

The Heavens 461

Chapter 461: Encountering Zhao Youlan Again!

Of all the worlds formed by Immortality Bridgestones in this area, this was the largest one listed on Meng Hao's jade slip map. Meng Hao stood on his three hundred meter wide rock and glanced around the area.

The sky above seemed extremely stable; there were only a few cracks visible. Mountain ranges rose and fell, and ancient ruins could be seen all over.

As the rock shot through the air, Meng Hao looked down at the ground. Suddenly, his gaze flickered as he noticed that the mountains down below did not seem to have been formed naturally. They were connected together in what appeared to be a pattern.

This wasn't the first time Meng Hao had noticed something like this. The previous worlds he had explored also contained similar sights. However, those worlds had been far too small, so the phenomenon was much less obvious.

This world, however, was much larger. As he continued to look down at the mountains from up in mid-air, the more he got the feeling there was something very strange about them.

"They look like magical symbols." That was what made the most sense. He thought back to when he had first come to the Realm of the Bridge Ruins and seen the countless rocks which formed the shape of an archaic bridge that stretched through the stars. He had also seen magical symbols at that time.

Obviously, the mountains that made up this mountain range were nothing other than magical symbols. Because of the vast size of this world, Meng Hao was able to see them clearly.

"The Bridge of Immortal Treading was covered with magical symbols, each of which was most likely a Celestial talisman." Within Meng Hao's body, the Qi of Immortal Shows the Way rotated, and he rapidly blinked his left eye several times as he employed the Celestial Vision technique imparted to him by the parrot.

As soon as he employed the technique, his body trembled. Using his left eye to look down at the land below, what he saw was not a collection of mountains, but rather multiple black dragons, lifting their heads up to the sky to roar.

Many of the dragons were broken, but some were mostly intact. Their roaring was shocking to the extreme.

Meng Hao's entire body trembled, and he began to pant. He felt as if an invisible mountain were crushing down onto his body. Suddenly, the Celestial Vision technique was ended.

However, just before it did, Meng Hao managed to catch a glimpse of something off in the distance that was obviously not a black dragon, but shockingly, a black-colored butterfly. The butterfly was indistinct and invisible to any onlooker. Every time it flapped its wings, nearby black dragons would be sucked toward it and be consumed.

Inside the body of the black butterfly was a large area that was made up of... Celestial soil!

As the image disappeared, beads of sweat broke out on Meng Hao's forehead. He had never imagined that using the Celestial Vision technique would allow him to see such a shocking scene.

As his vision returned to normal, he looked around the land to find that it was just the same as before. The mountains were mountains, and not roaring black dragons. The area off in the distance where he had seen the black butterfly consisted of nothing more than ordinary mountains.

The only unusual thing about that particular area was that it was a point of convergence for several mountain ranges.

"Bridge Slaves, black dragons, butterflies.... this Realm of the Bridge Ruins is so full of mysteries." Meng Hao stood thoughtfully atop the large rock as it whistled through the air. As it began to veer off in a different direction, he looked back toward the area where he'd seen the butterfly.

"What I saw just now was most likely Celestial soil. I couldn't possibly be mistaken about that.... If I could get a chunk of Celestial soil that big, then I maybe I can form my Earth-type totem!" The area he had seen with the Celestial Vision left his heart shaken and excited.

“Rewards come only when you take risks. If you want to rise above others, you have to pay the price!” His eyes filling with determination, he transformed into a prismatic beam that shot off at top speed toward the area where he had seen the butterfly.

According to Meng Hao’s analysis, of the more than twenty people who had come to this place from the Western Desert, it was unlikely someone else had Immortal Shows the Way and a Celestial Vision technique. Therefore, it was most likely that he was the only one able to see the butterfly.

As such, the chances were relatively small that he would have to fight over the Celestial soil.

Since that was the case, Meng Hao would of course not be willing to give up this opportunity. Without the slightest hesitation, he continued on forward. Time passed by, and soon seven days had passed.

During that time, Meng Hao never stopped moving. On two occasions, he employed the Celestial Vision technique to once again observe the black butterfly consuming the black dragons. He could sense the boundlessness of the butterfly’s aura. It was on the eighth day that he finally arrived.

It was a place where ten different mountain ranges all converged together. There in the middle was an enormous basin, which was filled with roiling white mist. It prevented Spiritual Sense from extending out very far, and seemed to be imbued with a spirit that could conquer mountains and rivers.

Meng Hao flew around it once, and then began to frown. He observed the flowing mist with flickering eyes. Finally, he produced a flying sword which he flung out, causing it to whistle through the air toward the mist.

The instant it entered the mist, Meng Hao sat cross-legged on the border of the basin. He closed his eyes and sent out a fine thread of Spiritual Sense to connect to the flying sword as it shot down through the mist.

The mist was dense, and the flying sword continued on through it for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Finally, it emerged into the basin below. Meng Hao could see a dazzling glow. Stretched out below him was a shocking scene; buildings constructed entirely of Celestial soil. Suddenly a figure loomed up within his Spiritual Sense. A booming sound could be heard as the flying sword exploded. A force of extermination then began to shoot back through the Spiritual Sense toward Meng Hao.

His face flickered, but he was prepared. Almost the same instant in which the flying sword was destroyed, he severed his connection, preventing the exterminating force from reaching him.

Having cut off the Spiritual Sense himself, Meng Hao's face went pale.

“Buildings constructed completely from Celestial soil.... Just what place is this exactly!?” Meng Hao was breathing heavily, and his eyes glittered. Although he had only been able to glimpse the area beyond the mist for a brief moment, it was enough to completely shock Meng Hao.

“After the Bridge of Immortal Treading was destroyed, it transformed into the Realm of the Bridge Ruins. After all these years, who knows how many times Western Desert Cultivators have come here....

“I can't believe that after all these years, no one found this place. And yet, here it is. For there to be much Celestial soil shows how dangerous this place must be! Anyone who tried to enter in the past must have died!”

When Meng Hao's train of thought reached this point, his heart suddenly quivered. He waved his hand, and he suddenly vanished.

Not very long after he vanished, a beam of light appeared off in the distance. It was a woman wearing a long black garment. Her features were beautiful and her skin was like jade. It was none other than... Zhao Youlan!

She made her way along with caution. After arriving in this place, she did the same thing Meng Hao had done; she flew around in a circle, then found a place to sit near the edge. She was just about to employ a technique to scout out the mist when suddenly her phoenix-like eyes flickered. She waved a beautiful hand, causing a white spider to shoot out in a beam of whiteness and head toward the mist.

Just when it seemed on the verge of running into the mist, it suddenly jerked into a different direction and shot... directly toward the spot where Meng Hao had vanished from.

“Don't dare to show your face?” she said coldly. “Get out here!” The white beam of light shot toward the seeming emptiness. Just as it was about to reach it, ripples appeared, from within which stretched out a finger.

The finger tapped onto the beam of whiteness, and a miserable shriek could be heard. The light faded away. Meng Hao emerged, his eyes filled with hard coldness.

“It’s you!” said Zhao Youlan; her pupils constricted and her eyes filling with cold killing intent. Her arm had long since been restored, but her expression still radiated stabbing hatred.

Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed. For Zhao Youlan to show up here caused many questions to fill his mind. The fact that she was being so cautious indicated that she knew about the bizarreness of this location.

Even more importantly, when he’d met her before, her Cultivation base had been merely at the great circle of Core Formation. Now, however... it was in the mid Nascent Soul stage. From the ripples of her Cultivation base, he could tell that she was at the peak of that stage, on the verge of stepping into the late Nascent Soul stage.

In less than a year of time, she had experienced incredible progress. Meng Hao was well aware that such a feat was something rarely seen in the world!

“Well, that leaves only one possibility,” thought Meng Hao, his eyes flickering.

As for Zhao Youlan, killing intent flickered within her eyes. She actually admired Meng Hao, but that only served to fuel her desire to kill. The instant she saw him, she leaped up into the air. A three hundred meter wide white glow surrounded her, and an enormous white spider magically appeared. She immediately shot toward Meng Hao.

Obviously, the influence of the sealing of the Spider Branch’s totemic Sacred Ancient was now gone.

As Zhao Youlan shot toward him, Meng Hao donned the blood-colored mask. An enormous face appeared, sending out ripples in all directions.

A roaring sound filled the air, but then Meng Hao vanished. When he reappeared, he was directly next to Zhao Youlan. His fist descended, but even as it did, Zhao Youlan grew blurry and disappeared. She reappeared behind him, and raised her hand. Her thumb and forefinger were touching, and the other three fingers were raised. Killing intent radiated out from her eyes as she tapped down toward Meng Hao’s back.

He gave a cold snort. Looking down, his body flickered as blood colored ripples spread out in all directions beneath him. A bloody glow rose up into the sky as five figures became visible, none other than Meng Hao's Blood Clones.

Rumbling sounds filled the air, and Zhao Youlan's face flickered. She once again disappeared.

The two of them teleported back and forth in mid-air as they fought. Booming sounds echoed out in all directions as a dance of divine abilities played out.

Moments later, Zhao Youlan disappeared in the midst of an explosion to reappear three hundred meters away. She lifted her delicate hand, on which could be seen, shockingly, a drop of blood.

She tossed out the blood drop, and a sound like the shrill cry of a bird filled the air. The blood drop expanded, transforming into a red phoenix. It spread its wings, and flames leaped up everywhere. Surrounded by fire, the phoenix let out a powerful cry and then shot toward Meng Hao.

As it passed through the air, an astonishing, scorching heat roiled out in all directions. Meng Hao's face was grim as he fell back. Eyeless Larva thread spun around him even as the Flame Phoenix engulfed him.

As soon as the flames engulfed him, killing intent appeared in his eyes. His cold voice echoed out in all directions.

"Fire? I have that too!"

Chapter 462: Demoness Zhixiang!

As soon as the words left Meng Hao's mouth, the Flame Phoenix enveloped him. Suddenly, his Fire-type totem tattoo caused shocking flames to erupt off of Meng Hao.

Using fire to defeat fire!

The fire exploded out, instantly encircling the Flame Phoenix. Meng Hao stood there in the midst of the sea of flames, looking like some sort of devilish divinity. He waved his hand, causing the enormous image of a tree to magically appear around him. It melded into the flame sea, causing the intensity of the flames to increase rapidly. Meng Hao flicked his sleeve, sending the flames shooting toward Zhao Youlan.

It moved with incredible speed, and in the blink of an eye, was closing in on Zhao Youlan. Her delicate brow furrowed, and she waved her hand to cause a small white shield to appear.

The shield immediately began to expand, spreading out in an instant to completely cover her. The flame sea slammed into it, but was completely blocked.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered coldly. With a cold harrumph, he caused his Metal-type totem to appear, melding it into the flame sea. Golden droplets appeared which shot toward Zhao Youlan. She once again used the white shield to defend herself. However, the golden droplets began to spread out and merge with each other outside of the white shield.

In the blink of an eye, while the white shield expanded out to completely cover her body, she was, in turn, completely surrounded by the golden droplets, which formed something like a sphere. All of this happened before Zhao Youlan could do anything.

“You....” she said, her face flickering.

Moving at incredible speed, Meng Hao shot out from within the sea of flames, appearing directly beneath the white sphere. He lifted his hand up, causing the golden sphere to begin to vibrate. He roared as he used all the strength he could muster to heave the golden sphere in the direction of the mist.

“Since you like to hide in the protection of that shield, well, I'll add another layer of protection for you!” he said as the golden sphere whistled throughout the air toward the mist, with Zhao Youlan inside.

All of this takes quite a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in an instant. In the battle between the two, neither had been able to acquire the upper hand. However, Meng Hao's quick thinking prevailed; as soon as the golden sphere touched the mist, the mist began to churn violently. Suddenly, a sharp cry could be heard coming from inside the golden sphere.

The sound of it was shocking, causing much of the mist to roil away. In fact, now the buildings down below were somewhat visible.

Cracks spread out over the surface of the golden sphere, and within the space of a single breath, it shattered. The sound of the cry entered Meng Hao's ears and caused his mind to tremble. It was like

a sharp blade was stabbing into his brain, causing blood to seep out of his eyes, nose and mouth. His mind became a blank.

