

# The Heavens 61

## Chapter 61: A Shocking Event in the Southern Domain

An earth-shaking boom rumbled out from the heavens.

The source of the sound wasn't close, but seemed to billow forth from quite some distance. It wasn't directed toward the location of Meng Hao and the others, but rather seemed to cover the entire State of Zhao. At this moment, every Cultivator within the nation could hear the massive roar.

A red glow appeared, so large that it was impossible to tell how much area it covered. It seemed as if the entire sky was crimson. No one knew what was happening.

Far away from the State of Zhao and the eyes of its Cultivators, in the middle of the Southern Domain, an enormous rift had appeared in the sky.

It was a Heavenly Rift!

The booming grew more intense, rolling across not just the State of Zhao but the entire Southern Domain. Every place, every Sect, every Clan in the massive Southern Domain eventually heard it.

Meng Hao's face changed. He was shocked to see the black aura roiling out from his body at an increased rate of speed. He moved forward even faster, his body turning into an iridescent streak of light.

Yan Ziguo and the others were awestruck. Their hearts began to race, and their Cultivation bases suddenly seemed unstable, as if they were about to fly out of their bodies.

At this moment within the mountains of the State of Zhao, a thick mist swirled around the Cold Wind Sect, one of the three great Sects. When the roaring boom sounded out, the mist began to seethe and the mountain peaks trembled. Within the Sect, hundreds of pale-faced disciples stared up into the heavens in shock.

On a mountain behind the Sect, its two strongest members, both Elders at the Core Formation stage, awoke and emerged from a secret chamber. They flew out and hovered in the air, looking up into

the sky and gasping. Their Cultivation bases rotated rapidly. Even though they couldn't see exactly what was happening so far away, they could feel an enormous, shattering pressure from the Heavens. And then, because of their extraordinary Cultivation bases, they were able to sense the Heavens splitting.

“What happened? The noise is coming from the center of the Southern Domain. Impossible! That's such an incredible distance away, how can a sound travel so far?!”

Five of the Cold Wind Sect's Foundation Establishment Elders flew up behind them in succession. Their faces were pale and their bodies trembled.

Within another of the State of Zhao's three great Sects, the Upright Evening Sect, two Eccentrics of the Core Formation stage and four Elders of the Foundation Establishment stage floated in mid-air, gazing numbly toward the distant Heavens. The entire sky was crimson, as if it were on fire. Seeing this left them in shock.

“What... is this...?”

It wasn't just the members of the Cold Wind Sect and the Upright Evening Sect. The disciples of the Winding Stream Sect also heard the sound and stared dumbly up into the heavens, looking awestruck. The Sect's Core Formation Eccentric was trembling. His Cultivation base was profound, and yet he stared off into the distance, wondering what was happening. Even more shocking, amidst the burning screen which covered the entire sky, there suddenly appeared what looked like countless fissures.

“This is not a normal sound, otherwise it wouldn't transmit so quickly across the State of Zhao. Its speed... this sound could exterminate everything!”

The situation in Sects in other surrounding countries was the same as that of the State of Zhao. Far away in the Southern Domain, the Patriarchs of the five great Sects and three great Clans, with their profound Cultivation bases, also felt the enormous pressure bearing down from the Heavens. Being in the center of the Southern Domain, they could see what all those other could not.

They saw the enormous rift in the sky. Disbelief covered their faces.

On this day, at this moment, the entire Southern Domain was in an uproar. Countless Cultivators flew into the air, and an innumerable amount of experts looked up in amazement. This strange sign which had appeared in the air shocked them all to the core.

Meng Hao flew along as quickly as he could; more black aura than usual was pouring out of him, as if it were answering a summons. This, combined with the strange sign in the sky, had him scared nearly witless. He shot forward at full speed until he arrived at the top of a tall mountain. He stood there, looking off into the Heavens.

Far away, it seemed as if the Heavens were slowly being split open. Then, a dark glow spread out, filling heaven and earth both with pitch-black darkness.

A moment passed, and then the entire Southern Domain began to quake, as if a powerful force were shaking its very center, sending tremors rippling outward. Mountains crumbled and the land was rocked.

The Southern Domain was very large, so it took time for the effects to spread. It started in the center and then spread out in every direction, all the way to the borders. Mountains continued to collapse, but because the State of Zhao was so far away, the reaction there was not as strong. It only experienced minor earthquakes about seven days later.

Even that left the Eccentrics of the State of Zhao shocked. Some of them had been to the central district in the Southern Domain and knew how incredibly far away it was. Even a massive earthquake there would not have been able to travel seven days away to the State of Zhao.

Within those seven days, a rumor spread like wildfire through the Southern Domain. Soon, everyone had heard the shocking tale.

A corpse had fallen from the sky!

And it had fallen roughly five hundred kilometers from one of the three Danger Zones of the Southern Domain, the Rebirth Cave!

The news caused a huge sensation in the Southern Domain and sent everyone into a commotion. It was even said that experts from the Western Desert were gathering in the Southern domain because of it.

“Which expert did that corpse belong to? It fell down from the Heavens. It’s said... you can only step foot into the Heavens after achieving Immortal Ascension! Could it be that the roar which echoed out was emitted by that corpse before it died?!”

“Achieve Immortal Ascension? It’s easy to use those words, but according to the ancient records, only seven or eight people in the Southern Domain have ever done it. But that corpse... it was just too astonishing. When it hit the ground, it caused seven days of earthquakes.

“Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment, Core Formation and Nascent Soul, Spirit Severing and Dao Seeking, finally Immortal Ascension. A total of seven stages to ascend to Immortality. To achieve Immortal Ascension and conquer emptiness is difficult, difficult. Oh so difficult!”

This news spread through the Southern Domain. However, the State of Zhao was a somewhat remote place, so the rumors didn’t reach there. Only a few Elders from the great Sects learned of the information.

As for Meng Hao, he continued to move through the deep mountains, a frown on his face. During the seven-day period, the death aura in his body had been reduced significantly. But then it had started to seep out again like before. He estimated that it would take about twenty more days for it to dissipate.

“This death aura is very annoying. If it weren’t for it, I could be out accomplishing things.” Meng Hao’s mood was one of vexation. Because of the inexplicable event seven days ago, all the Cultivators in the State of Zhao had been aroused, forcing Meng Hao to hide himself constantly. He had even been found out a few times and put into dangerous situations.

Each time he had to think of some way to extricate himself. He didn’t like killing, but lately he had felt killing intent more and more often.

“This won’t do. If I’m forced to kill someone, it will cause even more problems. It’s much better to just hide.” He thought for a bit, then suddenly looked up. There ahead of him in the multitudinous mountains, everything was quiet. Meng Hao stopped and looked around, but didn’t see any clues as to why everything was so peaceful.

He had a bad feeling, though. He frowned, slapping his bag of holding to produce the treasured fan. He shot forward through the forest.

There was a banging sound, along with a wind that sent leaves rustling throughout the area. Then, everything was still again, without the slightest trace of anything strange. Meng Hao’s facial expression, however, changed. The event from seven days ago had been shocking, but, things had

calmed down since then, and none of the wildlife in the area had died. The boom that had sounded out just now should have sent the animals fleeing, and yet, everything was calm.

Without hesitating, Meng Hao sent the treasured fan shooting forward, this time, in a different direction. Just then, a cold snort sounded out, and from the peaks of several surrounding mountains, black beams shot forth. The beams of blackness connected, enveloping the entire area, like a seal.

Meng Hao was within the sealing area, although he wasn't at the center, but rather toward the edge. If he had not been cautious just now, and had instead continued on forward, he would have been smack dab in its middle.

Eight figures appeared, their bodies blurs. Soon, the group became visible. Meng Hao saw a strange, water-like shield which he had been unable to sense before, that had been hiding them just now.

Eight people: six men and two women. One of the women wore a long white dress, and her face was pale. In her hands she held an aqua-blue pearl. The pearl emitted waves of water-like ripples which had served to conceal her presence. Except, the pearl was covered with cracks; it appeared to be a single-use treasure.

She didn't approach him, but rather stayed off in the distance. The others approached him at top speed, surrounding him. One of them was Yan Ziguo.

Meng Hao's face grew dark as he looked around coldly at the group of Cultivators. A killing air swirled around Yan Ziguo, but his Cultivation base was not the highest among the group. The highest belonged to someone who wasn't even standing on the ground. Floating in the air on a flying sword above Meng Hao, was a middle-aged man wearing a sky-blue Daoist robe. His eyes were calm, but he emitted an air of supreme condescension.

His cultivation base was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation!

Among the Sects of the State of Zhao, people at the ninth level of Qi Condensation were in a unique position. If within a sixty-year cycle they could successfully establish their Foundation, then they would become Sect Elders. If they could not establish a Foundation within a sixty-year cycle, then they would no longer be members of the Inner Sect, but rather an Honor Guard.

If Shangguan Xiu had been a member of the Reliance Sect when it was powerful, then he would have been an Honor Guard and not an Elder.

The middle-aged man had only been at the ninth level of Qi Condensation for about two years. You could say that his future was limitless. If he succeeded in establishing his Foundation, he would have a completely different identity.

“You’re clever,” said Yan Ziguo coldly. “If you weren’t, you wouldn’t have been able to swindle the Violet Fate Sect. But even though you’re not in the center, once you’re in the perimeter of this spell, you’re dead. After all, Elder Brother Liu is here, and we’re going to take the real treasure from you. When we do, maybe we’ll leave your corpse intact.” He looked greedily at Meng Hao’s treasured fan. In the past days, he found out a lot about Meng Hao, including the details of his trade with the Violet Sect disciples, which he had learned from Sun Hua. Now he coveted Meng Hao’s items even more.

Meng Hao, his face grim, didn’t even look at Yan Ziguo. Instead, he stared at the ninth level Qi Condensation Cultivator.

This was the Elder Brother Liu that Yan Ziguo had mentioned. He looked ordinary, and didn’t speak; instead, he just stood there on his flying sword, emanating a powerful aura. When Meng Hao sensed his strength, his pupils constricted.

“If you want Meng Hao’s treasures,” he said coldly, “then you will have to pay the price.” He slapped his bag of holding and a silver light shot out. A glittering silver spear appeared in Meng Hao’s hand. He planted it in the middle the treasured fan next to him, its point straight up.

As soon as the silver spear appeared, it caught the attention of the onlookers. Even Elder Brother Liu’s eyes flickered, coming to rest on the spear.

In the same moment as their eyes focused on the spear, Meng Hao, eyes glittering, flung open his scroll painting. Howling sounds poured out from within the painting, and three mist-beasts appeared. They charged forth toward the group of people.

