaven Gate instantly reformed, as good as new.

Of course, the young man knew that although the gate itself could be repaired, its collapse earlier had caused harm to the Cultivation bases of all living Ji Clan Cultivators connected to it. Such losses would not be easily recovered.

That was the true importance of this gate; it allowed all Cultivators who were part of the Ji Clan to utilize power of the Heavens of Ji to achieve Cultivation base breakthroughs.

Meanwhile, back in the Western Desert, outside of the Crow Divinity Holy Land, the stillness which had gripped the world was gone. Because of the failure of the Karmic Severed, the members of the five great Tribes once again had their memories of Meng Hao.

However, they were left with no sense whatsoever regarding the stillness. The last thing they remembered was Meng Hao suddenly flying up through the shining golden doors.

The Crow Scout Tribe Greatfather shook his head and laughed heartily. "Grandmaster Meng is being a bit hasty, but there's no harm in that. Let's go meet up." With that, his body flickered and he entered the glowing golden doors. He was followed by the Priest, the Grand Elder and the others, including the man-form Outlander Beast. The large man's face was grim, and his eyes flickered with rage and humiliation.

At the moment, the parrot was the dominant one. It remembered everything that had happened, and understood the truth. This caused its fury to billow up as it urgently entered into the golden light.

As for the rest of the Tribes, they didn't care a bit whether Grandmaster Meng barged in, nor did they say anything. In fact, were they in the place of the Crow Scout Tribe, they would do nothing about the matter. After all... Grandmaster Meng had displayed the power of a Grand Dragoner. A person like that would be treated like an esteemed guest in any Tribe.

The members of the Crow Scout Tribe passed through the golden doors and entered the Holy Land with the seven volcanoes. By this time, Meng Hao had Ji Nineteen thoroughly bound up. The four wooden swords were continuously crippling his Cultivation base, making it impossible for him to recover.

In fact, out of fear that his Cultivation base would rise too high, Meng Hao decided to use some additional methods. From within his bag of holding, he retrieved a large collection of poison pills that he had concocted. The power of these poisons was terrifying, not to mention any possible interactions they might have later. Meng Hao knew that even he himself would have a difficult time dispelling them. Without hesitation, he fed them to Ji Nineteen.

Ji Nineteen's eyes went wide as he was forced to consume the vast quantities of poison pills. His face turned purple, and seven tremors ran through his body. With each tremor, he withered a bit, until his very aura seemed to ooze with poison. His eyes were green, and filled with terror.

“You.... Dammit! How many poison pills do you have? How many did you give me!?!?”

Meng Hao snorted coldly.

“We will end your torment for today. Once the poisons are fully fused into your body, I'll concoct some more for you.” With that, Meng Hao waved his hand, wrapping Ji Nineteen up in the flag of three streamers and sucking him into the blood-colored mask.

Only binding him in such a way allowed Meng Hao to set his mind at ease. Otherwise, how could he feel safe, considering Ji Nineteen's incredible power?

“Once he's weak enough, I can use his blood to make a Blood Spirit. Also, I can use his soul to make a Soul of Lightning, just like the Li Clan Patriarch. If I can use some special methods, I can turn his body into a puppet. A high level expert like him is a treasure through and through. I can't waste any part of him. The sad thing is, he didn't have a bag of holding....” After a long moment of consideration, he came to the conclusion that he truly hadn't wasted any opportunities. Finally, he nodded in satisfaction.

It was a good thing Ji Nineteen didn't hear the conclusions he had reached, otherwise blood would spray from his mouth as he realized that being killed by Shui Dongliu would have been much better.

“This time I really did profit from misfortune.” He looked down at his bag of the Cosmos, and his heart began to twitch with excitement. On the way here, he had taken advantage of the power of the

fishing line to collect a huge assortment of ferocious neo-demons. There were some that, normally speaking, he would have had great difficulty in acquiring on his own.

That was especially true regarding some of the hordes he had acquired. In his opinion, he really had profited wildly.

“And then there’s the sword!” He started breathing heavily as he thought of his fourth sword, which was currently stuck into Ji Nineteen. Technically speaking it was the third he had found.

Meng Hao now knew that the swords must contain some incredible mystery. If he could somehow acquire more of them, he would probably be able to solve the puzzle.

“Immortal Murdering Sword, huh? And then there’s the flag of three streamers. Ji Nineteen called it a much different name than the meat jelly did. The Mountain and Sea Emperor’s Banner.” After more thought, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding to produce a green fishing pole. Hefting it in his hand, his eyes began to shine with a bright glow.