It only lasted a moment before fading away. As soon as the sound was gone, Meng Hao's body returned to normal. Zhao Youlan emanated fierce killing intent as she appeared in front of him. Her delicate hand rose up and pushed down onto the Eyeless Larva silk which was surrounding him.

A bang sounded out and Meng Hao tumbled backward, blood spraying from his mouth. Before he could fall backward very far, Zhao Youlan teleported toward him. A white glow rose up from her hand as she pointed her finger out. For some reason, the Eyeless Larva suddenly stopped moving momentarily.

As the finger attack descended on Meng Hao, a bloody hole appeared on Meng Hao's chest, and strands of black Qi began to spread out through his flesh.

Meng Hao's mind was spinning. He was sure that her finger hadn't actually touched him. However, it had injured him, and in a bizarre way at that. The black threads burrowed into his flesh, rapidly sucking away at his life force.

Meng Hao's face fell. From the time he had left the Southern Domain, be it during his time in the Black Lands or in the Western Desert, he had never been injured like this. Blood sprayed from his mouth as the Eyeless Larva rapidly continued to spin silk. Were it not for the Eyeless Larva, Meng Hao would surely be dead by this point.

Even still, her divine ability just now was something he couldn't fight back against. He needed a buffer, time with which to retrieve a magical item from within his bag of holding, or perhaps perform an incantation.

However, time was not something that Zhao Youlan would give him. Blood sprayed from Meng Hao's mouth as she continued to press closer to him, once again raising a finger.

This time, it did not touch him, but he coughed up blood nonetheless. The bones in his left arm shattered, and the black strands continued to spread out through his body. Vast amounts of life force were vanishing, and his hair had turned white. Death Qi filled him.

Zhao Youlan got even closer, her killing intent extremely intense. For a third time, she raised her delicate hand. A sense of deadly crisis washed over Meng Hao like floodwaters. His eyes suddenly glowed with a bright light.

With all the strength he could muster, he roared: “Are you Zhao Youlan, or Demoness Zhixiang!?”

At this moment, Zhao Youlan’s hand suddenly stopped moving.

Taking advantage of this sudden pause, Meng Hao ignored the wounds to his body. He knew that this was a critical moment, and that his best option now was to teleport away. He needed to heal his injuries, otherwise his life would be in danger. However... he did not choose to do that.

When it came to lifesaving measures, he had the Agarwood as well as the Alcohol Core and the Dancing Sword Qi. However, Meng Hao had experienced many things throughout his years of practicing cultivation. As far as this particular deadly crisis was concerned, it had not reached the point where he needed to use those lifesaving methods.

Instead, he chose to use this precious instant of time to slap his bag of holding. The Lotus Sword Formation appeared, rotating rapidly and exploding with the power of Time.

Even Zhao Youlan could never have predicted that during the short moment in which she paused, Meng Hao would actually choose not to flee. Instead, laughing in the face of death, he actually chose to attack.

This caused her to hesitate in surprise. She and Meng Hao were relatively evenly matched. The only reason she had been able to dominate him so easily just now was because she had managed to get the upper hand by taking him by surprise.

Killing intent flickered in her phoenix-like eyes. She was just about to make an attack, when suddenly her face fell. As of this moment, she could feel her longevity slipping away. Her face flickered as she abandoned any thoughts of attack and suddenly shot backward.

Despite that, her moment of hesitation just now had caused three hundred years of longevity to disappear. As she fell back, face flickering, a look of savagery appeared on Meng Hao’s face. He quickly produced a medicinal pill which he popped into his mouth, and then shot forward.

“Now, it’s my turn!” he said. Followed by the Lotus Sword Formation, he appeared in front of Zhao Youlan. He pulled his fist back and then punched her in the pit of the stomach.

A boom rang out. Zhao Youlan was able to avoid being hit in a vital spot. However, blood sprayed from her mouth as she was flung backward. Meng Hao continued to move forward, once again attacking her with the Lotus Sword Formation. Another three hundred years of longevity vanished. Zhao Youlan's face was deathly pale as she continued to retreat.

"Allow me to help you retreat," he said. His fist slammed into her belly, causing blood to shower out of her mouth. She tumbled backward, now in much the same position Meng Hao had been in moments ago. She had lost her position of superiority and couldn't even fight back. Now she was being dominated.

Meng Hao's body flickered, and he appeared in front of her once again. Intense killing intent roiled out as Eyeless Larva silk shot out toward Zhao Youlan. It was at this point that she let out a disconsolate wail. At the same time, an indistinct figure appeared on her shoulder. It was very small, about the size of a hand. It looked like a small person, a woman. However, it was not Zhao Youlan.

She wore an anxious expression, and as soon as she appeared, she let out a scream. The scream caused Meng Hao's mind to reel once more. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as he backed up. He employed the full power of his Cultivation base to send the Eyeless Larva silk out to strangle Zhao Youlan.

Seeing the Eyeless Larva silk nearing, the eyes of the tiny person on Zhao Youlan's shoulder filled with a fierce look.

"You insect, do you really dare to mess with an Immortal!?" A mysterious glow appeared in the little person's eyes. Suddenly, a bizarre red flower appeared in front of Zhao Youlan. Faces could be seen on the petals of the flower... Meng Hao's face!

The flower... suddenly shattered. As it did, Meng Hao's mind reeled. It felt as if his soul were about to shatter.

"Immortal? So what?!" he responded. It was at this moment that Meng Hao suddenly caused the Alcohol Core within him to begin to rotate. Using the method that was fused into his mind, he spit out a mouthful of Alcohol Qi. Instantly, it began to transform into the shocking will of a sword. Rumbling sounds immediately emanated off of Meng Hao.

The sword will roiled up, instantly filling the entire continent he was on. All of the Cultivators here felt their hearts shaking and trembling.

The face of the tiny person on Zhao Youlan's shoulder instantly filled with fear and disbelief.

“That's Sword Immortal Han Shan's Dancing Sword Qi!”

The Alcohol Qi swept about outside of Meng Hao. Within him, Sword Qi began to condense. At the exact moment in which the Sword Qi was about to explode out... the sky suddenly turned gray, and a mist began to rise up.

“Dammit! The Bridge Slaves again!” Meng Hao's entire body was suddenly stuck in place. However, this time, he wasn't completely incapable of motion. The Alcohol Qi spread out, and the Sword Qi continued to condense inside of him. He could still move, but it felt as if he were trudging through mud.

Zhao Youlan's face instantly fell. The little person on her shoulder vanished. Suddenly, Zhao Youlan, like Meng Hao, was capable of slow, simple movements.

Alarm filled her eyes.

At the same time that this was happening, a group of figures appeared within the mist in the basin. Faint voices could be heard as the Bridge Slaves walked past Meng Hao and Zhao Youlan to head off into the distance.

“Don't tell me this place is where the Bridge Slaves reside?” thought Meng Hao as he watched the Bridge Slaves walking out from within the basin. His mind and heart reeled. It was at this point that he noticed the last Bridge Slave in line. It was a young girl, about fifteen or sixteen years old. As she walked, she suddenly turned and looked at Meng Hao and Zhao Youlan. Her expression shifted from one of frustration and confusion, to viciousness. Her body flashed as she shot toward them.

An intense coldness instantly pressed down onto Meng Hao, filling him with shock.

Zhao Youlan suddenly began to speak, her voice filled with unprecedented fear. “Meng Hao, we need to join forces. Otherwise we will both die this day!”

Chapter 463: Little Darling

Meng Hao's pupils constricted. He was in front of Zhao Youlan, and the person the Bridge Slave girl was charging toward was none other than him.

As the words came out of Zhao Youlan's mouth, the tiny person magically appeared once again on her shoulder. The little figure's expression was one of anxiety as it performed an incantation with both hands and then pointed forward.

Instantly, a red flower materialized in front of Meng Hao. Shockingly, on each petal of the flower could be seen the face of the girl. As soon as it appeared, the flower began to disintegrate.

At this point, Zhao Youlan coughed up a mouthful of blood. The body of the tiny person on her shoulder flickered and grew even more blurry; it seemed to be extremely exhausted.

At the same time, the charging girl's body suddenly stopped in place. An expression of pain filled her face and she let out a soundless scream. Then, her face grew even more vicious, and a fearsome aura exploded out of her. Everything in the area suddenly flickered, and the surrounding mist seethed.

“Quickly... use your Dancing Sword Qi to cut her down!! Don't let her get near us....”

At this critical moment, Meng Hao's eyes filled with resolve. He caused the Alcohol Qi to surge out, and then caused the congealed Sword Qi to emanate out as well. The two of them merged together into a shocking sword-shaped amalgamation of Alcohol Qi. It shot through the air toward the girl's head, then passed directly through it.

Her body trembled, and the mist around her churned. Suddenly, she stopped. The vicious expression on her face disappeared to be replaced by a look of catharsis.

“Daddy, mother....” she said softly. “Are you still here...? Where are you...? Why did you leave me alone here...? It's been so long... so long....” The girl no longer seemed evil, but rather, lonely and helpless. Murmuring the entire time, her body slowly disappeared.

In the spot where the girl had disappeared, a slender strand slowly took shape.

Meng Hao was touched by the girl's words, and suddenly thought back to Han Shan's story regarding the Bridge Slaves. Sighing, he reached out and grabbed the slender strand.

The other Bridge Slaves off in the distance didn't seem to have noticed anything, and continued to move off into the distance.

After they were gone, the grayness disappeared, as did the mist. Strangely, there was no tempest this time.

After the colors returned to normal, Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He clenched his fist and once again punched out. Simultaneously, Zhao Youlan's lips opened and a beam of white light shot out of her mouth toward Meng Hao.

The two magics slammed into each other and a huge boom rattled out. Both parties fell back. The tiny figure on Zhao Youlan's shoulder performed an incantation with both hands, preparing to once again materialize the power of her bizarre flower.

It was at this moment, however, that the Alcohol Qi once again began to roil within Meng Hao.

Immediately, the tiny figure stopped moving and stared at Meng Hao. As of now, Meng Hao could see that this figure was shaped like a woman. She was extremely beautiful; not even Zhao Youlan could compare.

She sat on Zhao Youlan's shoulder, looking very much like a Nascent Soul. However, she was far more limber than a Nascent soul, plus, her body emanated a pleasant aura very much like Celestial soil.

There was a thin, transparent line connecting her hand to Zhao Youlan's body. It appeared that Zhao Youlan currently had no mind of her own, but rather, was being controlled as a puppet.

As of this moment, Meng Hao felt rather confused. He wasn't sure exactly what was going on between Demoness Zhixiang and Zhao Youlan.

Zhixiang suddenly smiled and then spoke in a charming, melodious voice: "Little bro, your Dancing Sword Qi could definitely hurt me. In fact, there's a seventy percent chance that it could slay my Immortal Divinity. However... in the end, your Cultivation base just isn't strong enough to evade my final counterattack before dying.

“In that case, what’s the point of us fighting? This place is one of the locations where the Bridge Slaves live. Instead of one of us dying, why don’t we explore the place together? What do you say?”

He looked over at the tiny Demoness Zhixiang. For her to call him ‘little bro,’ didn’t seem very appropriate. However, he had to admit that what she said made sense.

“Just now, her actions against the Bridge Slave weren’t fake,” he thought. “I was closer, but she still took action to protect herself. She thought I simply had one strand of Sword Qi, but when she found out that wasn’t the case, she changed her mind.” He glanced over at the mist in the basin. When it came to the bizarreness of the mist, regardless of whether it was in terms of experience or technique, he simply wasn’t powerful enough to handle it on his own. Joining forces with her wasn’t necessarily out of the question.

As he was considering the matter, Zhao Youlan looked at him and frowned. Inwardly, she said: “Big sis Zhixiang, this guy is endlessly crafty. Plus, he’s cruel and merciless, completely cold-blooded. Also his decisiveness is incredible. If you work with him, you have to be very cautious.”

Zhixiang’s reply echoed out inside of Zhao Youlan’s mind. “Well, now I know that you really do love your big sis, my precious darling.”

Zhao Youlan blushed.

Sensing that her face was growing red, Zhixiang laughed, causing Zhao Youlan’s blush to deepen.