Taking advantage of the sudden chaos, Meng Hao quickly flashed an incantation pattern, and a black beam shot out at indescribable speed. Yan Ziguo’s heart leapt, and he ripped himself out of the shimmering glow caused by the magical item behind him, shooting backwards at the same time. Before he could barely even move, the black light sunk into his head, right between his eyebrows.

This was the Hellfighting Spike!

And this was Meng Hao's temperament. Not attacking was fine. But when attacking, one must be the first to strike! Yan Ziguo was looking to die, so Meng Hao would send him to the yellow springs of the underworld!

## Chapter 62: One Wave Settles Down

As soon as the Hellfighting Spike touched the space between Yan Ziguo's eyebrows, a black frost began to spread out rapidly. In the blink of an eye, it had covered his entire body. A cracking sound could be heard, and Yan Ziguo's eyes widened. His pupils shrank, and an astonished expression filled his face. Then, his entire body shattered into chunks of black, frozen flesh, which then fell to the ground.

Originally, Meng Hao had wanted to flee. But Yan Ziguo had arranged for his escape routes to be blocked. Therefore, Meng Hao made the decision to strike him down.

He had been a part of the Cultivation world for a while now, and was well aware of the law of the jungle. Not attacking was fine, but when the time came to attack, it should be without a shred of compassion; otherwise, it meant your own death.

This sudden turn of events instantly caused expressions of shock and horror to appear on the faces of the surrounding Cold Wind Sect disciples. The three mist beasts that had emerged from Meng Hao's scroll painting were almost upon them, howling savagely.

Their appearance was fierce, and their roars enveloped the area with a powerful pressure. They looked like three conglomerations of black mist as they charged directly toward the Cultivators, then smashed into them.

A boom resounded out, and an expression of shock appeared on the face of Elder Brother Liu, the Cultivator of the ninth level Qi Condensation. He slapped his hands together and then waved them forward; a red banner flew out. It rippled in the air, causing a massive flame conflagration to shoot out, over thirty meters in every direction. The flames shot toward the mist beasts.

Meng Hao ignored the other Cultivation Monks, who were in complete disorder. He moved downward, charging straight toward the woman with the aqua-blue pearl. He could tell that the pearl was the magical item maintaining the special spell.

Her face suddenly filled with anxiety, and she retreated backwards rapidly. But Meng Hao was faster than her; he was upon her in an instant. He waved his hand, sending her spinning, blood spraying from her mouth. Terrified, she released the pearl, which went flying away.

The woman might be beautiful, but her presence here made her Meng Hao's enemy. He looked at her coldly, then raised up his hand with a claw-like gesture. The pearl shot toward him and landed in his hand.

Almost as soon as it touched him, a thunderous roar could be heard. The three mist beasts were completely destroyed as Elder Brother Liu's flame conflagration encompassed them. It then spread out toward Meng Hao.

"You might have a lot of treasures," said Elder Brother Liu with an unsightly expression, "but you killed members of my Cold Wind Sect. You're dead!" His fellow disciples behind him looked to be in very poor condition. But that was of secondary importance. He would have a hard time explaining the death of Yan Ziguo when he returned to the Sect. He made no attempt to conceal his intention to murder Meng Hao.

Meng Hao said nothing. As the flame conflagration descended towards him, his left hand slapped his bag of holding and a large, black net appeared. He flicked it out, and it shot up into the sky. It passed through the flame conflagration, extinguishing it instantly. The net expanded, growing larger and larger, making a beeline for Elder Brother Liu.

Elder Brother Liu's face twisted. He lifted his right hand, which contained a jade slip that he snapped. Suddenly, his body blurred as he just barely ducked out of the path of the net. Behind, two of the other disciples were caught up by the net. The net radiated an intense heat, which instantly set their clothing aflame. Within a moment, their charred bodies began to be sliced into pieces.

Horrible shrieks rang out, causing the remaining Cold Wind Sect disciples' faces to grow pale. They trembled with fear. Even Elder Brother Liu looked on with wide eyes. He would never have been able to guess that Meng Hao would have magical items such as this.

Even while all of this was happening, Meng Hao continued to move, his right hand grabbing the pearl and smashing it. The giant sealing spell that covered the area flickered and then began to disperse. Meng Hao's left hand flickered in an incantation pattern which he aimed at the treasured fan. He grabbed the silver spear as the fan's sixteen feathers circulated around him to form a shield, which then carried him forward, shooting toward a hole in the unravelling spell.

"You want to run? Stop dreaming!" Elder Brother Liu jabbed his forehead, whereupon a sword aura emerged from his mouth. A small, translucent flying sword appeared, the size of a pinky finger. A glittering sword aura billowed out as it shot in pursuit of Meng Hao.



Meng Hao was moving fast and seemed just about to make his escape. He waved his hand behind him, and the black net made loud, reverberating noise. The two Cultivators who had been caught up in it were now cut completely into pieces. The net began to roll up, dragging their bags of holding along with it as it flew back into Meng Hao's sleeve.

By this time, Elder Brother Liu's glowing, crystalline sword had almost reached Meng Hao. It was just about to stab into him when he sensed the imminent danger. He was not in the position to stand up to the power of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Seeing the fierceness of the sword aura, Meng Hao's eyes flashed. The sixteen feathers rolled together and then became sixteen swords which shot toward Elder Brother Liu's crystalline sword.

A thunderous boom rolled out. Eight of the sixteen feathers were destroyed, and the crystalline sword was sent spinning. The remaining eight feathers returned to form a fan beneath Meng Hao's feet. However, the fan was clearly slower than before.

"With fewer feathers, your fan just won't be fast enough!" said Elder Brother Liu with a savage laugh. And yet, even as the words were coming out of his mouth, his eyes widened. Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding, whereupon eight more identical feathers appeared. The treasured fan was once again whole, and Meng Hao transformed into a blur of light as he shot into the distance.

"Dammit!" Elder Brother Liu's killing intent grew even stronger. He raced off in pursuit. Seeing this, the remaining disciples had little choice but to follow. Gnashing their teeth, they produced their magical items and ran after him.

Only the female disciple, whose Cultivation base was not strong enough, hesitated and did not follow.

Meng Hao stood on his fan, his face grim, the death aura still emanating from his body. He took out the two bags of holding he had just acquired and looked them over. The magical items and medicinal pills inside were of little value to him. But, he did find three white pearls, items that he definitely needed.

He took one out, and it instantly began to suck in the death aura. In the space of about ten breaths, it had become completely black and unable to absorb any more.

Meng Hao frowned, looking at the pearl for a moment before dropping it.

“I can’t do any duplication at the moment. Once I shake off these people, then I can make some copies of the pearl. That will take care of the problem of the death aura attracting people’s attention.” He looked behind him to see figurative thunder brewing. A glittering glow surrounded the Cold Wind Sect’s Elder Brother Liu as he soared after Meng Hao in pursuit. Behind him, on the ground, three figures could be seen, racing along at breakneck speed.

“Those three people are nothing,” muttered Meng Hao to himself. “Killing them won’t be a problem. But that guy surnamed Liu is at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He also has a lot of magical items. In our short battle just now, he didn’t even use any magic. Getting wrapped up in a fight with him wouldn’t be good...” A sneer appeared on his face. Even if Elder Brother Liu was of the ninth level, he couldn’t possibly have as many medicinal pills as Meng Hao. He would just keep running until the other party was exhausted.

His plan settled in his mind, he slapped his bag of holding and retrieved three Earthly Spirit Pills, which he popped into his mouth. He felt a bit of regret.

“I wasted eight duplicated feathers, and now I have to waste medicinal pills. If I keep fighting like this, I’m going to become poorer and poorer. I also forgot to grab Yan Zigu’s bag of holding. I need to be more careful in the future.” He felt a little depressed. The Earthly Spirit Pills infused into his body, filling him with boundless spiritual energy. His speed increased.

Time passed, and soon it was dusk. Meng Hao sped along at top speed the entire time. Sometimes he would soar on the treasure fan, other times he would race along on foot. Elder Brother Liu was behind him the entire time, laughing grimly. Meng Hao was much more experienced now. Even though gliding via flying sword was not as fast as the treasured fan, he was still completely at ease.

Far behind him, the three Cold Wind Sect disciples who had been pulled into the chase were currently moaning and groaning. They didn’t dare give up, though, for fear of arousing Elder Brother Liu’s displeasure.

Meng Hao sped along as dusk fell. Suddenly, his expression grew intent. The death aura which continuously emitted from his body was now floating off into the distance. His heart began to thump. He looked off in that direction and suddenly saw a beam of prismatic light screaming through the air. Behind it were ten or more figures racing along on foot.

The beam of light turned out to be two people. Both were about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, and were at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. Each one stood on a green jade flute, nearly two meters long. Their eyes flashed like lightning, especially one of them, who wore a red robe. From

the power emanating from his Cultivation base, he was clearly just a hair away from entering the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

Among the people following them on foot was Sun Hua. He carried a pearl in his hand, which was currently absorbing the death aura.

“So, you’re still in the State of Zhao, Meng Hao!” said Sun Hua with a loud laugh. He stared greedily at Meng Hao. “Elder Brother Zhou, Elder Brother Xu, this is Meng Hao. He has the treasure of Patriarch Reliance. Even the Violet Fate Sect is interested in it! He tricked them and aroused their ire. He definitely still has the treasured item with him!” He palpitated with eagerness as he thought about the treasured item that Meng Hao possessed. He had been dreaming of getting his hands on it ever since he’d witnessed what happened that day.

Fortunately, he had run into Elder Sister Han of the Cold Wind Sect a few days before. During an intimate moment, he’d been able to coax some information out of her regarding Meng Hao. Then, he’d immediately found some Elder Brothers from the Sect and begun to use the death aura absorbing pearl to track down Meng Hao.

When they appeared and caught sight of the Elder Brother Liu chasing Meng Hao like thunder, murder on his face, their expressions changed in rapid succession.

Sun Hua’s eyes flickered, and the two soaring in the air, Zhou and Xu, let out cold snorts. They moved to block Meng Hao’s way, fingers flashing in incantation patterns. The flutes beneath their feet began to emit ghastly, shrieking sounds, accompanied by thin wisps of mist. The mist transformed into a gigantic hand which shot toward Meng Hao.

“Beat it!” said Meng Hao, his eyes flashing. He raised his right hand, and instantly, a twenty or thirty meter long Flame Python appeared. Radiating intense, scorching heat, it shot to meet the flying hand.

Meng Hao flicked his right sleeve, whereupon two wooden swords appeared. Glowing brightly, they became the fangs of the Flame Python as it surged forward.

Chapter 63: Another Wave Rises Up!