“When Ji Nineteen launched his Karmic Severing, he used a fishing line. I’m guessing that the fishing pole he used was the same type as this one!” He looked thoughtfully at the fishing pole. All of a sudden, the same cacophony of life he had heard before, once again began to sound out in his mind. There were babies crying, old people gasping for breath, men and women laughing and arguing.

He quickly released his grip on the fishing pole. His eyes flickered as he muttered to himself for a moment, then put the fishing pole back into his bag of holding.

“I wonder how you use the thing? Maybe I can get the answer from Ji Nineteen.” Meng Hao glanced at the mouth of the volcano and then looked at the Pool of Destiny.

His heart suddenly quivered. Earlier, he had stepped into the pool because of the Karma Line. As such, he hadn’t noticed anything too extraordinary about it. Now, his eyes glittered as he once again shot back to enter the pool. Once inside, he closed his eyes for a long moment. When they opened, they were filled with excitement.

“So, it contains totemic transmogrification powers.... If I cultivate here, my Greenwood Tree totem will grow even stronger. With enough power, I should even be able to transmogrify the totem itself! It should even provide benefits to the Eyeless Larva. It should be able to make it into something like a true totem. I won’t need Li Tao’s magic to cover it up!” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered brightly. The

Wood-type Greenwood Tree totem was a legacy handed down to him from Ancestor Greenwood of the Crow Scout Tribe. Meng Hao wasn't sure what it would turn into if he transmogrified it further.

He stood there thoughtfully for a moment, his eyes filling with determination. Then he sat down cross-legged in the waters to meditate. When he closed his eyes, the Greenwood Tree totem tattoo on his forehead and the Eyeless Larva totem tattoo on his hand immediately appeared.

The waters in the pool began to seethe as if they were boiling. A whirlpool formed, with Meng Hao at the center and the water rushing around him.

Within the pool waters surged totemic power. As it circled around him, it fused into Meng Hao's body and then, into the Greenwood Tree totem and the Eyeless Larva totem.

After the fusion began, the pool waters were clearly lessening. Moments later, mist began to rise up from the seething water. The mist rose up to surround Meng Hao and then fill the entire inner part of the volcano.

At the same time that Meng Hao was performing the fusion, the group from the Crow Scout Tribe was cautiously making its way through the region outside.

The Greatfather, the Sky Priest, and the Grand Elder all looked suspicious as they traveled through the Holy Land. Things weren't exactly the way they remembered from previous occasions. Everything seemed much emptier.

"How strange. I remember last time there was a flock of crow neo-demons in this area. By using a special method, there was a high chance of acquiring a few of them."

"Yeah, that's right. And I remember that over there was a group of green mosquito neo-demons, completely fearsome in appearance. That year, the group I was leading happened to see someone from the Crow Fighter Tribe accidentally provoke them. He was drained up and turned into a withered corpse in the blink of an eye."

"Weird, it's much quieter than usual in here this time...."

They encountered almost no neo-demons during their entire way, nor did they need to use any of the ancestral techniques. They simply flew directly toward the centermost of the seven volcanoes.

According to the Tribe records, the center volcano housed the primary pool. If the water in the Pool of Destiny in the center volcano was reduced, then the water in pools in the other volcanos would also be reduced.

As soon as the Crow Scout Tribe members neared the volcano mouth, they saw the mist within in. They also heard a growling roar coming from within.

It was none other than the voice of Meng Hao. His long cry echoed out as the image of an enormous Greenwood Tree suddenly emerged from within the mist.

At the same time, the mist in the volcano began to shrink down, absorbed. Soon, the image of Meng Hao became visible, seated cross-legged within the pool, sucking in all of the mist.

The image of the Greenwood Tree existed directly above him.

“It’s Grandmaster Meng!” cried the members of the Crow Scout Tribe, instantly recognizing him. Their hearts trembled as Meng Hao’s eyes suddenly opened. He took a deep breath, and the waters around him lessened further. Wisps of white Qi rose up to be absorbed by Meng Hao and the Greenwood Tree image, causing the tree to become even more lifelike as if it really existed there.

It was at this point that rumbling sounds could be heard from the other six volcanos. White Qi rose up from them and shot toward the region of the Crow Scout Tribe members. It shot into the volcano mouth and directly toward Meng Hao.

The Greenwood Tree above him suddenly began to shake, and it expanded outward. Its bark began to look older and older, as if years were passing. It seemed as if at this moment, the tree was growing so high it could reach the Heavens.

In fact, to anyone observing, it seemed... the tree wasn’t just growing. The ancient scars and marks on the tree’s surface seemed to be naturally occurring. This indicated that the Greenwood Tree....

The Sky Priest gasped. “Ancestral Awakening!” she said faintly. “Grandmaster Meng’s Greenwood Tree totem is experiencing an Ancestral Awakening!!”