“Little bro, what do you think? There are plenty of treasures here. Big sis isn’t greedy. I just want half. You can have the rest. What do you say?” With that, the tiny figure on Zhao Youlan’s shoulder laughed lightly. She lifted a hand and pointed toward the mist. A strand of Qi shot toward the mist, causing it to seethe and then slowly grow thin. Zhao Youlan’s body shot down into the mist.

“If you agree, then come on over. Big sis is waiting for you!” Demoness Zhixiang’s voice carried with it a touch of allure, causing Meng Hao to frown again. Then, his eyes glittered. Filled with caution, and keeping the Sword Qi prepared, he followed down into the mist.

They flew down in single file, piercing through the mist. Eventually they were able to make out the basin, and the luxurious buildings. Each of these buildings was completely constructed from Celestial soil, filling the basin with a thick aura of Celestial soil.

“Immortals used to live in this place,” said Zhixiang from her position on Zhao Youlan’s shoulder. “It’s one of the palaces used by the ninety-nine preeminent Immortals as a guard garrison for the Bridge of Immortality. After the bridge was destroyed, the ninety-nine Immortals died and merged into the Bridge of Immortality. They wished to restore the bridge and its position in the world. When they came back to life, they had no physical bodies. However, their palaces remained, filled with treasure.” As they neared the palaces, a glimmering shield suddenly appeared, blocking their way. A powerful aura radiated out, emitting thick pressure along with magical shadows.

Zhao Youlan spit out a mouthful of blood, and Demoness Zhixiang lifted her right hand and waved it toward the blood.

“Congeal!”

Immediately the blood turned into a red mist which then formed into a gigantic red flower. The flower floated forward and touched the shield. As soon as it did, it sank into the shield, merging into it.

The entire shield began to distort. In the blink of an eye, veins seemed to spread out through the shield. It began to flicker rapidly and then, dissipated. The power that blasted out upon its dissipation caused Meng Hao to narrow his eyes. He would not have been able to break this shield unless he used the Dancing Sword Qi.

“I’ve suppressed the defences,” said Zhixiang, “but it will only last for four hours. All of the palace structures here should have garrison treasures. Little bro, as you can see, there is a main hall in the center, with palace buildings stretched out on either side. You take one side, and we’ll meet in the middle.

“As for how many treasures you can acquire, that will depend on your own skill.” Zhixiang laughed, and Zhao Youlan gave Meng Hao a cold glance. Then, they headed directly for the palace buildings on the right side.

Meng Hao looked at the suppressed shield and the giant red flower floating there in mid-air. It was this flower which was suppressing the power of the shield, allowing them to enter.

“Four hours? I can’t trust her on that point. At most, it will probably last for two hours.” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. After a moment of observation, decisiveness filled his eyes and, without hesitation, he shot forward toward the group of palace buildings on the left.

“With my Cultivation base, I would normally never be able to get into a place like this. Whatever treasures are in the buildings, they are not things I could take. If I get too greedy, then I might end up paying a horrific price.

“Therefore, I will stick to my original plan. I don’t need treasures, I just need Celestial soil!” Eyes shining brightly, his body flickered and he appeared in front of one of the palace buildings. After looking it over carefully, he saw that the main door was shut tight with the power of some type of sealing.

Meng Hao did not spend time thinking about how to open the door. A flying sword appeared in his hand and he knelt down. Rotating his Cultivation base, he used the flying sword to try to pry up one of the floor tiles. Unfortunately, a cracking sound could be heard as the flying sword snapped in two.

Frowning, Meng Hao’s body flickered as he flew up to the roof and began to try to pull up one of the roof tiles. Unfortunately, the roof tile was extremely tough, and no matter what he did, he couldn’t pull it up.

“This stuff is really sturdy,” he thought, his eyes flickering with sharpness. He rotated his Cultivation base with full power, causing the Time Sword Formation to appear and unleash its power on the tile. A moment later, he pulled up on the tile. Crack! The tile was pulled up successfully by Meng Hao.

His heart pounded with excitement. The tile was only the size of a hand, but the entire thing was made from Celestial soil. He put it away and immediately began to use the same method to continue dismantling the building.

Very quickly, all of the tiles on the palace building’s roof had been collected up by Meng Hao. Next, he went to work on the floor tiles. It didn’t take long before they were all placed into his bag of holding.

“Rich! I’ve really struck it rich!” Panting, eyes gleaming, Meng Hao’s eyes next moved to the palace building’s guardian lions. Having successfully collected them up, he next looked over at the building’s eaves.

Chapter 464: Pinkie Finger!

Soon, the eaves were gone. Next, Meng Hao's gaze came to fall upon the steps leading up to the palace building. After that were the columns. Next, the wall coverings.

It didn't take long for a previously extravagant palace building to be completely blank and clean. The main structure was there, but now, it looked completely different, to a very shocking degree.

Every single thing that could be taken off of the outside surface, was gone....

Were it not for the restrictive spells and seals protecting the inside of the palace building, Meng Hao would tear down the entire structure. Trying to contain his excitement, he looked over at the next palace building. Filled with excitement, he leaped toward that building and began to dismantle it.

As for the Immortals who built these palace buildings, before their consciousnesses merged into the bridge, they placed the restrictive spells and seals in place because they were well aware that people might be interested in the items within. However, they had never imagined that someone like Meng Hao would happen to make his way into this place. He wasn't interested in the treasures inside, but rather, wanted to plunder the construction materials....

Time passed by. With bustling industriousness, Meng Hao proceeded along from one palace building to the next, completely dismantling their exteriors, leaving them stark and bare.... The only thing left behind were the bare palace structures; anything that could be pried up was taken by Meng Hao.

Even the grass on the ground seemed to have absorbed some of the Celestial Soil Qi. Seeing how extraordinary it was, he collected it up without hesitation.

"If I don't keep grabbing stuff until my hands cramp, then my name isn't Meng Hao!" he said, his eyes gleaming as he wrenched up a floor tile. If any of Meng Hao's acquaintances saw him now, they might think they were looking at a stranger. The look in his eyes was completely different than the coldness that usually resided there.

This was a part of his personality that he kept buried deep within, the part of him that lusted after anything valuable.

Despite having reached his current level of Cultivation base, one cannot forget about the matter in which he owed Steward Zhou three pieces of silver

Of course, after beginning to practice cultivation, the fervor he had shown toward that silver had shifted to cultivation resources.

For example, Celestial soil. At the moment, there was nothing he was more passionate about than Celestial soil.

After all... aspirations are a good thing. With aspirations, Meng Hao could be happy despite being tired or in pain. Right now, he was like a locust in human form. Every extravagant palace building that he encountered would be seemingly engulfed in a storm. After the storm passed by, the building would be completely bare.

Gradually ten buildings, twenty buildings, thirty buildings... after two hours had passed, more than seventy palace buildings had been completely dismantled by Meng Hao.

His expression was one of excitement, and he was breathing heavily. At the moment, there weren't even thirty buildings left. Meng Hao was just getting ready to go at the rest of the buildings with a final spurt of energy, when Zhao Youlan suddenly staggered out from a large palace building on the opposite side of the basin.

After she emerged, the entire palace building collapsed with a rumbling sound. Zhao Youlan looked excited. The tiny Zhixiang perched on her shoulder appeared even more excited. Shockingly, she held a small green flask in her hand.

"It took two hours to get this one item," said Zhixiang excitedly. "However, this small flask is a treasure that once belonged to one of the nine most preeminent of the Immortals. Two hours is a long time, but it was worth it. Precious darling, we must quickly go to the next... uh...? Huh? What?" When her gaze fell upon Meng Hao, her eyes went wide and she gaped. She even rubbed vigorously at her eyes, not daring to believe what she was seeing.

When Zhao Youlan saw the strange scene, her eyes also went wide as they filled with astonishment and shock.

Both of them... could do nothing other than be completely shocked. The tableau that faced them now was completely different from that which they had seen before entering the palace building earlier.

The previously lush and verdant grass in the area was completely gone. Only bare, uneven ground remained....

The Celestial tiles were nowhere to be seen. The floors were completely barren....

The auspicious beasts protecting the palace buildings, so imposing and extraordinary, had vanished....

The columns, carved with dragons and phoenixes, were now missing....

The matchlessly extravagant wall decorations, which had once covered the outside of the palace buildings, were as bare as if they had been swept over by a fierce tempest....

There were thirty or so palace buildings which retained their original appearance. However, the other seventy or more had become nothing more than empty frames.....

Completely clean; spick-and-span.

Demoness Zhixiang stared in shock, and began to murmur to herself subconsciously, “Is the Heavenly Hound from Planet East Victory here? Or the Locust Immortal of Planet North Reed?”

Everything was too bare, as if it had been licked clean by a dog, or swept over by an army of locusts.

Even as Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang were struck motionless from shock, they saw Meng Hao standing in front of an intact palace building, viciously prying up a floor tile with a flying sword. The sword was broken and twisted, and seemed to emit shrieks of humiliation.

A bang could be heard as the floor tile popped up. Meng Hao waved his sleeve to collect it up. Licking his lips, he used the same techniques he had picked up while dismantling the other seventy buildings to continue his work. The floor tiles were sturdy, but once you got one up, collecting the rest was simple.

Meng Hao had long since caught sight of Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang. However, he didn't spend any effort paying attention to them. He was immersed in his work of prying up the floor tiles. The two women watched on, stupefied.

Zhao Youlan was breathing heavily, her phoenix-like eyes filled with disbelief. It was as if this was her first time ever seeing Meng Hao. How could she ever have imagined that the cold, astute, vicious, and merciless Meng Hao, would do something like this?

“This guy really might have some Heavenly Hound blood in him. Or maybe he really has practiced some of the cultivation of the Locust Immortal. Dammit, he doesn’t even leave the floor tiles behind.” Zhixiang was panting. She could see the concentration in Meng Hao’s eyes, which caused her to feel a bit suspicious. “Isn’t he afraid of the curse?”

Zhao Youlan stared at the strange scene and suddenly started to think that this new Meng Hao was actually more terrifying than the usual Meng Hao. The fervor with which he was dismantling the palace buildings was beyond her comprehension. Because of that, she found the situation even more horrifying.

This was even more the case when Meng Hao finished with the floor tiles and then took away the guardian lions. After that, he cut down the pillars and then started to pull off the wall decorations. Zhao Youlan took a deep breath.

She almost couldn’t believe it. In fact, she was certain that if Meng Hao somehow found his way to the Five Poisons Tribe, something completely terrifying would occur. It would probably only take a few hours for the entire Tribe to be uprooted and wiped clean.

Zhixiang was filled with misgivings and hesitated for a moment. Finally, she called out, “Um, hey... Fellow Daoist....”

“Stop bothering me!” said Meng Hao, not even turning his head. He ripped a wall decoration off, then pulled out a flying sword to continue his work.

“You know,” replied Zhixiang immediately, “the big main hall in the center is made from even better material. That Celestial soil is even more refined.”

Her words caused Meng Hao to suddenly pause in the middle of pulling off a wall decoration. He turned to look over at Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang.

Zhixiang immediately continued, “Compared to the main hall, all the other materials in this place are like trash. The Celestial soil over there... um, the floor tiles over there are worth a hundred times more than the ones over here!

“Fellow Daoist, you’re clearly innately skilled and beyond ordinary. You have unique hobbies and are obviously a great man, an amazing hero! I think we really need to cooperate one more time, what do you think?”

“You dismantle the main hall, and I’ll open the restrictive spells. That way, your dismantling work will go even faster. Then, we can split the treasures inside fifty-fifty. What do you say?”

When Zhao Youlan heard Zhixiang’s words, her face grew taciturn. There was no way she could associate the terms ‘great man’ and ‘amazing hero,’ with Meng Hao. The only thing she could see was a monster of dismantling.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered, and he said nothing for the space of a few breaths, and then said, “Just wait a moment.”

“No problem,” replied Zhixiang excitedly. “Fellow Daoist, I understand that you need to meditate for a moment to rest yourself. No problem at all. As for me I can....” Suddenly, her eyes went wide with disbelief. As soon as Meng Hao finished speaking, he went back to ripping the wall decorations off. Only, this time, he went at it even faster than before.