A boom rolled out. The giant mist hand had been created by the combined effort of two eighth-level Qi Condensation disciples from the Winding Stream Sect. Meng Hao by himself couldn’t possibly stand up to it directly. This was why he had used the second most mysterious items in his bags of holding, the wooden swords. The first most mysterious item was, of course, the copper mirror.

The wooden swords, which had been the object of Wang Tengfei's desire, now flew out from Meng Hao's hand. They slashed through the giant mist hand and proceeded toward the two Winding Stream Sect disciples.

The swords didn't emit a powerful sword aura, but as they flew through the air, they sucked in the surrounding spiritual energy in a roiling current. Shocked, the two Winding Stream Sect disciples evaded immediately. Without so much as a cold snort, Meng Hao shot off into the distance.

The wooden swords circled back to him. He didn't even look back, just increased his speed forward.

Behind him, Elder Brother Liu's eyes narrowed, and the avarice in his eyes grew even stronger.

"This Meng character has way too many magical items. Those wooden swords are incredibly mysterious. It just goes to prove that the spear the Violet Fate Sect was after is incredibly extraordinary! But why hasn't he used its power yet?" Elder Brother Liu's eyes flickered as he continued in pursuit. Similar to Meng Hao, he did not have the ability to sustain long-term flight, but needed magical assistance to soar.

Sun Hua and the other Winding Stream Sect disciples had dark looks on their faces. This was especially true of Zhou and Xu. With cold harrumphs, they shot off in pursuit. Sun Hua clenched his jaw and followed them. Zhou and Xu transformed into multicolored streaks of light as they shot off in mid-air. They kept their distance from the Cold Wind Sect's Elder Brother Liu, but continued in pursuit of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao had a grim expression on his face. He knew that Elder Brother Liu from the Cold Wind Sect had not even really made a move yet. With the appearance of Sun Hua and the others, he now had two waves of Cultivators to deal with. He frowned.

"I just don't have enough Spirit Stones," thought Meng Hao somberly. "If I had enough, I could have duplicated a Heavenly Spirit Pill and broken through to the ninth level of Qi Condensation... If I were at the ninth level, these people wouldn't dare to pursue me.

"It seems I might have to go sell some of my treasures after all..." Meng Hao had thought of using the copper mirror to duplicate some of the magical items, then selling them. But the State of Zhao was small, and only had a few Sects. If he started selling magical items, then later used an identical magical item, it would arouse suspicion.

As he muttered to himself, conflicted, his eyes suddenly filled with determination. He dropped to the ground and began running, swallowing some Earthly Spirit Pills until his body was filled with plentiful spiritual power. Then, he jumped back onto the treasured fan and shot onward. Unfortunately, there were many mountains in this area, but few demonic beasts. The ones that he did see were weak, making it impossible for him to use his usual tactic to evade pursuit.

As he was trying to figure out what to do, the two Winding Stream Sect Disciples, Zhou and Xu, suddenly made incantation patterns. Another whistling sound rang out from the flutes beneath their feet.

It sounded out like a wailing spirit, circling around the two of them as their fingers flickered.

“Heavenly Thunder Spirit!”

As the words rang out, a fierce wind sprung up around Meng Hao, and black clouds appeared in the air. Lightning began to crackle within the clouds, then shot toward Meng Hao.

A look of shock appeared on his face, as this was the first time he had dealt with a lightning bolt attack such as this. He stamped his foot down onto the treasured fan, and immediately, ten feathers flew up, overlapping across each other. The lightning bolt slammed into them.

A thunderous sound rolled out, sending the feathers spinning. The lightning bolt had been created by the combined effort of two Qi Condensation Cultivators. Although it didn't contain the power of heaven and earth, it was not weak, and as far as Meng Hao was concerned, was actually quite powerful.

His face drained of blood, he looked back, killing intent flickering in his eyes. The attack had not been strong enough to cause him to spit up blood, but at the moment, his spiritual energy was unstable.

“An excellent Heavenly Thunder Spirit,” said Elder Brother Liu coolly, his eyes flashing. “The Winding Stream Sect's lightning bolt magic is very refined. Sadly, your Cultivation base isn't high enough. Even with your combined efforts, the result is this. Were you stronger, he would be injured if not dead.” Despite his talk, he didn't make any move on Meng Hao. Having fought with him already, he knew that he had a multitude of magical items. He'd decided that the best thing to do would be to rely on his own profound Cultivation base to exhaust his opponent, then attack.

He was happy to see the others attack him, forcing Meng Hao to use up his spiritual power.

“We haven’t finished with the magical technique,” said the Winding Stream Sect disciple surnamed Xu. “Don’t shoot your mouth off so much, Liu Daoyun!” Exchanging a glance, the partners each swallowed a medicinal pill and then began making incantation patterns, their fingers moving in unison.

Immediately, the black cloud roiling in pursuit of Meng Hao began to churn. Again, lightning began to form. A massive roar rumbled out across the land, and again the feathers from the treasured fan moved to defend. This time, the lightning didn’t end. Bolt after bolt struck, booming ceaselessly.

In the blink of an eye, three bolts had struck, causing Meng Hao to spit up a mouthful of blood, and the killing intent in his eyes to solidify. He flicked his right sleeve, and the scroll painting appeared. He poured his spiritual power into it and two roars could be heard. Mist seethed, and two mist beasts sprung from the scroll painting, shooting toward Zhou and Xu.

The two men grew pale. They had already consumed medicinal pills to perform their magical art, which was the only technique they had. Even with their combined effort, they could only keep it going for so long. They were discussing this as the fourth lightning bolt struck, which was when the mist beasts emerged from Meng Hao’s scroll painting.

These mist beasts had the appearance of wolves. Heads twisting with fierce howls, they charged the two men, black ripples spreading out from underneath their paws as they ran.

Liu Daoyun stared at Meng Hao with flashing eyes. He lifted his right hand, and at the exact moment that Meng Hao unfurled the scroll painting, and the lightning bolt was about to fall, he bit his tongue and spit out some blood. His fingers flickered, causing the blood to circle around his hand. His face began to glow red. He waved the finger at Meng Hao.

“Qi Condensation, Cold Wind Finger!”

The finger attack came without warning. The red blood suddenly became black and began to emit an intense coldness. In the blink of an eye, it had transformed into a finger made of ice crystal. This in turn transformed into a prismatic beam which shot directly toward Meng Hao. In an instant, it was within about nine meters of him.

The finger attack was cunning and powerful. As it approached, the mist beasts from the scroll painting collided with Zhou and Xu. Above Meng Hao, the fourth lightning bolt began to descend.

Meng Hao felt a sense of critical danger in his heart. A grim smile appeared on Liu Daoyun's face, and he advanced a pace. Beneath him, a glittering light could be seen as his crystalline sword shot toward Meng Hao.

"Let's see you dodge this time," he said, watching with flashing eyes. "You can't! You must produce your silver spear and show us its might. I'm really looking forward to seeing it!"

Meng Hao's pupil's constricted. There was no time to pull out another magical item, so he released the scroll painting to float at his side. It was a critical juncture, with no time even to think. He stamped his right foot down onto the treasured fan. It instantly disassembled, the sixteen feathers transforming into a rain. Ten of them shot toward the crystalline sword, with six remaining behind to defend against the lightning bolt.

To deal with the incoming Cold Wind Finger, Meng Hao dropped toward the ground and then extended his right hand upward. A flame python twenty or thirty meters in length shot out from the center of his palm, rushing to intercept the Cold Wind Finger. At the same time, his left hand flashed an incantation, then waved forward. A Wind Blade emerged, lending its power to the Flame Python, which grew even larger as it shot toward the Cold Wind Finger.

All of this takes some time to describe, but in actuality it happened in the time it takes for a spark to fly up from a piece of flint. A massive boom rang out as the lightning slammed into the six feathers. It was weakened, but it still hit Meng Hao, causing him to vomit up a mouthful of blood.

At the same time, the crystalline sword collided with the ten feathers. A series of explosions could be heard as the feathers were shattered. The sword aura continued on, stabbing through Meng Hao. He coughed up more blood, his body trembling.

Next was the most powerful attack of all, the Cold Wind Finger. Once a lost art, it had been improved to allow Cultivators of the Qi Condensation level to use it. Currently, it could only be used by someone of the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

A boom resounded out. The disparity between the Cultivation base levels was immediately apparent. Despite the considerable combined might of the Flame Python and the Wind Blade, they were still torn to pieces. They managed to destroy about half of the black colored Cold Wind Finger. The rest of it continued on through, stabbing into Meng Hao's chest. He coughed up even more blood, which instantly turned black and congealed into chunks of ice. His body spun backwards.

Intense coldness filled his body, making him feel as if he were about to freeze. He knew that this was a critical moment. His right hand shot out, and the elusive Hellfighting Spike emerged, along with two banners, which coiled around his body.

Currently, Meng Hao was seriously injured, but hadn't lost his will to fight back. He gritted his teeth and made to flee. But then something happened that no one had expected, neither the fleeing Meng Hao, nor Liu Daoyun, nor the currently bedraggled Zhou and Xu from the Winding Stream Sect. Suddenly, a third party arrived to join the fight!

An arrow shot forth from the distance, accompanied by a shrill, piercing scream. It flew directly toward Meng Hao, filled with intense killing intent. It clearly was meant to pierce his heart and kill him.

It moved with incredible speed toward him. He suddenly felt a stabbing pain in his chest, whereupon he let out a roar. The two hovering banners moved to block the arrow. An explosion rang out as the banners were shattered. As the arrow continued forward, Meng Hao waved his right hand, sending the Hellfighting spike, which he had originally wanted to use to counterattack, to intercept the arrow.

There was a boom, and Meng Hao spit out more blood. He watched as the black spike disintegrated. The arrow slowed some, but continued on toward him.

He retreated, dropping toward the ground, but finding no place to conceal himself. Even if the few remaining unsheltered feathers caught him and carried him off, there were too few of them. He wouldn't be fast enough to evade the arrow.

Borrowing some momentum from the explosion of the Hellfighting Spike, Meng Hao took in a ragged breath. A fierce look appeared in his eyes, and he smacked his bag of holding again. A wooden sword appeared. He didn't even have time to point the sword towards the arrow. It came in so quickly that it slammed into the side of the blade.

Boom!

Chapter 64: A Massacre Caused by a Silver Spear

When the wooden sword connected with the arrow, it began to emit a droning sound. It was pushed back by the force of the arrow and smacked into Meng Hao's forehead. Blood sprayed from his mouth, as he was sent spinning backward. As for the arrow, its power was spent, and it transformed into ash, which drifted away in the wind.