“Greenwood Tree Ancestral Awakening!” cried the Greatfather, shocked. He began panting, his eyes wide.

Down inside the pool waters, Meng Hao’s eyes snapped open again. Even he had never imagined that by absorbing the totemic power of the pool and fusing it into the Greenwood Tree totem would actually give birth to... the power of Ancestral Awakening!

Meng Hao was astonished. “What will be awakened in the end? An ancient Greenwood Tree?”

Chapter 428: A World that Supersedes

“Or perhaps it will turn into the tree that emerged from within the Ninth Sea all those years ago and crossed the stars to Planet South Heaven... the supreme Greenwood Tree!” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered as the Qi continued to rush into him. Outside, the other six volcanoes were rumbling as white mist continued to shoot out toward Meng Hao.

The more Qi he absorbed, the brighter his eyes grew.

He looked up at the enormous Greenwood Tree floating in mid-air above him, which emanated a boundless green glow. It dyed the sky, covered the land, filling everything with the aura of the Greenwood Tree. Throughout the Crow Divinity Holy Land, all of the plants and vegetation were withering.

The members of the Crow Scout Tribe panted as they stared at the scene. Meanwhile, outside of the Holy Land, back in the region of the Crow Scout Tribe, the enormous Treant looked over at the green glow rising up to the Heavens.

“Wood....” it said softly.

Even the members of the other four Tribes who were waiting outside of the golden doors were filled with shock. Although they couldn’t see clearly everything that was happening inside, they were filled with a sense of baffling wonderment. Each and every one had faces filled with shock.

At the same time, the various totemic Sacred Ancients atop the mountains of the other four Tribes appeared. They stared toward the Crow Divinity Holy Land, and one by one all uttered the same word.

“Wood...”

Even as this word filled the air, the plants and vegetation in the surrounding mountain ranges were whipping about wildly, despite the fact that there was no wind. They flickered, emitting rustling sounds that seemed to form voices of submission. It was as if they were offering obeisance to the sovereign of all Wood-type entities!

The four bizarre life forms from the other four Tribes slowly bowed as if in salute to the miracle which was occurring.

As they were saluting, the members of the Crow Scout Tribe back in the Crow Divinity Holy Land actually stopped breathing momentarily. They watched as the gigantic Greenwood Tree rapidly began to shrink in size. The smaller it got, the more intense was the green light it emitted.

By the time it shrank to three hundred meters in height, it was like a green sun, filling everything around it with intense green light. Meng Hao breathed deeply as he watched the Greenwood Tree shrinking. Three hundred meters, one hundred fifty, one hundred... until it was thirty meters!

Fifteen, ten, three... half a meter, one third... three inches, two inches....

It seemed to be shrinking in correlation to the reduction of water in the pool. Massive amounts of mist were absorbed by Meng Hao; in the blink of an eye, the Greenwood Tree was only one inch tall!

The light it emitted was so bright that it penetrated out of the Crow Divinity Holy Land. The plants and vegetation outside which were grovelling in reverence, the five saluting life forms, and all of the Cultivators who had Wood-type totems, felt a profound impulse to prostrate themselves in worship.

Back within the Crow Divinity Holy Land, the one inch tall, brightly glowing Greenwood Tree in front of Meng Hao shot toward him, branding onto his forehead. A massive roaring noise filled the air, and green light shot out in all directions. As soon as everyone was able to see again, they looked at Meng Hao's forehead and saw... a type of totem that no one had ever seen before!

This totem tattoo was of a single ancient character!

Wood!

There was no green tree, no picture, no resplendent glow. It was smooth and ordinary. A single ancient character. Wood!

However, this character Wood represented everything Wood-type under Heaven. Because of this, it didn't need some picture representation of a plant or tree, because it... was the essence of Wood!

All Wood-types in Heaven and Earth!

Everything shook as all plants and vegetation bowed in worship. All such living things paid respect.

"Wood..." Meng Hao floated up out from within the Pool of Destiny, the Wood character on his forehead glittering with green light. He suddenly had the sensation that he could communicate with all plant forms in the world. He had the intense feeling that by merely exercising his will, he could magically manifest any type of wood.

He also felt a type of calling from the Pool of Destiny beneath him. The pool had always born the semblance of a pool, but when Meng Hao looked down at it, what he saw was a path.

The call originated from the end of the path, where Meng Hao had the strange sensation that there existed... a Heavenly Wood character.

His eyes flickered thoughtfully, and then his body flashed. The Crow Scout Tribe watched panting as he suddenly shot back down toward the Pool of Destiny, toward the path. Then, he completely disappeared.

It wasn't until Meng Hao disappeared that the Crow Scout Tribe members finally reacted. In fact, it was the man-form Outlander Beast who did so first. Eyes wide, he looked at the scant amount of water left in the Pool of Destiny, and then let out a roar and charged toward the water.