Zhixiang was breathing heavily as she watched Meng Hao sweep over the palace building, and then moved onto the next one. In the following hour, the rest of the thirty or so remaining palace buildings were completely swept clean. Finally, he looked over at the nearly hundred palaces in the area Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang had come from, and a look of regret appeared on his face.

He looked back toward the majestic palace building in the center. “Is that the main hall you mentioned?” he asked.

The palace building was surrounded by walls, inside were four majestic structures that were completely beyond ordinary. Meng Hao’s professional eyes swept the place over and noticed that the floor tiles were nearly two square meters and shined like gold. The Celestial Soil Qi that they emitted was thick to the extreme.

Then he noticed the columns, which were thick and solid. The wall decorations were transparent like jade, shocking to the extreme. He glanced at the palace building’s main door and could tell that the Celestial Soil Qi that it emitted was incredibly dense.

Under Meng Hao's professional gaze, the places on the walls that were appropriate to begin deconstructing were apparent. As for the floor tiles, he quickly identified the best one to start with. He also took note of which roof tiles to take without disturbing the restrictive spells.

His sharp gaze fell upon Zhao Youlan, causing her to take a deep breath; she suddenly felt as if her clothes were being stripped away. Noticing that Zhixiang wasn't paying attention, she casually lifted up her hand and held up her pinky finger. When she was sure that Meng Hao saw it, she slowly lowered her pinky finger.

Off to the side, Zhixiang had an expression of admiration on her face.

"So, it turns out this guy has a specialty. His name is Meng? He seems to be a Grandmaster of dismantling ancient Immortal palaces without touching the restrictive spells."

Chapter 465: A Demon Spirit Appears!

Zhixiang suddenly looked very serious. "Grandmaster Meng, this Bridge of Immortal Treading was built by the Immortal Demon Sect many years ago. The place we are in now is the lowest of the three worlds that compose the Bridge of Immortality, the residence palace of the 99 Immortal Demons. This most majestic of the palace buildings is a local spell locus, and most likely one of the hubs of the Bridge of Immortality.

"There are 3,600 such hubs here. There are precious treasures sealed inside, used in past years to provide a constant supply of the power of the Essence of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

"The restrictive spells here are the most powerful. Even if I were here with my physical body, opening this building would be quite difficult. However... with your assistance, Grandmaster Meng, it should be much simpler.

"Grandmaster Meng, would you please tell me which parts of the outer wall would be the easiest to remove?" This was the first time she had acted so politely toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao had noticed Zhao Youlan's obscure gesture with her pinky finger, but his expression didn't change at all. He looked at Zhixiang, thinking for a moment about why she was calling him Grandmaster Meng. It only took a moment for him to realize that it must be because the ease with which he had dismantled the buildings earlier left her shaken.

He cleared his throat and then once more looked regretfully back at the other section of buildings. Then, he returned his attention to the main hall, studying it for a moment. Finally he pointed toward a certain section.

“Right side, row seventy-three, ninth piece from the top!” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered with sharpness as he looked at the particular piece he had just referred to. Based on his previous experience, that was definitely the best place to start.

Hearing this, Zhixiang looked over silently for a moment before her eyes filled with determination. She quickly began to perform an incantation. Zhao Youlan took a deep breath and also began to incant. The two of them pushed their arms out at the same time, causing two beams of light, one white and one red, to shoot through the air toward that particular piece.

In the blink of an eye, they landed, causing the entire wall to glow brightly.

“Left side, row thirty-three, seventh piece from the bottom!” said Meng Hao. Once again, Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang released attacks.

“Right side, row one hundred fifteen, second piece from the top!” This, of course, was all based on Meng Hao’s previous experiences. The wall glowed and began to shake.

Suddenly a booming sound rang out. Finally, a section of the wall exploded, causing the wall’s spell formation to crack, flicker, and then disappear.

Zhixiang took a deep breath and looked somewhat tired out. However, her face quickly filled with enthusiasm. Zhao Youlan hurried over, with Meng Hao following close behind. Without the slightest hint of anxiety, Meng Hao began to collect up the pieces. Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang waited just outside the main hall, watching as the perimeter wall surrounding the palace building disappeared rapidly. After collecting up the final piece, Meng Hao contentedly walked over and began to examine the floor tiles, completely ignoring Zhixiang and Zhao Youlan.

The two women watched on, not daring to interfere. After a moment, Meng Hao stood above one particular floor tile, then squatted down to examine it closer. He took a few steps back toward where there was a small crack on the border of the tiled area. He looked up.

“I’m not sure how to break the spell formations in this place, but as far as the floor tiles go, I have to say that this is the place to target with your divine abilities. Hitting it there will send a crack out that will loosen all the tiles in the area.” Having said this, Meng Hao took a few steps back.

Zhixiang's eyes glittered. She flickered an incantation, causing a beam of light to fly out toward the cracked tile. A boom filled the air. At first, it didn't seem like anything had happened. Zhixiang frowned, and a sharp look appeared in her eyes. Both hands flickered in an incantation, and she spit out a mouthful of Qi.

Zhao Youlan instantly reacted to this. Trembling, she spit out a mouthful of blood, which fused with the Qi to transform into the image of a finger.

The finger obviously was filled with shocking power. The instant it appeared, Meng Hao's pupils constricted, and the Dancing Sword Qi within him began to circulate. Meng Hao's reaction seemed casual, but in fact he was constantly considering ways in which to cause his opponents to drain their Cultivation bases. Throughout this situation, he had constantly been on guard; even though they were working together, it was all because of mutual profit, not because of some impregnable alliance.

The finger seemed to be filled with power that could harm even the Heavens; as soon as it appeared, the sky dimmed and an incredible pressure weighed down on the area. It shot toward the crack, slamming into it, and causing everything to tremble. Cracking sounds echoed out as the floor tile filled with cracks. One of the cracks spread out in just the way Meng Hao had described. More intense roaring sounds filled the air.

The shaking was so intense that the other floor tiles of this palace building filled with three more gigantic cracks.

A moment later, the shaking stopped. As of this moment, all of the restrictive spells outside of the palace building were gone. Zhixiang's face was pale, and she was breathing heavily.

"You need to go faster," she urged Meng Hao. "My technique to suppress the shield won't last for much longer. We need to get into the main hall as quickly as possible."

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. Feeling somewhat anxious, he quickly produced a flying sword and began prying up the floor tiles. Without the restrictive spells in place, there was nothing protecting the floor tiles. With Meng Hao's professional technique, the floor tiles quickly began to disappear into his bag of holding. However, it was at this moment that his eyes suddenly narrowed.

The earth beneath the floor tiles was not smooth. Instead, complex magical symbols became visible as he collected up the tiles. The symbols bore the appearance of a sealing mark, a seal that looked like a butterfly.

Zhixiang looked down at the butterfly seal and then casually remarked: “That seal is the restrictive spell covering this area. However, I’ve disabled it; it doesn’t function anymore.”

Meng Hao nodded, then pried up the final floor tile. Suddenly, he looked up and then performed a Bloodburst Flash and then a minor teleportation. In the blink of an eye, he was far off in the distance.

Once he was away from the main hall, he blinked his left eye several times in succession, pouring the Qi of Immortal Shows the Way into his left eye. Immediately, his view of the world changed.

The majestic palace hall was now a mass of black mist, the source of which was the butterfly seal in the hall’s square. An enormous black butterfly was visible, struggling against the silver strands which were wrapped around its body. It looked like the strands were on the verge of collapsing.

It seemed that the floor tiles in this place had been suppressing the butterfly’s true form. Now that the tiles were gone and the restrictive spell broken, it was in the process of freeing itself.

At the same time, countless roaring black dragons were flying toward the butterfly, intent on consuming it. However, as they neared, the bizarre butterfly sucked them in, using them as power to assist in freeing itself.

Standing next to the butterfly was Zhao Youlan, who for some reason had a bitter smile on her face, and grief in her eyes. A despair existed therein that was no longer possible to cover up.

Shockingly, with his Celestial vision, Meng Hao could see that Zhixiang, perched on Zhao Youlan’s shoulder, had a red thread coming out of her to wrap around the butterfly, as if she were attempting to make some sort of connection with it.

Meng Hao immediately began to fly away. There were still a handful of floor tiles that he hadn’t collected up. As for Zhixiang, her face flickered, and when she looked up and saw Meng Hao, she laughed coldly.

Her face was grim, and she obviously knew that Meng Hao had some clues as to what was happening.

“This guy is profoundly astute!” she thought. “However, there’s something unique about him. He’s capable of taking away the Celestial soil that the Immortal Demon Sect cursed for all time. From ancient times until now, he must be the first person who came here unprotected and not only evaded death, but also took away the Celestial soil!”

Zhixiang frowned. It was for this very reason that she had opted to enlist Meng Hao’s help in disabling the restrictive spells. However, at the most critical moment she had been found out by him and he seemed to be leaving. Although he had taken most of the floor tiles, there were a few left that, while seemingly random, were actually cleverly positioned.

“Grandmaster Meng, what is the meaning of this?” asked Zhixiang lightly. Her voice seemed sweet, but also filled with allure.

“There’s no special meaning,” he called back. “It’s just that my bag of holding is full.” He quickly flew out of the palace building area.

He had acquired enough Celestial soil for now and did not wish to participate in any more of Demoness Zhixiang’s scheming. As for Zhao Youlan, he now understood what was going on. Earlier, outside the basin, he had had his doubts.

Granted, there was some rancor between him and Zhao Youlan. However, it hadn’t reached the point where he felt he needed to attack her to resolve the situation.

After all, the war between the Five Poisons Tribe and the Crow Divinity Tribes had started because of an invasion. He had tried to kill her that time, but only once, not twice.

Despite that, Zhao Youlan had immediately attacked him earlier. At first glance it might seem that she had plenty of reasons to do so, but upon careful analysis, her actual motives were unclear.

In fact, now that he thought about it, perhaps the gesture she had made earlier with her pinky finger had been an intentional distress signal.

In any case, Meng Hao had no intention of staying behind in this place in some attempt to rescue Zhao Youlan.

A sharp look appeared in Zhixiang’s eyes and she gritted her beautiful teeth.

“Well, considering the situation, it looks like I have no choice, right...?” she said with a sigh. “What a pity. Youlan, precious darling, it goes without saying that I’m going to have to possess you.” She suddenly flew off of Zhao Youlan’s shoulder. Zhao Youlan began to tremble. It only took a few breaths worth of time for her aura to completely change. She was no longer cool and elegant, but rather bewitching and charming.

Her body flickered as she reached out and pushed down five times onto the ground. Booms rang out as five floor tiles suddenly cracked into pieces. At the same time, the silver strands holding down the black butterfly suddenly dissipated. The butterfly flew into the air!

As it did, flames erupted on its body. It was now no longer invisible; thanks to the burning, it was now colorful in appearance and visible to anyone who looked its way. It had now transformed into a colorful, hand-sized butterfly, completely eye-catching in all aspects.

In the instant that the butterfly appeared, it flapped its wings, causing an enormous windstorm to sweep across the entire land mass. Simultaneously, an incredibly intense Demonic Qi rolled off of it.

It had Demonic Qi and possessed consciousness. Even as he retreated, Meng Hao saw the black butterfly transform into a colorful one, and it caused his mind and heart to shake. Suddenly, two words appeared in his mind.

“Demon Spirit!”

Chapter 466: The Agarwood Appears Again to Wrest Away the Demon Spirit!

There was no other term which could be used to describe this colorful butterfly which floated in mid-air. It had transformed from blackness, almost as if it had been reborn from within death. No intense feeling of danger emanated off of the colorful butterfly. The only thing it radiated was intense, natural beauty.

As it fluttered its wings, a thin, colorful dust could be seen floating around it, as well as a bright glow. The butterfly immediately began to fly up into the air.

Zhao Youlan... or perhaps it would be better to say Demoness Zhixiang, flew up in pursuit, her eyes glittering. The main reason she had come to the Realm of the Bridge Ruins was for this very Demon Spirit!

“With it, I will be qualified to enter the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane. As a disciple of the current generation of the Immortal Demon Sect, I will definitely be able to snatch some good fortune once I get into that ancient plane!” Zhixiang performed a minor teleportation, and in the blink of an eye was next to the butterfly.

Meng Hao’s eyes shone brightly. As of this instant, he gave up any notions of fleeing. As far as he was concerned, this thing... was exactly what he had come to the Realm of the Bridge Ruins to acquire.