As Meng Hao flew backwards, he slapped his bag of holding, and produced a Demonic Core, which he swallowed. He was running low on Earthly Spirit Pills, so he opted for the Demonic Core. His eyes were shot with blood, and his injuries were severe. This was perhaps the worst he had been hurt since becoming a Cultivator.

Thankfully, the wooden sword was truly a treasured item and hadn't been damaged at all. Actually, the reason Meng Hao had been sent flying back was because his Cultivation base wasn't high enough to completely control the sword. If it were, the arrow wouldn't have even been able to make the wooden sword move back an inch.

Meng Hao's body was wracked in pain, and his mind a bit clouded. But his innate desire to survive still existed. He bit his tongue, and used the pain to focus. He lifted his pale, bloodless face and looked off into the distance. Currently approaching was a young man in a white robe, flying on an enormous green leaf.

His face was calm, and his eyes cold, without a trace of arrogance. However, a single look at him would leave anyone without doubt that he was superior to others.

His Cultivation base was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, and yet he appeared to be only twenty-two or twenty-three years old. Seeing him approach, Liu Daoyun, who was also at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, narrowed his eyes.

He instantly understood. "At his age... he must be a Chosen from a great Sect," he said to himself.

"White robes...." Meng Hao wiped the blood from his mouth, staring at the white-robed youth.

"I am Ding Xin [1. Ding Xin's name in Chinese is 丁信 (dīng xìn) - Ding is a common family name. Xin means "believe" or "faith"] from the Violet Fate Sect," he said coolly. "I'm here to take your life, on orders from the Sect Leader." He had been dispatched months ago to the State of Zhao to search for Meng Hao. Using his own special methods, he had finally caught his trail today. He had actually been watching for some time, waiting to make his move.

He was completely different from Qian Shuihen and Lu Song. As an Inner Sect disciple, he was frequently sent out on Sect business. He was one of the Chosen of the Violet Fate Sect, destined to reach Foundation Establishment. When that happened, he would be a true Chosen. Handling matters outside of the Sect was simply training for him.

He was vastly more experienced than Qian Shuihen, and had even made a name for himself in the Southern Domain in the past two years. His personality was cold, his attacks ruthless. Back in the Southern Domain, he would always consider the reputation of his Sect. But here in the State of Zhao, he could be a bit less restrained.

He had attacked Meng Hao when he was in critical danger, and had never imagined that Meng Hao would actually be able to survive the lethal arrow.

Meng Hao's face was grim. Three waves of attackers had appeared today. Two were of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and two were of the ninth. Based on his Cultivation base alone, he couldn't stand up to them. Furthermore, he was seriously injured. The situation was very dangerous.

Watching Ding Xin approach, Liu Daoyun's eyes flickered, and he felt somewhat nervous. Yet his eyes were determined. He would not give up.

Zhou and Xu from the Winding Stream Sect, seemed even more hesitant. If they only had to deal with Liu Daoyun, they could do it. But now that the Violet Fate Sect had made an appearance, they were less convinced.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered faintly. His right hand slapped his bag of holding and five feathers flew out, combining with the four beneath his feet to make a nine-feathered fan. It took to flight, carrying him away at high speed.

Ding Xin's eyes were calm. He flicked his sleeve, and the giant leaf beneath his feet flashed as he shot off in pursuit. Liu Daoyun burst into motion as well. Zhou and Xun from the Winding Stream Sect gritted their teeth, then joined in the pursuit.

Sun Hua wasn't fast enough and had already been forced to drop to the ground. But, he wasn't willing to give up, so he followed as fast as possible on foot.

The three waves of people were incredibly fast, so Meng Hao swallowed another Demonic Core. The coldness within him was still very strong, and his body was covered with sword wounds which oozed blood.

He clenched his jaw and circulated his spiritual power, then slapped his bag of holding. A silver light flashed in his hand. It was none other than the silver spear!

Liu Daoyun's vision immediately became focused on it, and he slowed down a bit. Ding Xin, with his flashing eyes, as well as Zhou and Xu from the Winding Stream Sect, had never before laid eyes on the long silver spear. But Sun Hua, who was still running along on the ground, had. He immediately shouted out: "That's the silver spear! That's the treasured gift from Patriarch Reliance!!"

Hearing this, Zhou and Xu slowed down a bit, their eyes shining fiercely.

"You are all after this silver spear?" said Meng Hao. "Very well then. It requires a lot of spiritual power to use. Its true might can't even be utilized unless you are at Foundation Establishment stage. If you are powerful enough to use it, then be my guest!" His face twisted with an expression of incomparable pain, as if he were throwing everything away in an attempt to save himself, he tossed the spear away as hard as he could.

He put all the spiritual power he could muster into his arm as he flung it. The silver spear hummed, transforming into a silver-colored rainbow as it shot off into the distance, shining so brightly that it virtually forced everyone's eyes to follow it.

The instant it flew off, Meng Hao's treasured fan transformed into a beam of light that shot off in the opposite direction.

Interestingly (whether or not it was on purpose was hard to tell) the spear just happened to fly in the direction of the three pursuing disciples from the Cold Wind Sect. When they saw the silver spear flying toward them, they gaped in shock.

Sun Hua's eyes were red, and with a hoarse shout, he changed directions, running directly toward the silver spear. Killing intent billowed from his face, he slapped his bag of holding, and a sword aura emerged. He clearly intended to kill anyone who dared to take the spear from him.

Further behind him, the ten or more Winding Stream Sect disciples raced forward even harder.

Liu Daoyun's facial expression changed as he debated to himself about whether or not the spear was real. Because he was not at the Foundation Establishment stage, he didn't have Spiritual Sense, so it was difficult to make a judgement about this matter. There was a fifty-fifty chance about it, but in his mind, it didn't matter. He couldn't just let the Winding Stream Sect disciples gang up on his fellow disciples.

If they did, and word got out, he would be severely punished when he returned to the Sect.

And if the spear was real... well, if he gave up under those circumstances his punishment would be even more severe when he returned to the Sect. He was damned if he did, damned if he didn't. He clenched his jaw.

"Dammit!" Liu Daoyun abandoned his pursuit of Meng Hao and made a beeline for the spear.

Zhou and Xu hesitated, watching as the long spear flew off, pursued by both Sun Hua and their fellow Winding Stream Sect disciples. At first, they weren't sure if they should chase after the spear, but when they saw Liu Daoyun speeding off after it, they made their decision, shooting off in the same direction.

Only Ding Xin from the Violet Fate Sect stopped, his eyes flashing. His task was to slay Meng Hao, so he didn't care whether the treasure was real or fake. With a cold laugh, his eyes shining, he pushed his giant leaf into a beam of prismatic light, speeding after Meng Hao.

Two people, one up ahead, one behind. One fleeing as fast as he could, the other pursuing with a magical item backed by the power of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. They disappeared over the horizon.

As for Liu Daoyun, he flew quickly in the direction of the silver spear, and seemed to be on the verge of reaching it, when someone howled out from behind him.

"Heavenly Thunder Spirit!"

As soon as the sound rang out, a black cloud formed in the sky above Liu Daoyun, and the crackling of thunder could be heard as a lightning bolt struck down toward him.

His face grew dark. He slapped his bag of holding, and a coldness spread out and shot toward the lightning bolt.

The lightning bolt dissipated with a booming sound, and the intense coldness continued onward to enter the black thundercloud. It began to rumble, as if it were about to break apart.

"Heavenly Thunder Spirit, detonate!"

Under normal circumstances, Zhou and Xu would never do something like this. But with the silver spear in play, and the Winding Stream Sect disciples on the ground having the upper hand, they couldn't allow Liu Daoyun to enter the fray. Now that they had abandoned their pursuit of Meng Hao, they could pour all their combined power into play.

A massive explosion reverberated out as the thundercloud exploded. The force of it shot out in all directions. Zhou and Xu coughed up blood. Liu Daoyun, also injured, was not in a good position. A crystalline glow appeared in front of him as blood seeped from the corners of his mouth.

It was at this moment that the silver spear slammed into the ground. As it did, the Cold Wind disciples were about to grab. But then Sun Hua arrived, a savage look on his face. Behind him swarmed the Winding Stream Sect disciples, their faces radiating ferocity.

“This treasured item belongs to the Winding Stream Sect!” shouted Sun Hua excitedly. If he was the first person to lay hands on the spear, it might not end up belonging to him, but the Sect would definitely reward him. Perhaps he would end up having a breakthrough in this Cultivation base, and reach the eighth level!

The three Cold Wind Sect disciples were just reaching their hands up to take the spear, when they were surrounded by the ten or so others. They howled as the Winding Stream Sect disciples attacked them. They could do little more than watch as the prize which had just moments ago been theirs, was taken away.

“So brazen!” shouted Liu Daoyun, turning his head to see what was happening. His roar rumbled out, and he completely ignored Zhou and Xu. He waved his hand toward Sun Hua, and the Cold Wind Finger appeared, shooting forward as fast as lightning.

Considering the level of Sun Hua's Cultivation base, he simply couldn't avoid the attack. His facial expression changed into one of savagery, and he gritted his teeth. His only hope lay in the treasured item. As the Cold Wind Finger approached, he snatched up the long silver spear, brandishing it in an imposing manner.

“You're defeated!” he shouted. Liu Daoyun's eyes focused on the spear as it flew into the air. Zhou and Xun held their breath.

The silver spear flashed as it flew forward, making a beautiful, silver arc. The instant it met the Cold Wind Finger, a bang sounded out. It wasn't a very loud bang. The spear broke apart, most of it shattering into dust, with only a few fragments remaining intact.

Sun Hua gaped in astonishment. It was the last astonished look he would ever give, as the Cold Wind Finger pierced into his chest. His body shuddered, and a boom rang out, louder than that emitted by the silver spear, as he exploded.

Liu Daoyun stared in shock, as did Zhou and Xu. The Cold Wind Sect and Winding Stream Sect disciples were also dumbfounded.

Everything was suddenly quiet, except for the sound reverberating out from the attack that had killed Sun Hua.

Liu Daoyun was the first one to move again. He went forward and began to collect up the remaining fragments of silver. Zhou and Xu also approached and picked up some of the pieces.

“Silver... it’s really silver. It’s just a damned silver spear!!” Liu Daoyun’s eyes were crimson, and it seemed as if he was about to go berserk. He raised his head to the sky and let out a ferocious roar. He was humiliated, and furious. He had killed Sun Hua; had the spear actually been a treasured item, it would not have been a huge problem. But he had killed a Winding Stream Inner Sect disciple over a simple silver spear.... This could cause a huge conflagration between two great Sects.

“Meng Hao!!” He wanted to chase after him, but Meng Hao had long since disappeared. Zhou and Xu were also furious. And while they felt indignation toward Meng Hao, Sun Hua had been killed by Liu Daoyun. They couldn’t just let him go.