The Greatfather's face flickered. He waved his hand, indicating for the others to follow as he headed toward the Pool of Destiny. There was already very little water left, but even absorbing a bit would be very beneficial.

Almost at the same time that the Crow Scout Tribe members were charging toward the Pool of Destiny, the faces of the members of the four Tribes on the outside flickered. This was especially so

when they noticed that the golden doors were growing dim. The four Greatfathers and the Priests looked shocked.

“How could it be happening so quickly?! Dammit! The Pool of Destiny is going to disappear!”

“The golden light is fading! That means the waters in the Pool of Destiny are already running out!” As of now, the Greatfathers and Priests of the four Tribes did not feel it necessary to abide by the previous agreement. They immediately began to lead their various Tribe members toward the golden light. In an instant, more than one hundred colorful beams of light shot through the doors.

Within the Crow Divinity Holy Land, the members of the four Tribes scattered, heading in the direction of the various volcanoes.

Everything was quite chaotic. However, amidst the chaos, there were four people who happened to have a special means of communication. Suddenly, they all began to whistle through the air toward the seventh volcano.

These four people were none other than Yan Song and the other Nascent Soul Eccentrics. They moved with great speed, but cautiously, so as not to make themselves stand out. They entered the volcano and looked around, killing intent flickering in their eyes as they immediately attacked the other Tribe members who had entered the volcano at the same time.

Considering the level of their Cultivation bases, and the fact that the Tribe members were caught unawares, it only took the space of a few breaths before they wiped them out. There wasn't even time for miserable cries to ring out.

Now that they didn't have to conceal their identities anymore, the four of them revealed their true appearances.

The reek of blood filled the air, but Li Tian waved his hand, causing it to disappear instantly. At the same time, Mo Li and old devil Wang performed double-handed incantations. In the blink of an eye, a magical shield covered over everything, making it impossible for anyone else to enter the volcano.

“I have the feeling that Grandmaster Meng is none other than our Fellow Daoist Meng,” said Yan Song coolly, looking at the others.

“He was the first to enter this place,” said Li Tian, frowning. “He must definitely have picked up on some clues already. We need to move faster.”

“According to my understanding,” said Yan Song, “this seventh volcano has the weakest restrictive spells. May I prevail upon you Fellow Daoists to break the spells? Then we will be able to enter the location of the ancient Dao of alchemy.”

The four exchanged glances, then rushed down to the bottom of the volcano. According to the previous arrangement, Mo and Wang began to use their magical techniques to break down the restrictive spells.

As the party of four got to work, the rest of the five Tribes were struggling over the Pools of Destiny. Even as the man-form version of the Outlander Beast, parrot and meat jelly was absorbing the waters, Meng Hao magically appeared in a world that seemed to supercede anything that even remotely resembled it.

The instant he appeared, he looked around, stunned. His eyes began to shine.

Shockingly, he was... in exactly the same place he had been before. He was in the same volcano he had just left. The water beneath his feet was none other than that of the Pool of Destiny. However, the waters were murky, and impossible to absorb. Everything around him seemed tinged with gray, as if that were the only color that existed in this world.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered as he loped around for a moment and then flew up toward the mouth of the volcano. Outside, everything looked the same; there were still seven volcanoes. The land and the forests, everything looked just exactly the same as the Crow Divinity Holy Land. Except... located in the middle of the seven volcanoes was a gigantic tree.

This enormous, ancient tree towered up so high that it seemed as if it were supporting the very Heaven. And it was golden!

If you looked closely, the tree was not made from wood, but rather, metal. At the very top of the tree was a gigantic Golden Crow, standing there, staring at Meng Hao.

At the bottom of the tree was a corpse, leaning up against the tree and facing a decrepit pill furnace.

There was no one and nothing else in the area, only the great tree and the Golden Crow. No lives were present, nor any life force... nor any presence of death.

Everything was quiet, so quiet that many people would find it terrifying.

Meng Hao focused on the great tree and the Golden Crow. Then he looked at the corpse and the pill furnace. Were it not for the corpse and the pill furnace, Meng Hao would have come to the conclusion that everything Yan Song said was incorrect.

Thoughtfully, Meng Hao flew forward toward the great golden tree.

As he neared, the Golden Crow atop the tree suddenly moved its head. A golden gleam could be seen in its eyes.

Meng Hao stopped and stood stock still. He could sense that it was the golden tree upon which the Golden Crow stood that was calling him.

The Golden Crow glanced at Meng Hao, then closed its eyes. Meng Hao clasped hands in a bow, and then neared it.

He didn't examine the great tree first. Instead, he looked down at the corpse. There in the corpse's hand was a jade slip.