With a Demon Spirit, the two thousand members of the Crow Divinity Tribes would be qualified to enter the Black Lands, and would thus have a chance to survive the Apocalypse.

There was no time to think. Meng Hao’s body flickered as he Bloodburst Flashed and then teleported. All the Blood Qi in his body rose up as he shot toward the butterfly Demon Spirit.

As he sprang into action, he circulated the Alcohol Qi within him, preparing to use the Dancing Sword Qi.

Killing intent flickered within Zhixiang’s eyes. However, in the exact moment in which both of them shot up into the air after the colorful butterfly, the butterfly shot forward, its body becoming a blur. A moment later, it was a few hundred kilometers away. Were it not for the intense, glowing light that emanated off of it, it would have been able to disappear without a trace.

Meng Hao’s face flickered as he teleported once again; Zhixiang pulled back the divine ability she had been about to use. Both ceased thoughts of attacking as they shot in pursuit of the Demon Spirit.

They moved with incredible speed, although Zhixiang was a bit faster than Meng Hao. However, her merging with Zhao Youlan was not complete. Furthermore, Zhao Youlan was actually still only at the Core Formation stage; Zhixiang had been able to force her Cultivation base up to the Nascent Soul stage. Even still, it was impossible for Zhixiang, an Immortal, to employ her full level of power using this body.

Even if she could push Zhao Youlan to Spirit Severing, it wouldn’t match up to her speed in Immortal Divinity form. If she pushed the body too far, it was very likely that it would shred to pieces in mid-air.

Every time the butterfly Demon Spirit shot forward, it moved a few hundred kilometers. In fact, in one particularly stunning moment, it traveled over five hundred kilometers in one shot.

Fortunately, the colorful glow it emitted was like a bright lamp on a dark night, clearly pointing it out. Were it not for that, Meng Hao would have been incapable of tracking it down.

Unfortunately, the butterfly Demon Spirit's frantic flight did not go unnoticed for very long. Soon, it began to attract the attention of other Western Desert Cultivators in the area.

As the Cultivators became aware of the butterfly, they immediately came to think of Demon Spirits. All of them had come to the Realm of the Bridge Ruins with one of their goals being to search out the Demon Spirits that came to being here.

Instantly, the eyes of these Cultivators turned red. This Demon Spirit represented a chance for survival for their respective Tribes. It only took one glance for any Cultivator in the area to cause the full power of their Cultivation bases to explode as they shot toward the butterfly.

On this land mass, the colorful butterfly instantly gave rise to a storm of fighting.

Meng Hao frowned. Seeing this happening, he decided to hold back from joining in the fray. However, he did not lessen his speed at all as he continued in pursuit.

As far as Zhixiang went, she had long since disappeared. Meng Hao knew that she was definitely in the area of the Demon Spirit, waiting for the perfect moment to make her move, most likely when the butterfly slowed down a bit.

At a certain point, an area of distortion suddenly appeared in front of the butterfly Demon Spirit, and a man appeared. His body was festooned with totems, most noticeably his forehead, upon which could be seen a black dragon. The aura and ripples coming off of this man made him seem thoroughly frightening.

Furthermore, his Cultivation base was at the late Nascent Soul stage!

This was the first person of the late Nascent Soul stage that Meng Hao had seen in the Realm of the Bridge Ruins. He was tall and strapping, his features somewhat crude, with thick, bushy eyebrows and large eyes. As soon as he appeared, he let out a roar and lifted both of his arms up. His body

suddenly began to expand; green veins bulged out on his skin, and an enormous, lifelike black dragon suddenly exploded out from behind him.

The butterfly Demon Spirit was only the size of a hand, and had no Cultivation base. It obviously couldn't count as something powerful. Anyone could grab it and take it away. However, its speed was indescribable, giving it an incredible power. As soon as the man appeared in front of it, it shot forward, slamming into him. An incredible boom filled the air.

Amidst the booming, the burly man's body trembled. All of his totem tattoos flickered. The black dragon lifted its head into the air. The man lifted his head up and roared as he shot back a full three thousand meters before coming to a halt.

However, he still held the butterfly firmly with both hands.

There were more than ten people in the area who had been attracted by the butterfly Demon Spirit. All of them recognized this man and were thrown into a commotion.

“That's Xu Bai of the great Black Dragon Tribe!”

“The great Black Dragon Tribe is from the Western Desert East region, and has a Spirit Severing Patriarch, a true great Tribe!”

“Great Tribes with Spirit Severing Patriarchs do not need a Demon Spirit to be qualified to enter the Black Lands. Xu Bai is a powerful expert of the great Black Dragon Tribe. Word has it that he is the next Tribe member likely to rise to Spirit Severing. Why does he want to snatch a Demon Spirit!?”

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. The scene just now had shaken him inwardly. This burly man named Xu Bai had already made quite an impression on him. It seemed that the majority of his Cultivation base power was focused on his physical body, which was something very unique.

However, as soon as Xu Bai took control of the Demon Spirit, a soft laugh could be heard coming from seemingly nowhere. Ripples suddenly flickered, and a red glow could be seen. Within the red glow was a man wearing a long red robe. He was thin and possessed a feminine air. The instant he appeared, magical symbols appeared all around him, all of which were unique, and emanated a bizarre glow. Actually, upon closer inspection, each of these magical symbols seemed to be a life force.

Even more bizarre, there was no totem tattoo on the man's forehead. Furthermore, in the places of his body not covered by his robe, a vast assortment of magical symbols could be seen.

As he laughed softly, his femininity seemed to increase. In concurrence with his appearance, he lifted his right arm and waved it gently in front of him. Instantly, a vast array of magical symbols appeared and began to converge together. As they did, they transformed into a gigantic hand made of magical symbols. It immediately shot at top speed in the direction of Xu Bai.

As it neared, it seemed to be closing in on the butterfly Demon Spirit, as if to snatch it.

“Chen Mo!!” roared Xu Bai.

As his voice echoed out, the other surrounding Cultivators' faces were instantly filled with astonishment.

“Chen Mo? That's Chen Mo from the great Demon Talisman Tribe. He reached the late Nascent Soul stage two hundred years ago!”

As the rumbling echoed out, Xu Bai's face filled with ferocity. He loosened his grip, and the butterfly flapped its wings, extricating itself and dodging away from the gigantic hand formed from magical symbols.

It was at this exact moment in which the butterfly freed itself that suddenly, Zhixiang's figure appeared. She reached out her delicate hand and grabbed the butterfly, then flickered and disappeared.

The speed with which she moved made it so that nobody could detect her beforehand. The faces of Xu Bai and Chen Mo instantly filled with shock. To have the Demon Spirit snatched away in front of their very noses left both of the men feeling completely humiliated.

However, the moment in which Zhixiang disappeared, Meng Hao's eyes filled with a cold glow.

“Drop it,” he said coolly, Alcohol Qi spreading out from within him. Zhixiang's cold laugh could be heard echoing out in the air.

“If you hadn’t used the Dancing Sword Qi before, then using it now all of a sudden would have worked on me quite well. Unfortun....” Before she could even finish speaking, she stopped. That was because the Alcohol Qi had ceased spreading out of his body; not even a scrap could be detected. Despite that, shocking ripples were suddenly emanating off of Meng Hao.

The ripples filled the entire area for fifteen thousand meters in every direction. The sky dimmed and all of the surrounding Cultivators’ faces fell. As for Chen Mo and Xu Bai, their pupils constricted as they felt an intense sense of crisis.

It was in this shocking moment that a three thousand meter long beast appeared in front of Meng Hao.

Its body was that of a dragon, while its tail was that of a phoenix, and it had two dragon’s heads. The shocking, three thousand meter long creature instantly emanated a horrifying aura that pressed down on everything within fifteen thousand meters.

This was none other than the Agarwood!

Meng Hao possessed the Agarwood legacy and could use it three times to avoid death. When the Agarwood appeared, its body flickered and it began to roar. Its body actually disappeared at this point, but its power transformed into an attack that shot forward, causing everything around it to shake.

The air for fifteen thousand meters in every direction seemed about to collapse. Zhixiang’s body was instantly forced to reappear in mid-air. Blood sprayed from her mouth and her face was covered in shock.

“Agar... wood...” she thought, her expression one of complete disbelief. She had long since ceased to look down on Meng Hao. His usage of the Dancing Sword Qi caused her to be vigilant. Then there was the fact that he wasn’t affected by the Immortal Demon curse. That had filled her with suspicion, and caused her to change her plans. But now.... In the short time in which she had known Meng Hao, everything she had seen and experienced, including Meng Hao’s scheming and his fighting, caused him to occupy a place of extreme importance in her heart.

Blood continued to spray from her mouth as she shot backward involuntarily. The attack just now caused her to lose her grip on the butterfly. Meng Hao’s eyes gleamed brightly as he shot forward, flicked his sleeve and collected up the butterfly.

Xu Bai's face flickered as he tried to retreat. However, the power of the attack caught him up too, and he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut. He ended up several hundred kilometers away, where he coughed up eight mouthfuls of blood.

Chen Mo met a similar fate. Despite retreating and trying to use a magical technique to protect himself, he ended up several hundred kilometers away, coughing up blood.

Considering that this happened to the two of them, there is no need to go into detail regarding the other ten people present.

All of them felt rumbling throughout their entire bodies. The bodies of three or four directly exploded and their Nascent Souls fled. The others sustained severe internal injuries. All of them immediately pulled out the Immortality Bridgestones that had brought them to this place and crushed them. As they did, their bodies began to disappear.

This was not a minor teleportation, but rather, greater teleportation. It was a way of leaving this place, the only method of returning to the Western Desert. Any Cultivator in the Realm of the Bridge Ruins could use this method to escape at any time. However, once they left they could not return. In essence, it was a way of giving up.

Chapter 467: Soil Vortex!

As soon as Meng Hao laid hands on the Demon Spirit, he placed it into his bag of holding. Then he turned, transforming into a beam of colorful light. Moving as fast as lightning, he shot past the group of people who had been forced to fall back by the Agarwood attack.

There were only three people present who could pose a threat to Meng Hao: Zhixiang, Xu Bai, and Chen Mo.

At the moment, though, Xu Bai and Chen Mo were coughing up blood. Their retreat had momentarily cost them the chance to give chase. However, considering they had Cultivation bases at the late Nascent Soul, it wouldn't be long before they could collect themselves and begin to pursue him.

As for Zhixiang, she was definitely a most formidable adversary, difficult to contend with and worthy of being called Demoness by others.

If all three of them worked together, he would be forced to use the Agarwood and the Dancing Sword Qi. Otherwise, it would be difficult to escape with his life.

Even still, in Meng Hao's analysis, the end result of such a situation would be mutual loss for everyone.

At the moment, there seemed to be one more possible choice in front of him. That was to take out his Immortality Bridgestone and use it to teleport out of this place.

That option, though, was something he would pick only as a last resort. He had obtained a lot of Celestial soil, but right now it was impossible to tell if he had enough to create his Earth-type totem.

Once he opted to leave, there would be no way to return, and he would have lost this fortunate chance.

Therefore, he whistled off into the distance at top speed, brow furrowed.

Behind him, the eyes of Xu Bai and Chen Mo glittered as they took in deep breaths. After the Agarwood attack and Meng Hao's sudden departure, they had no time or inclination to heal their wounds. Instead, they unleashed minor teleportation as they began to chase Meng Hao.

They were determined to acquire that Demon Spirit!

As the two of them began to give chase, Zhixiang transformed into a beam of light. Three people, one in the lead, and two bringing up the rear, all shot off with incredible speed in the direction of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao frowned. Right now he had to decide what to do. He could keep ahold of the Demon Spirit for the sake of the Crow Divinity Tribes. The price he would pay would be that he might not have enough Celestial soil. His other choice would be to think about himself first, and abandon the Demon Spirit.

After the space of a few breaths passed, his eyes began to shine with determination. To make his Earth-type totem become a reality didn't necessarily require the use of Celestial soil. A multitude of different types of soil existed in Heaven and Earth. However, right now there was only one Demon Spirit!