Chapter 65: Battle at the North Sea

An iron spear had cheated the Violet Fate Sect disciples.

A silver spear had cheated Sun Hua and Liu Daoyun, and had caused friction between two great Sects.

If Fatty’s father knew about this, his eyes would definitely grow wide. The iron, silver and gold spears were crafted by his artisans.

If Fatty had a chance to hear about it, he would definitely find it incredibly amusing.

Meng Hao hadn't even known how useful the silver spear would be. The people from the Winding Stream Sect and the Cold Wind Sect had already stopped chasing him. And now, even if they wanted to pursue him, they wouldn't be able to track him down.

And yet, his face was as grim as before. He stood on the treasured fan, popping down Demonic Cores. Ding Xin pursued him on his giant leaf, his face cold. In order to kill Meng Hao, he would follow him to the ends of the earth if necessary.

If it was a simple pursuit, Meng Hao would be able to lead him around in circles, considering his vast amount of Demonic Cores. But he was seriously injured, which made things difficult. The Demonic Cores were just barely enough to keep him going.

He could suppress the injury for a while, but eventually he would reach the point where he couldn't. When that happened, the injury would become even more dangerous.

Even more frustrating, an occasional arrow would scream toward him from behind, forcing him to use the treasured fan to defend himself. The most dangerous position was when he reached the end of a glide and had to drop to the ground and run, decreasing his speed and agility. Thankfully, the land was mostly covered by forests, and by the time he reached the top of next mountain in his path, he would be able to jump onto the treasured fan again.

Of course, Ding Xin was also incapable of sustained flight. Just like Liu Daoyun, he also had to drop to the ground occasionally, waiting to find some favorable terrain to once again begin gliding.

"You can't get away," said Ding Xin with a smile, his eyes glittering. "If you give up without a fight, I can take you back to the Sect and let them deal with you."

"There are some special circumstances regarding the matter between myself and the Violet Fate Sect," said Meng Hao as he continued to speed forward. "Fellow Daoist Ding, do you understand what I mean?"

"I don't need to understand," he responded coolly, his eyes growing colder. "If I take you back to the Sect, the Sect Elders will surely punish you. The Violet Fate Sect is one of the great sects of the Southern Domain. Naturally, they will be reasonable, and discern what is true and false."

"What happened that day was beyond my control," Meng Hao explained. "Qiu Shuihen and Lu Song forced me to sell my item. I told them it was just an ordinary spear, but they insisted. They

even threatened me! You can't put the blame on me for that!" Having reached the top of a relatively high hill, he pulled out the treasured fan and began to glide once again.

"How could the fault not be yours?" said Ding Xin, his voice as cold as ever. He continued to move forward with great speed. "You could have broken the spear on the spot, then pulled out the real treasure. Then none of this would have happened." He slapped his bag of holding, and a black wooden bow appeared in his hands. He pulled it back and released a screaming arrow toward Meng Hao.

There was a boom as Meng Hao used a magical item to defend himself. Coughing up blood, he laughed. The blood on his teeth made his smile even more ferocious.

"This is your so-called 'being reasonable?'" he said. His eyes shone with killing intent, and he didn't say anything more. Swallowing a Demonic Core, he pushed the treasured fan forward even faster.

Several hours passed. Afternoon came, then evening. Meng Hao was exhausted, but he could see that this pursuit might go on for days. He could see from the cold eyes of the person chasing him that he was ruthlessly toying with him.

He was prey, not to be killed forthrightly, but to be toyed with. Then, even as he began to go crazy from it all, he would be felled in a single blow.

The land of the State of Zhao whizzed beneath Meng Hao and Ding Xin. Time passed. Meng Hao's Cultivation base of the eighth level of Qi Condensation was at the point that it seemed about to wither up. He continually consumed Demonic Cores, but that in itself was harming his body. Even his blood seemed to reek with a Demonic air.

To a Cultivator, this was essentially intentionally harming one's own Cultivation base. Meng Hao had never heard of this before, but based on what he was seeing, he now had a clue. And yet, he had no choice.

As for Ding Xin, he had noticed what was happening, so had intentionally slowed his pursuit. An inquisitive look had appeared in his eyes, as if he had caught sight of some interesting toy.

"I really want to see what happens when you consume so many Demonic Cores that your entire aura becomes Demonic? When I kill you, will I find an eighth-level Demonic Core inside?" Ding Xin laughed.



Meng Hao heard his words, and more veins of blood appeared in his eyes. His face grew somber.

He was not the type of person to speak a lot during a fight. Just now he had tried to explain himself, only to find out that his opponent didn't care. After that, he didn't say a single word. This was just like the time he had faced up against Wang Tengfei. He had not roared or howled; he had faced everything with dark silence.

He continued to flee for some time, pushing himself to the limits of his speed. Finally, up ahead, he caught sight of Mount Daqing. He had been hiding away for about half a year, and had finally come back to the mountain again, a big circle.

As he continued on, he could see a vast, mirror-like lake off in the distance. It was the North Sea.

When he saw it, his eyes suddenly lit up.

“The North Sea....”

Meng Hao thought of the little ship, the old man and the young girl, and about how the North Sea had revealed the Dao!

His gaze grew hard, and he changed his direction, aiming for the lake.

He sped along on his treasured fan. Behind him, Ding Xin sneered. He had quite enjoyed forcing his quarry to continuously consume Demonic Cores.

“I'm not sure why this guy has so many Demonic Cores, but it doesn't matter. I'll force him to tell me before he dies. In any case, I really want to see what his body looks like after he eats too many.” He smiled, stamping down on his giant leaf and continuing on in pursuit.

The two of them continued on for a while, until suddenly a booming sound rang out in the air. Just as they flew out over the surface of the North Sea, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding, then tossed out the black net.

It immediately grew out to a diameter of approximately nine meters and shot toward Ding Xin. Ding Xin immediately flicked his wide sleeve, and a violet-colored jade slip flew out, which transformed into a violet whirlwind. The whirlwind sent the net spinning. Its connection with Meng Hao seemed to have been severed, and it flew off into the distance.

“Using a useless treasure like that shows how incompetent you are,” said Ding Xin coldly. The net appeared to be extraordinary, so he had used the jade slip just now. He’d never imagined that it would be defeated in one move.

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed. He bit down on his tongue and then spit out some blood. His face was even paler than before. As he moved across the surface of the North Sea, the water began to ripple as if a fierce wind were blowing across it. Its calmness had been broken.

The treasured fan stopped when he reached the center of the lake. It was the first time since Ding Xin had begun chasing him that he came to a full stop. He turned around, slapping his bag of holding, and the scroll painting appeared in his hands. His eyes glittered, emanating killing intent.

He would flee no longer. He would fight with Ding Xin, Cultivator of the ninth level of Qi Condensation!

Meng Hao was not in the upper hand, but he would fight. He had to fight. He couldn’t carry on much longer, so if he didn’t fight, he would die. There was only one option... fight!

“So, you’re not running anymore,” said Ding Xin as he approached. A sneer appeared on his face when he saw the look of murder in Meng Hao’s eyes. He waved his finger, and instantly a violet light appeared in front of him which transformed in a bird. It flapped its wings as it shot toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed. The instant the violet-colored bird appeared, the scroll painting trembled, and the sounds of roaring beasts could be heard. Meng Hao went all in with his Cultivation base. Perhaps because of the vast quantities of Demonic power within his spiritual energy, the roars of the beasts were particularly frightening. Four streams of mist appeared, solidifying into four Demonic beasts which charged toward the violet-colored bird.

At the same time, Meng Hao took a step forward. The treasured fan beneath his feet disassembled, the feathers circulating around him and then shooting toward Ding Xin like flying swords.

Meng Hao didn't retreat. A flying sword appeared beneath his feet to support him, and he himself shot toward Ding Xin.

"You overestimate yourself," said Ding Xin with a cold laugh, his eyes filled with ridicule. His right hand flickered in incantation patterns and then he pressed down on his forehead. A vortex emerged, accompanied by a roaring sound.

"Violet Fate Aura!"

Dense Violet Qi poured out from within the vortex, instantly transforming into a violet-colored ring, which expanded, and then flew toward Meng Hao.

Thunderous sounds continued to reverberate, causing the feathers around Meng Hao to crumble and collapse. As the massive sound roared out, it caused him to vomit up blood. And yet, stubbornness filled his eyes. He slapped his bag of holding, and roughly one hundred flying swords emerged, shooting toward Ding Xin.

The sword rain screamed forth, filling the sky. The light from the sword auras filled the sky. The swords reached Ding Xin in an instant, and yet his sneer grew thicker.

"So reckless," he said, slapping his bag of holding. A red beam emerged, transforming into a red-colored whisk. He twirled the whisk, and a screaming red gust of wind appeared which cracked the nearly one hundred flying swords. Many of them simply shattered.

The wind gust smacked into Meng Hao, and he coughed up more blood. But then, within the fragments of the hundred flying swords, appeared two wooden swords. They flew out, piercing through the red wind and shooting toward Ding Xin.

Ding Xin's eyes narrowed. His fingers flashed in incantation signs as he shot backwards.

Meng Hao lifted his right hand into the air, his face radiating killing intent.

His finger pointed up, and suddenly the black net which had been spinning away moments ago, expanded to a size of thirty meters, then dropped down with incredible speed.

All of this takes quite a bit of time to describe, but all happened in the space of just a moment. Ding Xin's expression changed instantaneously. Before he could react, the huge net had caught him up. The two wooden swords shot toward him, and it seemed they would stab into his chest.

It was a simple tactic that had just occurred to Meng Hao. It wasn't perfect, but it was the best he could come up with on the spur of the moment. He had even used the feathers of the treasured fan and sacrificed the multitude of flying swords in an attempt to catch his opponent off guard. He had done it all for one purpose: to distract his opponent. And it had worked.

Chapter 66: A Great Kindness!

Everything was all to give the wooden swords a chance at a kill!

Ding Xin's eyes narrowed as a feeling of sudden, intense danger welled up in his heart. This was the first time he had experienced this feeling in the backwater State of Zhao. Even in the Southern Domain, he had never provoked the wrath of Foundation Establishment Cultivators; he'd only ever been in tussles with people of the same stage as himself.

Astonished to be in such a perilous situation, he raised his right hand and pushed down on his forehead. An exploding sound rippled out, and a massive amount of Violet Qi poured forth from his head. It rapidly congealed into the figure of a person, his back facing Meng Hao.

The vague figure was dressed in a violet robe. An explosive pressure burst out from it, and Violet Qi roiled out everywhere, causing the net to stop in place.