Meng Hao picked it up and scanned it with Spiritual Sense. Three characters suddenly appeared in his head.

“Spirit Severing Pill!”

His eyes glittered as he looked down at the pill furnace. As soon as he did, a strange expression could be seen on his face. There on the back of the furnace was a large hole.

Within the pill furnace, no medicinal pill could be seen. However, even though countless years had passed, as a Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy, Meng Hao could tell from the residue left behind that before being destroyed, there had indeed been a medicinal pill inside.

Looking at the hole, he suddenly had the sense that whatever pill had been concocted inside in ancient times, had burst out of its own accord. “It definitely is of the ancient Dao of alchemy, something from primordial times. But... where did the pill go?”

Chapter 429: The Golden Crow and the Great Tree

Meng Hao looked around, muttering to himself. He then scanned the area with Spiritual sense. However, other than the golden tree and the Golden Crow, there was no trace of anything else.

“Could it have left this place entirely?” thought Meng Hao. As a Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy, he had concocted sentient medicinal pills before, the kind that attempted to wrest away good fortune from Heaven and Earth, the type that the Heavens attempted to destroy with Tribulation.

Lost in thought, Meng Hao considered how most such ancient medicinal pills had withered up long ago, and were no doubt nothing more than dust. “Most likely it already shrivelled away into ashes.”

Meng Hao couldn't imagine how a pill that could break out of the furnace in such a manner could possibly still exist after so many years had passed. He put the matter aside and turned his head to look at the great tree.

After a long moment, he reached out his hand and placed it softly on the surface of the tree.

The instant he touched it, it began to vibrate and slowly emit a golden light. At the same time, the Wood totem tattoo on Meng Hao's forehead began to emit a green light.

There was no communication or interaction. Instead, there was a sliver of will that had existed for who knew how long in this great tree that, at this moment, was set free. It had encountered something similar to itself that it approved of, and had decided to say its final goodbyes.

Meng Hao looked at the tree and could see that it no longer had any life force left in it. The only thing that remained were the traces of the passage of time.

After a long moment passed, Meng Hao sighed.

“So, this is the place that Yan Song and the others are dying to get to.... No medicinal pill, only a corpse and the remains of a great tree. Even the pill formula in the jade slip is of ancient times.

Nowadays, you wouldn't even be able to find the right medicinal plants. The only thing here worth looking at is that Golden Crow." Meng Hao looked up at the bird sitting on top of the tree overhead.

Finally, he shook his head and was about to pull back his hand, when suddenly a tremor ran through his body. The previously closed eyes of the Golden Crow snapped open. Powerful life force streamed out, entering into the great tree. Suddenly, power seemed to emanate out from the tree, as if it was... still alive.

Because Meng Hao's hand was touching the tree, he was able to sense the power of the life force. In that instant, his eyes went wide with disbelief. He looked up again at the Golden Crow, his mind blank. It was an ancient sacred relic of the Crow Divinity Tribe, something that had existed for many years, and was powerful enough to give birth to an entire Tribe.

Nowadays, that once powerful Tribe was fading away and had already begun to split apart.

"This life force...." Meng Hao was struck dumbfounded for a long moment. Finally, he took a deep breath. As a Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy, he was very familiar with medicinal pills. Just now, he could tell that the life force emanating from the Golden Crow actually contained... the aura of a medicinal pill!

It was not emanating life force, but rather, the power of a medicinal pill!

"Is it because it consumed the medicinal pill, or... is IT the medicinal pill?!" The possibility of the latter sent Meng Hao's mind and heart reeling. Before coming to this place, he could never have imagined that the Golden Crow of this once powerful Tribe... originated from what had started out as a medicinal pill.

He was a Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy, and as such, could accept that lakes and mountains could become Demons. However, perhaps his own deep knowledge of alchemy covered over his own eyes in a way that made it impossible for him to conceive of the same thing happening with medicinal pills.

He began to breathe heavily. He was now almost certain that of the two different possibilities he had just considered, it was virtually impossible for the first one to be correct. After consuming a medicinal pill, its aura could not exist for a very long time.

The only correct conclusion was that the medicinal pill had turned into a Demon, which then could exist forever!

Panting, Meng Hao looked up at the Golden Crow and the great tree. Suddenly, an image appeared in his mind. Within the image was an ancient Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy, sitting beneath a Greenwood Tree, preparing to pass away in meditation. As death neared, he produced the most glorious pill he had ever concocted.

Unfortunately, by the time the pill emerged, the Grandmaster had already breathed his last breath.

Years later, when the sentience of the pill reached a certain point, it suddenly broke out of the pill furnace. It seemed as if this action might even have had something to do with the Greenwood Tree. From the moment it appeared in the world, its only friend and partner was none other than the Greenwood Tree.