The instant he made his decision, he slapped his bag of holding. Immediately, the Immortality Bridgestone appeared. He was just about to crush it when, suddenly, Zhixiang's voice transmitted into his head.

“Meng Hao, even if you have some more clever moves, considering you're being pursued by me and two late Nascent Soul Stage Cultivators, then the only way to keep your hands on that Demon Spirit is to leave the Realm of the Bridge Ruins. You have no other options.

“However, I can tell that you have some other reasons for coming here. That's why you don't want to leave, right?

“Therefore, I have a proposal. Why don't we team up? I know that our last cooperation didn't go very well, and that no matter what I say to you right now, you won't trust me. Therefore, let me present you with a show of good faith!” The instant Zhixiang finished transmitting her words, her body suddenly stopped. She spun in place and then began to perform an incantation with both hands. Two red flowers instantly materialized in front of her.

The two flowers floated toward Xu Bai and Chen Mo. The petals of these two flowers resembled the faces of none other than those two men.

Then, the flowers began to collapse into pieces. In the space of a single breath, the pieces transformed into gray ashes. Immediately, blood sprayed from Xu Bai's mouth, and his body sagged. Next to him, Chen Mo trembled and coughed up blood. The two of them immediately stopped in their tracks, their faces filled with both viciousness and astonishment.

Zhixiang wasn't finished. Her phoenix-like eyes glittered as the two men stopped in place. She lifted her right hand and pointed toward them. Immediately, both Xu Bai and Chen Mo coughed up blood. Looking even more flabbergasted, they began to retreat.

They had realized that even as she had raised her hand, they had already been injured. It was as if they had fallen into a bizarre reality with a new set of rules.

“Injure first, attack second?”

“Everything’s been turned around. It’s a divine ability that bends the rules of reality? That’s a Spirit Severing technique!” Their faces immediately filled with shock, and their minds spun. Without hesitation, they fled at top speed.

Zhixiang lowered her hand and watched indifferently as the two left. Then she turned and shot back toward Meng Hao.

With his Spiritual Sense, Meng Hao could detect some of the things that had just happened. However, he did not stop moving, and kept his Immortality Bridgestone held tightly in hand, ready to crush it at any moment.

“That was my show of good faith,” said Zhixiang. “They won’t be able to heal their wounds in a short period of time, and surely won’t have the gall to continue to pursue further.

“Meng Hao, this time, I sincerely wish to cooperate you. Last time, I truly made some mistakes. This time... why don’t we truly work together in the spirit of cooperation?”

“You don’t need to respond, nor tell me your decision. In the easternmost region of this land mass is a mountain crag that juts out. I will wait for you there for one month. If you come, then we can work together, and you can acquire a lot more Celestial soil. If you don’t wish to come, then I won’t force the matter.” Zhixiang didn’t pursue him. Having finished her transmission, she stopped and watched Meng Hao shoot off into the distance. It was impossible to tell what she was thinking. After a long moment passed, she turned and headed toward the east.

Meng Hao frowned. He was having a hard time analyzing Demoness Zhixiang’s words and actions. She was just too changeable. One minute they were fighting each other, the next she was acting like this.

Although he was hesitating, he didn’t reduce his speed at all. He proceeded onward for eight days, until he was absolutely certain that no one was pursuing him. It was only then that he stopped to rest.

Three more days passed, and then he proceeded onward. Six days later, he stopped again. By this point, he was about eighty percent certain that Zhixiang was in fact not following him.

“Could it be that she really changed her mind?” he thought with a cold laugh. He was currently sitting cross-legged in an Immortal’s cave that he had carved out. As far as leaving the Realm of the

Bridge Ruins, he really wasn't willing to do so. Eyes glittering thoughtfully, he produced some Celestial soil and sent his consciousness into it, slowly attempting to gain enlightenment.

He used the same method he had used to study the fire. He closed his eyes, and the structure of the Celestial soil appeared in his mind. When the structure was complete, he would be able to use the Earth-type totem seed given to him by the Crow Divinity Tribes to fully congeal his Earth-type totem tattoo. That was the method he planned to use.

Time passed. During the following ten days, everything around Meng Hao was quiet and peaceful. No one disturbed him. On the outside, many of the other Western Desert Cultivators had already left this place.

Finally, Meng Hao opened his eyes, and they shone with a bright light. In his mind, he had already completely outlined the basic structure of what could be referred to as a grit formed from Celestial soil.

"Not bad...." he thought, taking in a deep breath. From within his bag of holding, he produced the weak Earth-type totem seed that he had acquired from the Crow Divinity Tribes. It was flickering, and about to fade away; he had been carefully protecting it this entire time. Clenching his teeth, he branded it onto his right arm.

The instant the Earth-type totem seed was branded onto his arm, Meng Hao's will caused the Celestial soil grit in his mind to merge with the five Crow Divinity Tribes' Earth-type totem seed.

All of this was controlled by Meng Hao's will, but even he wasn't sure if he would succeed. All he knew was that he had used this method with the Fire-type totem, and based on his analysis, it should work similarly with the Celestial soil.

The merging process took a few days. Shockingly, when it was complete, something that looked like an indistinct vortex appeared on his right arm. It was yellowish-brown in color, and as soon as it appeared, an incredible gravitational force emanated out from it.

This gravitational force didn't attract spiritual energy, but rather, the Celestial soil in front of Meng Hao. Instantly, the Celestial soil was sucked into the vortex and consumed.

Meng Hao's mind shook. He immediately began to produce more clumps and chunks of Celestial soil. As soon as they appeared, they were sucked into the vortex. A few more days passed. Meng

Hao had produced every bit of Celestial soil in his bag of holding, and all of it had been sucked into the vortex. Afterwards... the gravitational force was still there!

Furthermore, the force had not lessened, but rather, become stronger, as if it were transmogrifying.

Meng Hao had the intense feeling that if he'd had enough Celestial soil, he could cause this vortex to transmogrify into a totem tattoo. It would be the fourth of the five elements totem tattoos, the Earth-type.

When that happened, his Cultivation base would shoot up again, allowing him to easily crush the early Nascent Soul Stage, and surely defeat the mid Nascent Soul stage. As for the late Nascent Soul stage, he would at least be able to hold his own in a fight.

As of now, he was a truly powerful expert of the Gold Core stage. He was absolutely powerful enough to ignore the divide between the stages. From ancient times until now, he was the only Core Formation Cultivator who could ever do something so shocking.

In order to reach this point, a Perfect Gold Core was required, and the five elements needed to be refined to their ultimate form. Enlightenment based on being a Grandmaster of the Dao of alchemy was also required, not to mention that being a Demon Sealer was a prerequisite!

The only person who could possibly tread this path was Meng Hao. He now had a peak Perfect Gold Core that could battle the Nascent Soul stage!

One could imagine that one day, when he possessed all five elements, and his Cultivation base was at the Perfect Five-Colored Nascent Soul stage, he would be in a realm that completely defied the Heavens. He would absolutely be the most powerful person on South Heaven who was underneath the Spirit Severing stage.

Chosen from all the great Sects, and all the Clans, could be crushed beneath his feet.

Meng Hao's Nascent Soul path was that of the Five-Colored Nascent Soul, a path forged by himself, a path of Perfection!

"I need more Celestial soil!" he thought. He covered the vortex with his sleeve, but the gravitational force was still there, and growing stronger. Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he walked out of his Immortal's cave and transformed into a colorful beam of light that shot through mid-air.

Several days later, he returned to the basin. He stood on the edge, frowning. There was no longer any mist there. All of the palace buildings below had been reduced to ash and wreckage.

Frowning, he walked down into the wreckage, whereupon bits of Celestial soil floated up into the air and then shot toward Meng Hao's arm. However, the place had been destroyed, and there was not much Celestial soil remaining. After the vortex sucked it all up, its gravitational force grew even more terrifying.

He stood there silently, his face filling with determination.

“When practicing cultivation, Cultivators must not allow dread into their hearts. They must always proceed forward! That Demoness Zhixiang is an Immortal... but for the moment, she's fallen into the mortal world. There's no reason not to cooperate with her one more time.”

Chapter 468: Thirty Thousand Worlds

Days later, in the eastern part of this land mass, was an area with a mountain crag that jutted out, forming a platform. The long, thin platform stretched out past the border of the land mass into the void beyond.

When you stood on this platform, you were surrounded on all sides by blackness.

A woman sat cross-legged at the far end of the platform. She was beautiful and had a look of indifference on her face. This was none other than Zhixiang, who had been sitting here meditating for more than a month.

After ceasing her pursuit of Meng Hao, she'd come here to wait in the peace and quiet.

After an entire month passed, she'd continued to wait, confident that Meng Hao would come. Although they hadn't known each other for long, Meng Hao had left an incredibly deep impression on her.

Suddenly, Zhixiang opened her eyes and looked off into the distant sky. A slight smile appeared on her mouth when she saw a beam of colorful light shooting toward her.

Within the beam was Meng Hao. His green robe and long black hair danced about in the wind as he flew, making him look less like a Cultivator and more like a scholar. However, his grave, stern face and cold eyes also made Meng Hao seem as if he were like a sharp, unsheathed sword.

She saw him, and he saw her.

It must be said that Zhao Youlan had been beautiful, but not consummately beautiful. However, after being possessed for a while, Zhixiang's Immortal Divinity began to meld more firmly with her. Slight changes could be seen within Zhao Youlan's body. Most were changes in disposition. In any case, these changes made this mixture of Zhao Youlan and Zhixiang show signs that in the future, she might reach that level of consummate beauty that Zhao Youlan never had.

One could imagine that in the future, this combination of Zhixiang and Zhao Youlan would change, and become completely different.

Meng Hao looked at Zhixiang and thought about Zhao Youlan, and the ruthlessness that existed in the Cultivation world. Zhao Youlan had tried to get him to save her. However, their relationship was not such that Meng Hao would risk death to attempt to rescue her. It was out of the question.

In the Cultivation world, the law of the jungle prevails. Meng Hao would do nothing.

Looking around, his expression was the same as ever. He strode forward across the jutting platform, nearing the Zhixiang-possessed Zhao Youlan.

"I knew you would come," said Zhixiang with a slight smile that contained a mysterious allure.

Meng Hao came to a stop next to her. His expression cool, he calmly said, "How could you be so sure?"

"Because you and me, we're the same type of person," she said, turning to look at him. Within her eyes could be seen a rare gleam of admiration. "When people try to kill us, we run. When facing death, we possess the will to live. In the midst of our struggles, we seize good fortune. In order to further our cultivation, we charge into the most dangerous of situations. We achieve our goals by fair means or foul!"

Meng Hao declined to comment.

Zhixiang spoke again, her voice soft and pleasant like a beautiful bird. “I know that you need vast quantities of Celestial soil. Unfortunately, the records maintained by you Planet South Heaven Cultivators only have information about a few of the Immortality Bridgestone worlds. The Bridge of Immortal Treading contains tens of thousands of worlds. Comparatively speaking, what you know of counts for little. Even the expression ‘a single hair out of nine ox hides,’ does not suffice to describe it.

“Throughout all the years that the Western Desert Cultivators from South Heaven have been exploring the Realm of the Bridge Ruins, they have only been to those few places. The Celestial soil that remains is negligible.

“The only way to get your hands on the amount that you need is to leave this land mass. Don’t confine yourself to this one area; go to places further away, places that the Planet South Heaven Cultivators have never been to.

“That is where you will find great quantities of Celestial soil. In fact, there is one land mass which is completely constructed entirely of Celestial soil.” When Zhixiang spoke, her expression was not one of flattery. Instead, her eyes were bright and glittering, like deep impenetrable pools of limpid autumn waters.

“It’s not that the Planet South Heaven Cultivators who have come to this place do not wish to explore more regions. Rather, those areas unknown to them are full of danger and peril. That, coupled with the fact that they are unaware of the paths leading to them, ensure that they never go there.” Zhixiang smiled faintly. She couldn’t actually see Meng Hao from where she was sitting, nor could she see that he was listening intently. The breeze caught her hair, causing it to dance about. She reached up and twirled a strand of hair around her fingers. Other strands of hair fell to partially cover her face, making her look even more charming than before.

Meng Hao glanced over at her, but said nothing.

“The correct paths cannot be traveled by riding randomly on the dust rocks that flit about the void. That is because the dust rocks which lead to those worlds do not appear in a set place or time. They can only be located by means of a special augury technique.