Ding Xin's face paled as the massive net slowed to a halt. He immediately shot backward. The two wooden swords gave no indication that they would stop. They continued to shoot forward without the slightest hesitation, passing through the violet cloud and speeding toward Ding Xin.

"Impossible!" Ding Xin's scalp went numb and his face filled with astonishment. How could he ever have imagined that Meng Hao's two wooden swords could defy the power of his lifesaving magic!?

This lifesaving magic was bestowed upon disciples of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, and was capable of resisting the complete power of a Foundation Establishment Cultivator. It could only be used once, and even after all these years, he had never employed its power. Finally, in the face of imminent peril, he had used it today. And yet, it couldn't stop the two wooden swords.

“What type of sword is this!?” The blood drained from Ding Xin’s face. At such a critical moment, he didn’t have time to think about it. He clenched his jaw and then let out a mighty roar. He bit his tongue and spit out some blood. This was blood from his Cultivation base, and was connected to his longevity. As soon as he spat it out, his Cultivation base dropped a bit. It would take a significant amount of time in secluded meditation before it could recover.

As soon as he spit the blood out, it transformed into a red mist that was sucked in by the violet mist form that had emerged from his head. He let out a shout:

“Violet Qi from the East!” Immediately, the purple-robed figure turned around. Its face was blurry, but its eyes were clearly radiating a powerful, violet glow.

When the violet glow appeared, Meng Hao’s body shook and pain washed over him like floodwaters. He retreated backward, blood spraying from his back. A roaring sound filled his body, and his consciousness began to waver. He floated backward like a kite with its string cut, then dropped down onto the surface of the North Sea. He slowly sank down into the water.

At the same time, the two wooden swords started to shake. One of them turned violet, seemingly no longer under Meng Hao’s control. It spun out of control, then fell down into the North Sea.

But... that was only one sword. Ding Xin had gone all out, reducing his own life expectancy and damaging his Cultivation base to employ the full power of the lifesaving art. But he had only been able to target one of the wooden swords. The second one, though it was shaking, continued onward. In an instant, it passed through everything to stab into Ding Xin’s chest. Then, it seemed to lose the spiritual power which controlled it. It too fell down into the North Sea.

The sword had stabbed Ding Xin, but not in through the heart. With the aid of the Violet Qi from the East, he was able to avoid being critically injured. Even still, he let out a miserable scream as blood showered out of his chest and mouth.

His hair flew around wildly, and his white robe was soaked with blood. His eyes bloodshot, he covered the wound in his chest and let out a horrified howl. In all the battles he had fought from the beginning until now, he had never received a serious injury. Now here, in this backwater State of Zhao which he looked down on so much, he had been severely injured by a nobody Cultivator who he had completely disregarded. Furthermore, he had been forced to use his lifesaving method. His eyes were grim as he looked down at the North Sea.

“Your life has been taken by my Violet Qi from the East. But since you dared to injure me, I will drag up your corpse and hack it to pieces!” Ding Xin’s chest burned with pain. He had used blood

from his Cultivation base and had damaged his longevity. At this point, he had sunk to the eighth level of Qi Condensation. His face was pale and filled with fury. He produced a medicinal pill and consumed it. And then, suddenly, his facial expression changed. He looked down at the wound in his chest, and his face was seized with terror.

“My spiritual power is being sucked out through the sword wound....” This was something Ding Xin had never experienced before. He gasped as he suddenly realized how amazing Meng Hao’s two wooden swords really were. He immediately shot down into the waters of the North Sea to search for Meng Hao’s corpse, and the two swords.

Deep down in the North Sea, Meng Hao’s body slowly floated down. His eyes were shut, and he didn’t move. It seemed as if he were dead. Ding Xin’s Violet Qi from the East had wrecked his longevity and his Cultivation base. Even though Ding Xin’s power could not compare to that of the Foundation Establishment stage, he was at the peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Meng Hao was at the eighth level. He simply had no chance of surviving.

Right now, his body was cold, and the only thing that remained was the tiniest spark, flickering inside his spirit. It wouldn’t take long for that spark to vanish, and then there would be no more Meng Hao.

His Qi passages were shattered, his flesh devoid of life force. His Core sea seemed to be completely dried up.

But he was not willing. He was not willing to die. Unfortunately, this was the Cultivation world’s law of the jungle. He couldn’t fight or resist that. As his body sank deeper and deeper, the spark of life grew more and more faint. Everything was quiet. The spark was about to go out.

A wisp of Qi flowed out from within the North Sea. A droning sound could be heard, and deep within the waters, ripples flowed out to surround Meng Hao. His body suddenly began to glow.

As the glow spread, spiritual energy from the North Sea poured into Meng Hao from all directions, filling his body, mending his Qi passages. Violet-colored blood spilled out from his orifices and pores.

All of the damage inflicted by the Violet Qi from the East was mended. In fact, every single one of his numerous injuries were healed as the spiritual energy of the North Sea poured into him.

Popping sounds rang out from within him as his Qi passages began to flow again. His lifeless body was reformed, and in an instant, once again hummed with life force.

A thunderous roar sounded out as vast amounts of spiritual energy rushed into his Core sea. Once again it rippled boundlessly. He was still at the eighth level of Qi Condensation, but had actually made significant advancement, and his current power level was almost as much as someone at the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

Within his Core sea, the Demonic Core undulated, sending out a Demonic aura. It began to absorb all of the Demonic Qi that Meng Hao had accumulated. Its Demonic aura grew stronger and brighter.

Finally, Meng Hao opened his eyes.

He looked calm. He was not excited or shocked or astonished. He had intentionally picked the North Sea as the spot for the showdown. It had all been a gamble, in the hopes that the North Sea Demon would help him.

As he opened his eyes, he straightened his body. There was only water beneath his feet, although some distance away he could see the bottom of the lake. Everything should be pitch black. But because of the silvery sand that spread out, there was a little bit of a glow, which faintly illuminated the surroundings.

Within the murky waters, Meng Hao could see a boat.

The boat was dilapidated, sunken and resting on the lake floor. Meng Hao suddenly realized that he recognised this boat. It was... the boat he had ridden in that day when he crossed the lake!

He stared silently at the boat, and then cupped his hands and bowed in respect.

Even as he bowed, he heard the twittering laughter of a young girl echoing out across the lake bottom. The laughter circled around, making it impossible to determine its origin. Meng Hao narrowed his eyes, looking down at the floor of the lake.

As the laughter rang out, he saw arms emerging from the silver sand at the bottom of the lake. The hands were all as white as jade. Along with the arms appeared corpses. They were the corpses of young women, floating up from the silver sand.

Black hair swept across the faces of the dozens of them as they floated up from the depths of the lake. Their eyes were closed, their faces pale white but beautiful. Amidst the rippling lake water, Meng Hao watched on, an expression of astonishment on his face as he realized that all of the women... looked exactly the same!

At that same moment, a small girl appeared, standing there in the dilapidated boat. She gave Meng Hao a bashful smile. She seemed to be filled with childlike innocence, but as Meng Hao looked at her, his mind began to spin, and he felt a roaring inside his head.

He had just noticed that the faces of the corpses strongly resembled this girl's face, as if they were her after she had grown up!

“Big brother, will you stay with me here forever?” said the little girl with a light laugh. Her voice was young, and when she spoke, the dozens of corpses floating around her stopped moving, and despite their eyes being closed, it seemed as if all of them were looking straight at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao mind spun, and the roaring sound seemed to consume his thoughts. Everything in front of started to grow dim, and then to shatter.

He suddenly opened his eyes. He was still floating in the lake water, some distance away from the lake floor, further away than he had been just now. Had it all been a dream? There was no boat, no corpses, and no laughing little girl.

Meng Hao gaped in shock. After a moment, he realized that his body had been healed. He gave a silent nod to the distant lake floor, even though he couldn't see anything down there.

He knew that everything he had just seen had not been an illusion. It was real!

He raised his hands and bowed deeply with clasped hands.

“Meng Hao will always remember your two great kindnesses. I speculate that you wish to become a sea, and that this is what is most important to you. I, Meng, of the junior generation, promise that one day, when my Cultivation base soars to the heavens, that I shall come to your aid. If there is any other way that I can aid you, please tell me.” Meng Hao bowed again, holding the bow for the space of ten breaths. Everything was quiet. He straightened up. He looked down one last time, then shot up towards the surface of the lake.



At the exact moment that he began to move toward the surface, his two wooden swords, which had sunk into the water, began to shake. Then, they shot toward Meng Hao.

One of the swords had just been tracked down by Ding Xin. His eyes gleamed as he reached out to pick up the sword. But then it began to move. Ripples spread out from it, and then, in the blink of an eye, it shot off into the distance.

When Ding Xin saw this, a look of surprise appeared in his eyes. Without hesitation, he raced in pursuit.

“This treasure is sentient!” thought Ding Xin. His heart began to thump wildly as he eagerly sped even faster to intercept the wooden sword.

#### Chapter 67: The Death of Ding Xin

Meng Hao sped along through the North Sea, moving faster and faster. The Core sea within him seethed and roiled, and before long he caught sight of the surface of the lake. He burst out of the water, sending waves surging in all directions.

At the same time as he shot out of the lake, his two wooden swords appeared, whistling through the air from different directions as they flew toward him. They circulated around him, one of them coming to rest beneath his feet, the other flying next to him.

Just then, Ding Xin burst out from the lake, and as he flew out, his eyes came to rest on Meng Hao. His face was immediately covered with a look of disbelief. How could it possibly be that Meng Hao... was alive!?

“Impossible! He’s not at the Foundation Establishment stage. Nobody can withstand my Sect’s consummate Violet Qi from the East, backed with the sacrifice of my own Cultivation base and longevity!!” He glared at Meng Hao, retreating backward a bit, still not quite believing what he was seeing.

Perhaps he wasn’t willing to believe because, at the moment, he was no longer at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Even his eighth level of Qi Condensation was a bit unstable. The wound in his chest was not healed, and spiritual energy continued to leak out. He feared that he might soon slip from the eighth level of Qi Condensation down to the seventh.

His face immediately grew pale. However, he wasn't like Qiu Shuihen and those others. Despite being shocked at seeing Meng Hao alive, he recovered in the blink of an eye. Without hesitation, he shot away, the giant leaf appearing beneath his feet and carrying him off into the distance. He was not fighting, he was fleeing.

He had no choice but to flee. He could tell that Meng Hao was completely recovered, and had in fact improved his Cultivation base, whereas he himself had suffered severe internal injuries. He had no other option than retreat.

Meng Hao watched coldly as Ding Xin fled. He didn't pursue at first, but instead looked down at the lake, making yet another respectful salute.