Year after year passed. After the passage of an innumerable amount of time, when the pill had matured and risen to prominence, it founded the Crow Divinity Tribe. Many more years passed. Eventually, the Greenwood Tree's life began to waste away, and it died.

The medicinal pill could not accept that the tree had perished. It used its powers to transform its color, and every so often, it would sacrifice some of its own life force to feed the tree.

However... the tree truly had perished. Regardless of what was done, the only thing that could be brought back was something empty, lifelike though it might seem.

Even still... although the medicinal pill understood this, it refused to give up.

Meng Hao considered all of this for a long moment, and then let out a soft sigh. His hand dropped to his side as he stepped back a few paces. He clasped his hands and bowed deeply to the great tree and the Golden Crow.

He could see that the Golden Crow was currently growing weaker and weaker. Soon, its life force would be exhausted, and it would transform into dust on the wind. When that happened, the great tree would have nothing to support its empty but lifelike existence, and it too would transform into dust.

Perhaps both of them were simply waiting for that moment when they both turned into dust together, and could drift up into the empty sky.

Meng Hao looked at the Golden Crow and the great tree. He wasn't sure why, but for some reason the look in the eyes of the Golden Crow reminded him of certain aspects of Grandmaster Pill Demon. The crow stood atop the great tree; Pill Demon stood on his short mountain. The crow gazed upon the tree; Pill Demon gazed upon the statue of Violet East.

It was a strange feeling that caused Meng Hao to stand there thoughtfully for a moment before sighing.

“Since I'm here, I might as well employ some of my power....” He lifted his right hand into the air and performed an incantation. Then, he took a deep breath and pointed at the tree.

“By my command as the Ninth Generation Demon Sealer, I bequeath you with Righteous Bestowal!” Immediately, a tremor ran through Meng Hao's body, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. When it landed on the tree, a strange light began to glow in the Golden Crow's eyes, and it stared at Meng Hao.

“Righteous Bestowal causes your path to become that of a Demon!

“Righteous Bestowal causes your Dao to become unceasing!

“Righteous Bestowal causes your spirit to return from emptiness to become a Demon!

“My approval represents the approval of the League of Demon Sealers.... This is Righteous Bestowal, a true blessing.”

Such was the true usage of Righteous Bestowal. After being enlightened regarding it, Meng Hao had never truly used its full power on any Demon. At the most, he had used only some of its bestowing power.

Righteous Bestowal was a type of approval. Any Demon of Heaven and Earth that received the approval of a Demon Sealer would be able to temporarily absorb some of the essence of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Even if that Demon were dead, its soul would not disperse.

This Golden Crow had not done any favors for Meng Hao. However, its emotions and thoughts had stirred Meng Hao. They touched him in a way that made him believe that providing assistance with Righteous Bestowal... was the right thing to do.

After the power of Righteous Bestowal was manifested, Meng Hao took a deep breath. He looked at the great tree and the Golden Crow and then turned to leave. It was at this point that the Golden Crow suddenly emitted a sound. This was the first sound it had made since Meng Hao entered this place, a shrill cry.

This cry sounded something like the grating of metal against metal. Meng Hao looked back to see the Golden Crow shaking. As it shook, ghost images sprung up, and a golden light surged out. The light slammed into Meng Hao's torso, transforming into a gold-colored brand.

It was a totem tattoo that was somewhat similar to his previous totem tattoo of the Greenwood Tree, an image of a Golden Crow. This was a Metal-type totem, which, if Meng Hao was lucky and could accomplish an Ancestral Awakening, might eventually turn into the ancient character for metal!

After sending out the totem, the Golden Crow seemed to have been weakened by at least half. Its body shook on the verge of collapse for a moment before it collected itself and then looked at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao opened his mouth to say something, although he wasn't sure what. However, it was at this exact moment that, within this world of grayness, a boom echoed out from the mouth of the seventh volcano. Four figures suddenly became visible.

"Hahaha! We're here!"

Chapter 430: Battling the Nascent Soul Stage

The booming sound echoed out through the air as four figures shot out from the mouth of the seventh volcano. In the lead was a man wearing a long white robe. His hair whipped about him, and his eyes flickered as if with lightning. His expression was one of excitement. This was none other than Yan Song.

Behind Yan Song was Li Tian, whose eyes shone brightly with vigilance. He whistled through the air like a Black Dragon, his black robe flapping in the wind. He really did look like a dragon; the sight was incredibly imposing.

Behind him were Mo Li and Eccentric Wang.

When the four of them appeared, they were instantly filled with interest regarding this gray world. The next thing they saw was the great tree, plus Meng Hao and the corpse beneath it!