“That special technique requires constant adjustments, and is something that Planet South Heaven Cultivators have no ability to master. Luckily, I happen to know of one such path. Although it does not lead to the deepest areas of the Bridge of Immortality, it does go twenty thousand worlds deep.

“This is my second expression of good faith, and proves that I don’t care about you acquiring that particular Demon Spirit. Actually, I hope that you can help me to get a second one!

“In return, I’ll take you into the depths of the Realm of the Bridge Ruins to get more Celestial soil.” She turned and looked at Meng Hao, her expression one of sincerity. It seemed as if this partnership was, as she said, very different than the first.

Meng Hao smiled slightly. How could he possibly trust this Demoness Zhixiang at the drop of a hat? Trust was a difficult thing to exist between Cultivators. Most of the time, partnerships were forged out of necessity.

“What good is a Demon Spirit to you?” asked Meng Hao suddenly.

Zhixiang hesitated, then looked at him one more time. Finally, she seemed to reach a decision.

“This partnership will be a manifestation of our mutual good will. If it ends happily, then we can enter into a yet another partnership... and I can once again manifest my good will. Very well, I will tell you why I need the Demon Spirit.

“Demon Spirits are good for only one thing. They are keys which can be used to enter the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane. Anyone who possesses a true Demon Spirit is qualified to return two hundred years after the opening of the Realm of the Bridge Ruins. At that time, the truly blessed location can be entered, the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane!”

“The Primordial Immortal Demon Plane....” said Meng Hao thoughtfully. Her words seemed quite plausible, and would also explain why the Heavenly Court Alliance of the Black Lands wanted Demon Spirits.

“The Bridge of Immortal Treading was created many years ago by the ancient Immortal Demon Sect. The purpose was to lead the branches of the Sect which existed on the four great planets toward Immortal Ascension. However, in the war with the Ji Clan, the bridge was destroyed. Members of the ancient Immortal Demon Sect set up an all-powerful spell formation, sacrificing their own lives to ensure that the Bridge of Immortality would manifest once every thousand years. It also ensured that the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane would remain intact.... After the war, the surviving Cultivators, after experiencing the vicissitudes of time, founded a new Immortal Demon Sect.

“I... am disciple of that Sect.”

Meng Hao's eyes glittered, and his expression flickered slightly.

“Because of the life sacrifices made for the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane, a curse was left behind. Any Cultivator who touches items from the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane would die a horrible death. However, you... dismantled a spell locus on the third level of the bridge. Unexpectedly, the curse did nothing to you. That is why I think we should work together.

“Even the Ji Clan fears the curse, and as such, permits the Realm of the Bridge Ruins to exist, and to manifest every thousand years.” Having said all this, Zhixiang looked over at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao kept silent for a moment, then indifferently said, “It opens once every thousand years. Countless years have passed. I wonder, how many times has it manifested so far?”

“The Primordial Immortal Demon Plane truly does only open every one thousand years,” Zhixiang explained slowly, “and can only be entered with a Demon Spirit. However, a Demon Spirit is born only once every thirty thousand years. So, for all intents and purposes... this is actually only the third time it has opened.

“As for Demon Spirits, they don't exist only within the Realm of the Bridge Ruins; they can also be born on the outside. It is possible for them to appear in any place that contains vestiges of the ancient Immortal Demon Sect.

“Therefore... in two hundred years, there will no doubt be quite a few people who go to the Primordial Immortal Demon Plane. In fact, people will most likely come from all the four great planets. Even some of the secretive great Sects from the Ninth Mountain and Sea will probably appear.

“After all, long ago, the ancient Immortal Demon Sect... was the number one Sect of the Ninth Mountain and Sea! One of its members was the Lord of the Ninth Mountain. At that time, the Ji Clan was under its command. Later, the Lord of the Ninth Mountain and Sea went missing. That was when the Li Clan was covered over by the Heavens

The Ji Clan occupied the Mountain, seized its Essence and forged the Immortality Bestowal Dais. Within the Ninth Mountain and Sea, anyone who wishes to practice Cultivation must tread the path of the Ji and become an Immortal of the Ji Clan. Anyone who refuses to follow their path is a renegade Immortal.

“Such matters do not have much to do with you. That you are aware of them is enough. If you ever have the chance to reach Immortal Ascension, then you will be forced to make a choice at that time.

“However, based on my observations, sooner or later, you will be an Immortal among these stars!”

She concluded her speech very calmly. However, Meng Hao’s heart and mind were trembling. As he thoughtfully considered everything she said, he realized that it didn’t matter whether or not he believed her. He had put a lot of thought into the matter before making the decision to come here. He turned to look at Zhixiang.

“When do we set out?”

Zhixiang’s eyes filled with a bright light. She realized that for some reason, her admiration for Meng Hao only continued to grow. Such decisiveness and lack of hesitation was only possible for people who were extremely stupid and narcissistic, or... extremely confident in their path of cultivation.

“So,” she said to herself smiling, “he’s not afraid of schemes and intrigues. In any case, I’m an Immortal.... This arrangement is good. We’ll work together, and I won’t hide anything more from him. Our partnership should work well this time!”

“I’d planned to wait for you for three more days before leaving.”

“Three more days?” he said, looking at her. “Very well.” With that he walked off to the side and sat down cross-legged to meditate, declining to comment further.

Three days passed in a flash. It was at this point that far off in the sky, a meteor could be seen. It moved with incredible speed toward them.

“That’s the rock!” said Zhixiang as it neared. She suddenly sprang into action, shooting toward the giant rock. Almost at the same time, Meng Hao teleported.

The two of them appeared on the rock and exchanged a glance. Immediately, the rock tore a hole into the border of the world and shot out into the void.

Out in the boundless blackness, one man and one woman rode the huge rock off into the distance.

Meanwhile, far out ahead of Meng Hao and Zhixiang, an azure-robed Cultivator with a sword strapped to his back strode out through the void. He held an alcohol flagon in his hand from which he occasionally drank. He looked lonely and bleak.

“You ask when you will gaze upon me again...? I’ve been looking for you for three thousand years.... Where are you? Thirty thousand worlds, countless Bridge Slaves. I’ve already been to twenty thousand worlds, and I’ve encountered countless Bridge Slaves. But you... where are you?”

“Xue’er, answer me! I will take you away from this place. It doesn’t matter who tries to stop me. It doesn’t matter if I die the cruelest death. It doesn’t matter if my body and spirit are annihilated. I will... take you away!!”

Chapter 469: The Depths of the Bridge Ruins

In the blackness of the void, there exists an indescribable coldness. This was a coldness that could, in the briefest of moments, freeze the body of a Nascent Soul Cultivator until it cracked into pieces.

Anyone who possessed a physical body but no cold-resisting treasures would be destroyed.

Only someone who cultivated a divine ability related to fire, and also had a fitting magical item, would be able to survive for long here.

At the moment, Zhixiang was sitting cross-legged on the large rock. She looked over at Meng Hao with her phoenix-like eyes. This was their tenth day traveling through the void. During that entire time, they hadn’t spoken to each other at all. Each sat on one end of the rock, some distance away from each other.

A glittering shield surrounded Meng Hao, preventing the cold on the outside from entering. At first, it had been quite stable, but as the rock continued further into the depths of the void, the shield formed by the five small white stones was gradually beginning to flicker. The further they went, the more it seemed as if it might collapse.

On previous occasions in which Meng Hao had ventured into the void, he had always spent more than ten days in the darkness. This time, however, was different than those previous times.

The cold here was many times stronger than before. Furthermore, the deeper they traveled into the void, the more shocking the cold became. It was so fearsome that even with the protective treasures, it was getting to the point that it was becoming unbearable.

Meng Hao had long since noticed that the rock he was sitting on had actually turned white. The frost which covered everything was growing thicker and had turned into thick ice.

Zhixiang didn't seem to be having any problems dealing with the cold. She was sitting there cross-legged, surrounded by the freezing cold, looking the same as ever. She had nothing to protect her; she simply rotated her Cultivation base, seemingly sucking in and absorbing any of the coldness that neared her.

This caused Meng Hao to feel even more vigilance than before regarding her.

He could sense that she had looked at him just now. His eyes opened and their gazes met. Cracking sounds could suddenly be heard from Meng Hao's protective shield. Fissures appeared on its surface, spreading out and growing in quantity. Soon, they covered the entire thing. The shield did not collapse, but it obviously would in a short period of time.

Once it shattered, the coldness would instantly rush in toward Meng Hao.

A contemplative look appeared in Zhixiang's eyes as she thought to herself, "Perhaps I thought too much of him. I overlooked the problem of the cold; if he can't get across the void on his own power, then I guess we'll need to change the terms of our partnership. After all... power is the foundation of any cooperation, and also the basis of respect." Despite this, she smiled.

Zhixiang's eyes glittered as she looked at Meng Hao and his shield, which was clearly about to shatter. It really had never occurred to her that he might not be equipped to cross the void in this way. "Fellow Daoist Meng, the coldness here is not something that ordinary Nascent Soul Cultivators can resist. You may have a strange Cultivation base, but I'm afraid you won't be able to survive either. Why don't you come over here by me? Anything within ten meters of me will be kept safe."

Even as the words came out of her mouth, cracks spread out like a spiderweb over his shield. It didn't seem as if it would last much longer. It was at this point that Meng Hao spoke coldly: "There's no need."

His voice was calm and yet powerfully shocking. It seemed to carry an unspeakable confidence as well as grim feeling. When Zhixiang heard his response, her eyes filled with a look of concentration.

She watched as Meng Hao slowly reached his hand out and pushed against the shield. A boom could be heard as the shield trembled and then collapsed. As it did, the five white rocks around Meng Hao all exploded.

The shield disappeared, causing Zhixiang's eyes to go wide. Meng Hao's actions completely exceeded her powers of anticipation. How could she have guessed that Meng Hao would dare to personally destroy his own protective shield in such a way?

The instant that the shield collapsed, the surrounding cold from the void rushed in toward Meng Hao. In the blink of an eye, it completely covered him.

However, he continued to sit there cross-legged just as before, his expression placid. He lowered his right hand and closed his eyes to meditate quietly. It was as if he didn't feel the surrounding cold whatsoever.

Zhixiang looked at him for a long time, having been completely shaken by Meng Hao. She was an Immortal, so she could ignore the cold. But Meng Hao had decisively destroyed his own useless shield, and then relied on only himself to fight back against the cold.

She looked over at him, once again filled with the same admiration as before, if not more. "Ordinary Cultivators, faced with a disintegrating shield, would all take the chance and hope that the shield held. However, this guy did no such thing. He is thoroughly decisive!"

She took him even more seriously now that she could see how he resisted the cold. It seemed that at the moment, he was not out of sorts in any way.

As she sat there thoughtfully, Meng Hao closed his eyes. They didn't speak any more, but rather sat in silence as the rock continued to fly onward. Half a month passed, and the fearsomeness of the cold continued to grow.

At one point, Zhixiang opened her eyes and performed an incantation with her right hand. As she did, Meng Hao looked over and watched. In recent days, Meng Hao looked the same as he usually did, but actually, being in this cold was like training in a type of cultivation.

His Fire-type totem tattoo was fused with his Everburning Flame. The words Everburning represented life. In the icy cold of this void, an eternal fire burned inside of him, igniting his spirit, making his own will everburning.

Although the cold pressed down upon him, his spirit burned with eternal flame. All he had to do was exercise a thought, and his body would restore itself. This was what qualified him to cross this void.

He continued to watch Zhixiang's fingers flash in an incantation. Her eyes shone with a glimmer that indicated she was performing augury. Suddenly, she stretched out her left hand and then pushed it down toward the rock. Before it could touch the surface, Meng Hao's eyes glittered. Immediately, Alcohol Qi spread out through his body, and the shocking Dancing Sword Qi appeared. It seemed that if Zhixiang touched the rock, then the Dancing Sword Qi would explode out.

Seeing this caused Zhixiang to pause and turn her beautiful head to look at him.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, what is the meaning of this?”

“Why don't you tell me, Fellow Daoist Zhixiang?”