"I will remember this great kindness for the rest of my life!" said Meng Hao in a voice that could sever nails and slice iron. Then he lifted his head and flicked his sleeve. The sword beneath his feet hummed, and he transformed into a radiant beam of light as he shot in pursuit of Ding Xin.

"Starting now, the hunter becomes the hunted," he said, his eyes filled with the intent to kill. After leaving the Reliance Sect, Meng Hao had never felt the desire to kill anyone as much as he did Ding Xin, except perhaps Shangguan Xiu. His desire to kill spread into his eyes until they shined. During his entire life of Cultivation, he had never been so seriously injured before. In fact, it actually did not count as being injured. He had already... been killed!

A dazzling gleam filled his eyes as he raced in pursuit. In an instant, he left behind the North Sea. In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he had caught up with Ding Xin, who was consuming medicinal pills even as his Cultivation base continued to drop.

Meng Hao didn't say anything. Instead, he simply lifted his finger, and the wooden sword flying next to him sped forward toward Ding Xin. Pale-faced Ding Xin looked back, well aware of the strange powers of the sword. He smacked his bag of holding, and immediately, the long black bow appeared in his hand. Ignoring his continual loss of spiritual energy, he pulled back on the bow and shot an arrow.

The arrow thundered toward the wooden sword. When they met, an explosion rang out and the arrow collapsed. The wooden sword shuddered.

Meng Hao was expressionless. He lifted his finger again, and the wooden sword sped forward again. Ding Xin, his face pale, had no choice but to shoot another arrow.

A boom rang out. The wooden sword continued on.

Veins of blood filled Ding Xin's eyes. Could he not see that Meng Hao was exacting his revenge, intending to drain his Cultivation base and push him to complete exhaustion?

After dropping from the ninth level of Qi Condensation, his injuries had worsened. He was weak, but he feared the wooden sword, so he could do nothing else but use his arrows to defend himself. Unfortunately, because of his weakened state, his arrows were also weak, and did not carry the power that they did before. When he shot out his sixth arrow, his body suddenly quivered as his Cultivation base suddenly began to drop from the eighth level of Qi Condensation to the seventh.

The wooden sword was upon him in an instant, stabbing into his chest. It wasn't a critical wound, but blood surged out nonetheless. Ding Yen let out a miserable cry and tried to flee faster.

His body shook as he felt even more spiritual power flowing out of him. His tottering Cultivation base fell rapidly, from the eighth level of Qi Condensation to the seventh!

Of course, his Cultivation base wasn't actually regressing. But he was losing spiritual energy at a rapid rate, and without any recovery. The spiritual energy loss was so great that his level of power was essentially at the seventh level of Qi Condensation.

He was consuming medicinal pills, but unfortunately had two sword wounds, both of which were leaking spiritual energy. There was no way for him to recover at the moment.

"I'm a Violet Fate Inner Sect disciple!" cried Ding Xin with a fierce howl. "If you dare to kill me, the Violet Fate Sect will track you down even if it takes a hundred years! They won't stop until you're dead!" His situation was desperate. He let out another blood-curdling scream as Meng Hao's wooden sword passed by. It didn't stab him, but cut him, whereupon his spiritual energy drained even faster.

"I've already died once," said Meng Hao coolly. His eyes were cold as he waved his finger once more.

Time passed. An hour went by in the blink of an eye, during which time Ding Xin's miserable cries continued to ring out. His body was numb, and appeared to be covered with hundreds of sword wounds. He was soaked in blood. None of his wounds were critical, but he dripped with so much blood that he looked like a dead person.

Ding Xin was a Cultivator, and as things grew dim, what frightened him the most was not his wounds, but rather, the fact that his body had seemed to become like a sieve. Spiritual energy poured out of him at a shocking rate.

The sixth level of Qi condensation, the fifth, the fourth...

...

A bang rang out, and Ding Xin fell onto the ground, spitting up blood. He scrambled forward, fleeing as fast as he could move. He was no longer capable of any sort of flight. His Cultivation base had dropped so low that it was the same as if he were at the third level of Qi Condensation.

“Meng Hao, if you kill me, you will be slaughtered without a proper burial! I’m a Violet Fate Inner Sect disciple. If I die, it will cause problems for the entire State of Zhao. You don’t dare to kill me!” His body trembled. He fought back the dread in his heart and coughed up more blood.

Meng Hao snatched up Ding Xin’s giant flying leaf. Without a word, he moved his finger again, and the wooden sword shot toward Ding Xin.

Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn. There in the middle of the woods, Ding Xin no longer resembled a disciple of a great Sect. He stared at Meng Hao, his eyes filled with venom. And yet within that venom was also regret. He regretted his desire to watch his opponent consume Demonic Cores. Instead, he should have held nothing back and killed him immediately.

“I should have butchered you!” he said, gnashing his teeth, chest heaving. It seemed he was more interested in venting his anger than breathing.

“You know, you taught me something,” said Meng Hao. He was done with his revenge. His hand lifted, and the sword fell. Ding Xin’s head flew into the air, showering blood everywhere. It landed off in the distance, rolling across the ground to rest underneath a large tree.

His eyes were still filled with disbelief. He couldn’t believe it, because he was a disciple of the Violet Fate Sect, at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He was a Chosen, he was to reach Foundation Establishment, whereupon he would be a true Chosen, and his name would rock the Southern Domain.

But here he was, dead in the backwater State of Zhao, killed by Meng Hao, an insect he had held in the palm of his hand.

Meng Hao closed his eyes for a long time. This was not the first time he had killed someone, and this time, he was not filled with emotions. He had already died.

“That day when I ran into Yan Zigu, I should have killed him, as well as all the people with him.” Determination filled his eyes. He had now experienced the result of his indecisiveness back then, when he had the chance to kill Yan Zigu.

“I don’t want to die a second time.” He lifted his right hand and made a beckoning gesture. Ding Xin’s bag of holding flew over. Then he flicked his sleeve and a Flame Python appeared. It consumed Ding Xin’s body and head, turning them into ash.

Meng Hao turned and walked away.

It was evening, and as he walked off into the distance, snow began to fall from the sky. It covered him, his footprints, and the reek of blood. The snow accompanied him as he walked further and further away.

“I am the snow during winter. If I get too close to summer, then... summer will melt me. That is not the world of snow, nor is it my world.” Meng Hao disappeared into the distance. He looked like a scholar, but deep down, he was as cold as snow.

Chapter 68: Milky Way City

After the battle at the North Sea, and his rebirth in the depths of the lake, the death aura had been completely dispelled. As he walked through the wind and snow, not a sliver of it emanated out.

The fact that the black aura, which had encircled him for more than a month, was now gone, made Meng Hao’s pace a bit more leisurely as he moved through the snowfall.

Snow fell more and more heavily, making seem as if this was the year’s last and heaviest snowstorm. The snowflakes appeared to be pushed along by the incoming season, falling out of the sky as fast as possible.

The snow covered him, until he finally reached the cave in Mount Daqing that he had been taken from years before. He sat cross-legged, looking out at the world of snow and listening to the cry of the wind.

Night fell.

Snowfall blocked the night sky, making it impossible to see the stars. The only things visible were the endless sheets of snow which covered the landscape.

A small bonfire burned in front of Meng Hao, illuminating the surroundings with flickering firelight. The light fell onto his face as he sat there thinking.

Nearly four years had passed.

It was almost four years since he had joined the Reliance Sect. He had started out as a youth and had grown into a young man; he was now twenty years of age.

For a long time, Meng Hao sat there, looking down at his hands. They were clean, without a spot of dirt on them. But Meng Hao knew without a doubt that they were stained with blood.

He had killed many times in the past four years. At first, it had caused him much mental tribulation. Now, though you couldn't say he was numb to it, at least he had come to accept it. He had adapted. It was as if some invisible force of heaven and earth had changed his spirit, his fate, and his future.

"What will I become in the end...." Meng Hao looked out at the snow outside of the cave, but it contained no answers.

Time passed by slowly, and soon dawn approached. Everything was pitch black. The only thing present was the whimpering of the wind and the frigid snow. The bonfire in front of Meng Hao slowly burned out, and the cave was consumed by darkness.

Meng Hao sat there in the dark, and a sense of deep loneliness filled his heart. The feeling grew stronger and stronger until it seemed as if it would consume him.

"Father, mother, where are you...." His voice was soft as he thought of his parents. He missed them so much.

“Fatty, what are you doing right now?” Meng Hao sighed as an image appeared in his mind of Fatty filing away at his teeth.

“Elder Sister Xu, Elder Brother Chen, you are in the Southern Domain... that’s great....” He looked out at the dark night outside the cave, and it was almost as if he could see the Southern Domain. An absentminded expression filled his face.

“Reading hundreds of books is like travelling ten thousand roads.... One day I will leave the State of Zhao and go to the Southern Domain.” A look of determination appeared in his eyes. The State of Zhao was on the very edge of the Southern Domain. The middle of the Southern Domain was very, very far away.

He remembered the map he had seen of the lands of South Heaven. There was a vast wilderness between the State of Zhao and the core of the Southern Domain, as well as several countries.

Given the current level of his Cultivation base, if he tried to travel by soaring, it would take an incredibly long time.

“If only I could become a Foundation Establishment stage Cultivator!” A fire seemed to burn in his eyes, a fire that contained a fierce longing. It was a longing to be able to fly in the sky, and a thirst to reach the Foundation Establishment stage.

“Reaching Foundation Establishment is being a true Cultivator. Then, my longevity will be extended to one hundred and fifty years.” The concept of extended life was a distant reality to Meng Hao. Usually, people wish for a longer life only when they get older. As of now, Meng Hao didn’t really care about that; what he was most concerned with was continuing to live on and not be in danger.

Unless one wants to live an average life, one must accept the limitations of one’s Cultivation base and latent talent, and fight on.

Meng Hao breathed deeply and looked out as dawn broke over the world. He pulled out Ding Xin’s bag of holding and looked over its contents. His eyes began to glitter.

“He really was the disciple of a great Sect. Even though he hadn’t reached the Foundation Establishment stage, he was filthy rich.” There were seven or eight thousand Spirit Stones inside, as well as the black, wooden bow.

When he pulled the bow out, his entire body felt cold. When he pulled back on the bowstring, it felt as if the spiritual energy of heaven and earth were being pulled into it.

Inside the bag of holding were several hundred black arrows, each one carved with strange markings. He collected them up. In addition to the Spirit Stones and treasured items, there were some pill bottles, assorted message plaques, and other random items.