What caught their attention more than anything else, though, was the pill furnace!

“So, it is here!” said Yan Song, his eyes flickering with coldness. Next to him, Li Tian’s eyes were grim as he hovered in mid-air and stared at Meng Hao.

Mo and Wang also floated in mid-air, glancing around with flickering eyes. After seeing that Meng Hao was the only person present here, their eyes filled with a strange light.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, you’re so fast,” said Li Tian, laughing mirthlessly. “You’re not wearing your mask today, but we’re all old friends, right? There’s no need for any disguises. You beat us here, which is well and good, but according to our previous agreement, please produce whatever treasures you’ve acquired. It’s time to split our shares.” As he spoke, he moved forward toward Meng Hao. Yan Song, Mo and Wang also neared, surrounding Meng Hao.

Meng Hao frowned as he looked at the approaching Nascent Soul eccentrics. His face grew dark and he let out a cold harrumph, then suddenly kicked out with his right foot, sending the pill furnace flying into the air.

The instant his foot began to move, Li Tian’s right hand shot up and he pointed at Meng Hao.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, what are you doing?!” A black blur shot out from his finger. As it flew out into the air, it transformed into a rotating black flower with five petals. Each petal of the flower looked like a sinister face. They emitted mournful cries as they shot toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao waved his right hand. A bloody light erupted up as the air in front of him turned the color of blood and a massive hand appeared. It instantly shot toward the black flower, slamming into it. A massive explosion ensued.

As the sound of the explosion rippled out, Meng Hao retreated backward. Yan Song and the others continued to approach. It was at this time that Meng Hao finally spoke.

“Fellow Daoist Li, I would like to ask YOU a question. What exactly are YOU doing? Why don’t the lot of you go look at that pill furnace!”

He flicked his sleeve, his expression grim. Having heard his words, Yan Song and the others suddenly stopped moving. Li Tian's eyes narrowed and came to fall on the pill furnace. The others looked over as well, and instantly saw the hole in it.

The hole was obviously not recently made. Yan Song and the others were all wily old foxes, and it only took a glance for them to realize that the hole had been created long, long ago, not recently.

“This is....”

The four of them frowned and breathed with seeming difficulty.

Meng Hao's expression was one of extreme displeasure, even rage. “I haven't been here for long. After coming to this tree, I saw only this corpse and that damaged pill furnace!”

He had noticed earlier that the weakened Golden Crow had long since concealed itself atop the tree. Even if you looked closely, you wouldn't be able to see it.

“If I said I didn't find anything, you wouldn't believe me. Well, I did find something!” Laughing coldly, he lifted his right hand up to reveal a jade slip. As everyone watched, he took out another jade slip, a white one, and then branded the information from the first one onto it. After that, he threw the first jade slip out in front of him.

Yan Song caught it, then looked at it with furrowed brow. He then handed it to Li Tian and the others, who also examined it and began to frown.

They should be able to tell at a glance whether the jade slip was real or a fake. But even Yan Song, an expert in the Dao of alchemy, was unfamiliar with most of the ancient medicinal plants listed therein.

Meng Hao's face was dark, even filled with rage. His wording sharp, he said, “You want to cause a big fuss over a single jade slip? How disappointing! I'll take my leave now. From now on, my path is not connected to any of you!”

His awe-inspiring display and sharp words left Yan Song and the others incapable of offering any sort of response.

Meng Hao gave a cold snort. Then, his body flickered as he turned into a beam of colorful light and shot off into the distance.

Before he could get very far, Li Tian suddenly disappeared. When he reappeared, he was directly in front of Meng Hao.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, why are you in such a hurry to leave? Exactly what else did you acquire? Don’t expect that a few trite words will convince us that you didn’t take the medicinal pill that burst out of that pill furnace.”

Meng Hao stopped. Now, his expression was no longer grim, but calm. His eyes were ice cold as he looked at Li Tian.

“Well, Fellow Daoist Li, what brilliant opinion do you have?”

“I won’t dare to use the word brilliant, Fellow Daoist Meng,” he replied slowly, staring Meng Hao in the eye. “But since you got here before us, it will be difficult for you to avoid suspicions. Just hand over your bag of holding and let us search it, that should be enough.”

Meng Hao looked back at him, then started to chuckle. His chuckle turned into uproarious laughter, that eventually began ripples that shook everything in the area. Li Tian’s face flickered; Yan Song and the others suddenly looked very serious.

“You want to search my bag of holding? Li Tian, have you suddenly reached the Spirit Severing stage?!” Killing intent blazed within Meng Hao’s eyes. He began to lift his right hand, but even as he did, Li Tian flashed an incantation gesture with both hands and then shoved them forward.