After thinking for a moment, Zhixiang slowly replied, “Based on my augury, I can tell that we have arrived at an unfixed intersection node. I must cause this one thousand meter dust rock to stop temporarily. Then, we will wait in this position for seven days.”

“How exactly can you persuade me to trust you about this?” said Meng Hao coolly, his expression the same as ever.

Zhixiang frowned, then gave him a deep, thoughtful look. Finally she laughed.

“Fellow Daoist Meng, if you want to learn my augury technique, you can just say so, there's no need to go about it this way.” Despite her words, she still sat there thoughtfully for a moment. She knew that Meng Hao was endlessly crafty and viciously decisive. He was not a person who could be easily fooled. After a bit of thought, Zhixiang decided that what was most important was that their partnership proceed smoothly. The fact that he was not affected by the curse was something that would prove very helpful to her later. She clenched her jaw and then made a grasping motion

toward the void. Immediately, the coldness in the area rushed toward her palm, then coagulated into a crystalline jade slip.

She branded it with some information, then tossed it over toward Meng Hao. Meng Hao grabbed it and scanned it with Spiritual Sense. It contained information about how to use augury to find one's position within the void. It also contained a large map which now floated in his mind.

His expression was the same as ever as he crushed the jade slip, then performed an augury incantation, which gave him the same information Zhixiang had just referred to. After this, he closed his eyes.

“He looks young,” thought Zhixiang, “but is astute and acts with foresight. He's as wise as a Demon! A person like this who reaches Immortal Ascension will be completely inhuman!” Resigning herself to this fact, she snorted internally and then pressed her right hand down onto the big rock.

A rumbling sound could be heard. The ice on the rock shattered as layers of power surrounded the rock, causing its speed to suddenly reduce. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, it was completely motionless within the void.

Seven days later, a white beam of light approached from off within the distance. Another dust rock was now shooting toward them. When it neared, both Meng Hao and Zhixiang performed minor teleportations. After they appeared on the surface of the new dust rock, it changed directions and headed off into the distance.

It was in this manner that the following five months passed. The two of them switched rocks at least ten times, proceeding through void.

Unfortunately, at one point they failed to encounter a passing dust rock at an intersection, and as such were unable to proceed along in the way they had originally intended. After performing various auguries, Zhixiang and Meng Hao changed their path. Eventually, an enormous land mass appeared in front of them.

The borders of this land mass were red, like some bizarre shield. It was huge, containing mountains and ruins. The whole place was very peaceful; it seemed to have been a very long time since anyone had been here.

“The paths of the dust rocks of the Realm of the Bridge Ruins are not eternally fixed,” said Zhixiang calmly. “Even though we suffered a setback, with both of us performing augury, I’m eighty percent confident that we can find a dust rock in this place that will allow us to proceed. I’ve never been to this particular land mass before, but from the look of it, few people have been here in the past tens of thousands of years. After all, we are now approaching the twenty thousand worlds area.”

Meng Hao nodded. They stood on their rock, allowing it to shoot toward the red shield. In the instant it passed through, a rumbling filled the sky. The echoing sound caused Meng Hao’s expression to suddenly change.

It wasn’t just him. Upon entering this strange new world, Zhixiang’s eyes went wide with astonishment.

Chapter 470: Violent Changes!

“Do you wish to attain eternal life?”

“Are you qualified to defy the Heavens and live forever?”

“Do you want to have a type of life that is unique in all Heaven?”

Meng Hao’s mind buzzed. As soon as he entered this world, three sentences entered his ears. They were not spoken by the same person, and they resounded like thunder into his mind and heart.

At the same time, he saw that the sky of this world was a familiar gray color. No gray mist covered the ground, but Meng Hao could see hundreds of thousands of figures, all of them Bridge Slaves, moving at high speed in the direction that he and Zhixiang were standing in.

They moved with incredible speed. In the blink of an eye, these hundreds of thousands of Bridge Slaves neared. However, they did not even glance at Meng Hao and Zhixiang. Their expressions were frustrated, even anxious, as if they had just received a summons. They charged past Meng Hao and Zhixiang, pouring out through the border of the world and into the void.

In the space of about ten breaths, hundreds of thousands of Bridge Slaves had all charged out into the void. After they were gone, the only thing that remained were the faint echoes of their voices.

“When will the Bridge of Immortality reappear like new...? Sir, on what day will we again lay eyes on you...?”

To have so many Bridge Slaves whistling through the air directly next to him caused Meng Hao’s scalp to go numb. He panted as the rock he stood on suddenly stopped moving. Zhixiang looked over at Meng Hao, obviously shaken by the huge number of Bridge Slaves in this world.

Both Meng Hao and Zhixiang heard the voices of the Bridge Slaves, although the voices didn’t seem to be directed just toward the two of them. The words uttered by the hundreds of thousands of Bridge Slaves seemed to be a collective expression of their heartfelt wishes.

Meng Hao and Zhixiang remained motionless as the Bridge Slaves swept past them like spectres. As they left, the world returned to normal. The grayness disappeared, and normal color returned. Meng Hao found that he was completely soaked with cold sweat.

As for Zhixiang, her expression was still one of fear. Even for her, her first thing she thought upon seeing so many Bridge Slaves was that she was going to die.

“According to my understanding,” she said, “it is only because of their hellish destiny that the Bridge Slaves of the Realm of the Bridge Ruins instinctively gather together in groups of a few hundred. But there were so many just now. Could it be that this place... is some immense historical remnant of the ancient Immortal Demon Sect?”

“Is that why there were so many of them gathered here? If my speculations are correct, then why would they all leave so suddenly? Their expressions looked anxious. Such emotion should be impossible. Unless....” Suddenly, her eyes filled with terror.

“Unless they were summoned?” said Meng Hao slowly, his eyes glittering as he gave voice to his own speculation.

The two of them stood there silently. As they did, the restored world around them all of a sudden began to tremble violently. Everything shook as the previously clear sky suddenly filled with fissures. The fissures grew bright as a piercing shriek suddenly filled the air.

The ground was quaking so hard that it seemed it might collapse. This entire Immortality Bridgestone land mass seemed to be emitting a shocking howl which echoed into Meng Hao’s ears, shaking him and causing him to cough up a mouthful of blood.

He lost control of his body. It felt as if some incredibly powerful force had slammed into his face. He was tossed backward with a bang, slamming into the border of the void with a bang.

Fortunately, this part of the border had been ripped open, and wasn't completely restored. Meng Hao flew like a kite with its string cut, directly out into the void.

Simultaneously, blood also sprayed from Zhixiang's mouth. Several tremors ran through her and it seemed she was incapable of standing up to the force. However, she was apparently still in control of her body as she tumbled backward out through the gap, into the void.

Meng Hao's face was pale and his mind spun. The coldness of the void surrounded him completely, and his body instantly began to grow stiff. Even worse, his torso was mangled bloodily; numerous bones were broken. Blood spurted out of countless wounds.

It was a critical moment. As for Zhixiang, she was tumbling backward, but clearly wasn't seriously injured. A violet light appeared in Meng Hao's eyes as the Violet Pupil Transformation took effect. By sacrificing some of his life force, he was able to heal some of his serious injuries.

The faster the healing went, the more life force was drained away.

Meng Hao's chest quickly recovered, and all of his injuries vanished. Even his Cultivation base was at the peak of its power. However, the price had paid... was the loss of a sixty-year cycle's worth of life.

Meng Hao's instant recovery caused Zhixiang's eyes to flicker. She could tell that whatever technique he had used to force such a quick recovery would have come at some great cost. As the two of them continued to fall back, they exchanged a glance and then looked back toward the enormous, trembling land mass.

The only thing they could see was the gigantic land mass shaking. Occasional roars could be heard, which grew stronger and stronger until finally, a gray mist rose up from within the land mass.

The gray mist looked like a gigantic mushroom cloud. As it exploded out, it churned and seethed, transforming into an enormous beast. It looked like a qilin, completely formed out of mist. However, if you looked closely, it was clearly... a Bridge Slave.

Except, this enormous qilin was vastly more powerful than an ordinary Bridge Slave.

After it appeared, the mist-qilin lifted its head up and roared. It suddenly charged forward, its expression anxious, as though it had been summoned.

Meng Hao and Zhixiang were extremely close. Even if they used minor teleportation, even if Zhixiang relied on her incredible speed, there was no time to evade. They could only stare blankly as the gigantic qilin beast shot toward them. In the blink of an eye, its mist had enveloped them.

Roaring sounds filled the air. More blood sprayed from Meng Hao's mouth. He quickly summoned the Lotus Sword Formation to rotate around him rapidly. The power of Time radiated out in waves.

By the time Meng Hao had coughed up four mouthfuls of blood, the Lotus Sword Formation radiated the fearsome power of a thousand years of time, which managed to melt all the mist its range — thirty meters in every direction. Of course, compared to the entire massive frame of the qilin beast, that was a paltry size.

The result was that Meng Hao was carried along with the beast as it shot forward.

At the same time, Zhixiang coughed up several mouthfuls of blood. Then, she employed one of her own Immortal Divinity techniques to resist the mist. Just like Meng Hao, she cut out a space for herself within the body of the enormous qilin beast.

They exchanged a mutual glance, and could see the somber look in each other's eyes. They had been put into this situation involuntarily. However, there was no need to discuss how to extricate themselves. At the moment, that would leave them out in the void, directionless, exiled. If that happened, it would mean being lost forever, with no choice but to use an Immortality Bridgestone to give up and leave.

“Why do that when I can just hitch a ride on this qilin beast?” thought Meng Hao, his eyes glittering. “Let's see what sort of thing it is that can summon Bridge Slaves!” Although the situation seemed to have taken a turn for the worse, he didn't really have any other options. Since he still had his Immortality Bridgestone, if anything went truly bad, he could leave in an instant.

It was impossible to say what Zhixiang was planning. Most likely, after possessing Zhao Youlan, she too could use the Immortality Bridgestone to leave.

The two exchanged no words, but simply went along with the roaring qilin beast as it flew onward.

The coldness of the void was incapable of penetrating the mist. The blackness outside almost seemed like black waters as the qilin shot forward with fearsome speed.

The qilin beast moved far, far faster than the dust rocks. It was incredibly huge in size, making Zhixiang and Meng Hao seem like nothing more than mosquitos within it.

It carried Meng Hao and Zhixiang with it as it sped deeper and deeper into the Realm of the Bridge Ruins.

Time passed. After seven days, they had traveled further than they could have traveled in a month on a dust rock.

A month later, Meng Hao's mind trembled. Up ahead in the void, he had just caught sight of a matchlessly huge giant waving its arms. Its body was made of mist, and it bore the semblance of a Bridge Slave. Furthermore, it was charging... in the exact same direction as the qilin!

At the same time, Meng Hao saw a vast army of spectre-like Bridge Slaves, hundreds of thousands of them, all flying at top speed in the same direction.

As they continued to travel, he saw more and more scenes like this. It seemed almost as if all the Bridge Slaves in the entire Realm of the Bridge Ruins, big ones, small ones, were all appearing and heading toward the same place.

Meng Hao wasn't the only one who was shocked by this. Zhixiang was panting. Her understanding of this place was even greater, and her speculations gave rise to a gripping fear inside her heart.

“Don't tell me... that they're going... to Bridgesoul Mountain!”

Even as Zhixiang's heart trembled, a mountain appeared off in the distance.

The mountain let off a mysterious glow as it hung there in the middle of the void. There were no Immortality Bridgestones near it. There was only the gigantic, enormous mountain!

Countless names were written onto the mountain, each one of which let out a mysterious glow. They looked like magical symbols, covering the entire mountain. It was hard to say, but it appeared as if there were several million names written there.

Every time the names pulsed with light, the faces of the Bridge Slaves who were nearing the mountain would grow more anxious, and they would fly forward with greater speed.

At the top of the mountain was a palace that brimmed with an aura of archaic rot. Within the palace was blackness, and silence.

In another location near the mountain was a person. He stood there, an azure sword swirling through the air around his body, and alcohol flagon in his hand. He wore a long, azure robe, and his hair danced in the air. His eyes gleamed with a fierce glow.

This was none other than... Han Shan!

He suddenly spoke, his voice filled with an icy cold that made the coldness of the void seem warm. "I'll say it one more time. I want my wife... returned to me this instant!"