As he shoved his hands forward, a black mist surged up, which then transformed into a long black spear. Rumbling filled the air as the spear shot toward Meng Hao. It moved with incredible speed, but even as it neared Meng Hao, the Wood totem tattoo on his forehead glittered. Suddenly, an enormous Wood character appeared in front of him.

Simultaneously, boundless Wood-type aura erupted out. Instantly, the approaching spear began to shake.

Rumbling filled the air as Meng Hao's body shot backward at high speed. His left hand slapped his bag of holding, and Wooden Time Swords flew out to form the Lotus Sword Formation. The formation rotated in mid-air, its appearance like that of an enormous lotus!

This formation embodied both the shape and the will of a lotus. In addition, it contained the natural properties of intelligence embodied by a lotus, something that Meng Hao had come to gain enlightenment regarding throughout his years of observing lotuses.

Propelled by the power of the Wooden Time Swords, the glowing, ten-meter wide lotus shot through the air toward Li Tian, rumbling the entire way.

"Time!" said Meng Hao softly, his expression cold.

Immediately, the shocking power of Time emanated out toward Li Tian. Li Tian's face fell as he suddenly sensed his body growing older. Everything within the region of the lotus experienced the passing of time. Everything seemed to be moving faster than the world around it; in the blink of an eye, an entire sixty-year cycle was gone.

Li Tian had never encountered any magical technique like this before. His face flickered, and he flashed an incantation gesture with his right hand. As he waved his hand, black light poured out from his body to resist the Wooden Time Swords. He performed a minor teleportation, reappearing several hundred meters away.

Even as he tried to flee, Meng Hao's eyes flashed with killing intent. He took a step forward and then utilized the Bloodburst Flash. Moving such a short distance made it seem almost like he had used minor teleportation, and he was suddenly directly in front of Li Tian. His right hand clenched into a fist and he punched out.

A boom echoed out. Li Tian's face fell and he spit out a mouthful of Nascent Soul aura. The brightly colorful aura transformed in mid-air into the image of a small person that looked exactly like Li Tian. The figure let out a sharp cry as it shot toward Meng Hao.

BOOM!

Meng Hao's body trembled as he retreated seven or eight paces, his face ashen. As for Li Tian, he retreated about four paces, his face flickering. His expression was one of ferocity, but fear glimmered within his eyes.

“Fellow Daoists Yan, Mo and Wang,” he said. “What are you standing there watching for!? If you’re really willing to let this guy leave, then I’ll hold back.”

Before Yan Song and the others could even react to Li Tian’s words, Meng Hao laughed coldly and once again shot forward.

“It’s too late to hold back now!” Five figures appeared around Meng Hao that looked identical to him. These were none other than Meng Hao’s Blood Clones, each of which could wield an untold amount of Meng Hao’s.

Simultaneously, a golden glow sprang into being around Meng Hao. The full power of the great circle of the Gold Core exploded out. Up above Meng Hao’s head appeared an ancient starry sky. Within this starfield magically appeared a shocking great Greenwood Tree.

Meng Hao’s Cultivation base was at the great circle of the Gold Core stage. However, even with only the Wood-type power he possessed, he could fight back against the early Nascent Soul stage. Now that he had acquired Metal-type power as well, there was very little difference at all between him and the early Nascent Soul stage, although there were some divine abilities he could not employ.

Moving forward rapidly, Meng Hao pointed out with his right index finger. The Blood Finger, Blood Palm and Blood Death World, along with his starfield Core Qi and Wood-type totem, all fuelled the Lotus Sword Formation. In the blink of an eye, its power was increased exponentially.

It droned as it rotated through the air. At the same time, Meng Hao cried out, “Time!”

“This magic again!?” Li Tian’s face flickered. Although his Cultivation base was higher than Meng Hao’s, and he had more divine abilities at his disposal, there was little he could do when facing up against the magic of Time. He didn’t even dare to near it. His longevity was already nearing its end as it was. To him, this art was like Death itself. Feeling his aura being ruined, he had no choice but to retreat.

Seeing the rotating Lotus Sword Formation about to fall, Yan Song and the others finally took action. They shot forward to appear near Li Tian. The mighty pressure of the Cultivation bases of four Nascent Soul Cultivators emanated out like a flash flood.

“Fellow Daoist Li, Fellow Daoist Meng, please let me say a word!” said Yan Song, looking directly at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s expression was as calm as ever, but inwardly he heaved a sigh of relief. Even if he put on the blood-colored mask, he was no match for four Nascent Soul Cultivators all at the same time. However, based on the current situation, he had no choice but to fill the others with misgivings by putting on the air of someone who others did not dare to provoke.

“There’s no harm in speaking your mind, Fellow Daoist Yan,” he said, his voice cold.