Most of the pill bottles were empty. However, one small bottle caught Meng Hao’s attention. It was sealed, but when he heard the sound of the pill rattling around inside, his heart thumped. He broke the seal, whereupon a thick, fragrant odor buffeted his face. The entire cave was instantly filled with a medicinal aroma.

This aroma seemed even stronger than that of a Heavenly Spirit Pill. It seemed to be even stronger than Meng Hao’s most powerful pill, the Plateau Charging Pill. In fact, there was really no way to even compare them. It would be like trying to compare a firefly with a full moon. As far as Meng Hao could tell, one was like a tiny sapling, the other like a mighty tree.

“This is....” Meng Hao’s eyes shone, and he began to breathe quickly. He turned the bottle over and dropped the medicinal pill onto his palm. It was about the size of his thumbnail, and the color of amber. It emanated a powerful fragrance as well as a feeling of boundless spiritual energy. With a simple glance, you could tell this was no ordinary item.

He stared at the pill for a moment, then tapped his bag of holding, retrieving the ancient Pill-name jade slip he had purchased at the Hundred Treasures Pavilion. There were more cracks on its surface than before, although Meng Hao didn’t seem to care. Pressing the jade slip against his forehead, he poured spiritual energy into it.

A moment later, the ancient jade split into pieces, collapsing into ash. Meng Hao opened his eyes. They glowed with powerful excitement.

“A Foundation Establishment Pill! It’s a Foundation Establishment Pill! It’s hard to even determine how much it’s worth!” Palpitating with eagerness, he clutched the pill against his chest. His heart raced, and it took quite some time before he could calm down.



This Foundation Establishment Pill was one of the reasons Ding Xin just couldn't believe that he would die. It had been made by his master and then gifted to him. Considering that he was at the ninth level of Qi condensation, if he came across a bit of good fortune in his travels, then he might be able to break through to the Foundation Establishment stage. He had kept it on his person so that he could have it handy when that critical juncture arrived.

Even in a great Sect in the Southern Domain, a Foundation Establishment Pill was not common. It was even less common for them to be distributed to disciples. The requirements to acquire one were very high. Even if more than the usual amount of pills were available, the supply would still fall short of the demand. Most people could not establish a Foundation with only one pill. Usually two or three were required. Some people with only average latent talent but the support of Sect Elders, might be able to break through with five pills.

Foundation Establishment Pills were truly treasured. Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that two of the medicinal plants required to concoct the pill only grew in the Three Danger Zones in the Southern Domain.

Ding Xin had an exceptional master, which gave him a special position within the Violet Fate Sect. When he had reached the ninth level of Qi Condensation, his master had bestowed him with the Foundation Establishment Pill. If he failed in breaking through to the next stage, when he returned to the Sect, his master would not hesitate to give him another.

Meng Hao opened his hand and looked more closely at the Foundation Establishment pill. It was then that he noticed a strange seal on its surface.

The seal bore the image of a demonic face. It was expressionless, solemn, and imparted the feeling that the face was looking at you. Meng Hao's heart thumped. Upon further observation, he determined that the seal did not have any mystical properties. It was simply carved onto the surface of the pill, almost like a logo.

Meng Hao hesitated for a while, then clenched his teeth and put the pill away. Outside, the snowfall was growing lighter, and the rising sun was just becoming visible. He stepped onto the treasured fan and flew out into the cold.

"If I want to break through from the eighth level of Qi Condensation to the ninth, I will need more Spirit Stones. What I have now... it's just not enough. I'm going to need to go sell some things to get more. Eyes glittering, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a jade slip, which he pushed up against his forehead.

This was a jade slip from the Cold Wind Sect, a map that depicted several of the Cultivator Cities within the State of Zhao. Meng Hao saw Eastern Refinement City, but he had no desire to go back there. He needed to go somewhere far away from there, to a place not controlled by the three great Sects, a place where the Cultivators would be more random.

“Milky Way City,” Meng Hao muttered to himself. Having made his decision, he raised his head, eyes flashing, and soared ahead as fast as the wind.

In the direction of the Milky Way Sea was an area protected by protective spells, a place that mortals could not even see, within which was a city.

Its walls were black, and were patrolled by cold-faced, black-robed Cultivators. They stared out at the people coming in and out of the city.

Milky Way City hadn't existed before three hundred years ago. At that time, an eccentric with a Cultivation base at the Core Formation stage had appeared. His magical power and items were shocking. He had established this city, then gone into secluded meditation. Three hundred years later, no one knew if he was still alive, or dead. It actually didn't really matter. Either he had extended his longevity, or had begun to form his Nascent Soul.

Currently, the city was controlled by his descendants. As for Patriarch Milky Way, he had never had poor a relationship with the three great sects of the State of Zhao. That, coupled with the relaxed rules of the city, had made it grow into the bustling place it was, filled with people of all sorts.

One day, a person appeared outside of Milky Way City. He wore a black robe, and his face was covered by the wide bamboo hat on his head. It was impossible to distinguish his features, although his body seemed to be a bit pudgy.

His getup looked strange, but didn't attract any attention at all in Milky Way City. After all, this place was a jumble of all sorts of strange people. There were more than a few who didn't want others to know who they were or what they were up to.

Of course, this person was none other than Meng Hao.

He had made up his mind to sell some of his magical items and medicinal pills. So, he had disguised himself and come to this place. He strolled in through the city gates, looking around. As he did, his eyes narrowed. He immediately lowered his head, and, putting on a nonchalant air, entered a shop.

## Chapter 69: Young Lord Ding

Shangguan Xiu, garbed in a black robe, frowned as he walked down the street in Milky Way City. Two Cultivators of the seventh level of Qi Condensation, also wearing black robes, walked behind him. From the looks on their faces, they seemed to admire Shangguan Xiu quite a bit.

Accompanying Shangguan Xiu in his inspection of the city, they walked past the shop Meng Hao had just ducked into.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever. Even if it wasn't, no one would have been able to see anyway, because of the wide bamboo hat that covered his face. His gaze swept around the place he had entered.

It was a pill shop, only one story high and not very large. Racks filled with pill bottles filled the small space. The bottles were obviously empty, although on the surface of each one was written the name of a pill along with a price.

Off in the corner, a young man sat cross-legged. Other than him, Meng Hao was the only person in the shop.

Meng Hao walked along, examining the names of the various medicinal pills. Eventually, he found a bottle upon which was written the characters "Earthly Spirit Pill." It instantly caught his eye.

"So it's worth three hundred Spirit Stones...." Meng Hao frowned. The copper mirror required two hundred Spirit Stones to duplicate an Earthly Spirit Pill. Although there was a bit of difference in the two prices, it wasn't very much.

Seeing Meng Hao muttering to himself, the man sitting cross-legged in the corner opened his eyes and coolly said, "Earthly Spirit Pills are from the Southern Domain. We don't have many in stock, only five."

Meng Hao nodded. Looking around one final time, he made to leave, but then suddenly stopped. "Do you happen to have Foundation Establishment Pills?"

When the man heard this, he smiled, although it contained a barely perceptible air of doubt. "Fellow Daoist, this must be your first time in Milky Way City. Foundation Establishment Pills can easily run over one hundred thousand Spirit Stones. They are truly precious. Unfortunately, we don't have

any in stock at all. I've only seen one in my entire life. If you are really interested in purchasing one, you'll have to go to the Milky Way Workshop."

"So expensive!!" said Meng Hao, his voice filled with awe. Hearing his tone of voice, the young man's doubt seemed to disappear. He could tell that Meng Hao was simply inquiring, and didn't have the resources to actually make such a purchase.

Hearing Meng Hao mutter to himself enviously about the incredible price of Foundation Establishment Pills, the young man ignored him and close his eyes again.

Meng Hao left the shop and moved along down the streets of Milky Way City, his eyes shining. Moments later, though, he frowned, for two reasons. One reason was that it didn't seem it would be that simple to sell medicinal pills and magical items. The other reason was Shangguan Xiu.

"He was wearing a black robe, and was accompanied by more black-robed Cultivators. Those robes are the same ones worn by the city guards. It seems that after leaving the Reliance Sect, he didn't join another Sect, but rather came to this place." Meng Hao lowered his head. Instead of leaving, he continued to stroll through the city, checking out shop after shop. As he did, his frown deepened.

It seemed that pills for every level of Qi Condensation were available here. On the one hand, there weren't a huge amount of pills available, but on the other hand, the prices were not much higher than what he would have to pay to duplicate them. In other words, the profit margin would not be very high.

"Forget about Medicinal Pills. I'll go check out some magical items." Meng Hao turned, heading down a different street. There were many Cultivators coming and going, their Cultivation bases of various levels. Most seemed to be between the third and fifth levels. Meng Hao had only seen three Cultivators who, like him, were at the eighth level of Qi Condensation. Their faces were covered, making it impossible to see their faces clearly.

There were many Treasure Pavilions here. Meng Hao visited them one by one, carefully examining their wares. Soon, evening fell. Meng Hao sighed. Low-level magical items fetched a high price, but nothing close to the hundred thousand Spirit Stones he wanted. To get that much, he would have to sell nearly one thousand flying swords, but such an astonishing event would attract unwanted attention. He simply could not do such a thing.

His other magical items varied in price, but none alone would earn him that many Spirit Stones. And if he sold all of his magical items, it would attract too much attention.

What he wanted to do was handle everything at once, then leave immediately.

Meng Hao currently sat cross-legged in a room in an inn. “If I really want to sell the Foundation Establishment Pill... I have to do it very carefully,” he said to himself quietly. “I can’t act rashly.”

Milky Way City wasn’t very big. By the evening of the second day, he had explored the entire city. Finally, he ended up standing across from a luxuriously decorated building. Muttering to himself, he walked toward it.

An inscribed board above the main door read, “Milky Way Workshop.”

It was three stories tall. Meng Hao wandered around the first floor, but was prevented from going up to the second. To gain access to the second floor, one must produce evidence of a large number of Spirit Stones.

Meng Hao didn’t force the issue. He turned and walked around for a bit looking at things, as if he were just an ordinary customer. Finally, he left.

He sat cross-legged back in the inn, frowning to himself. “There’s only one door, guarded by three Cultivators of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, and one of the ninth level.... I can’t go up to the second floor, nor see past the curve of the stairs. Everything on the first level is ordinary items, without any spiritual energy... I need to know what’s on the second level. You can tell by looking at the windows on the outside that there is an abundance of spiritual energy there. But the windows are sealed tight.” After a long moment, he pulled out the copper mirror.

In his bag of holding, he currently had just a bit over ten thousand Spirit Stones. Gritting his teeth, he took out the Foundation Establishment Pill and placed it onto the copper mirror. It instantly sank into the mirror, disappearing. With a deep breath, Meng Hao began feeding Spirit Stones into the mirror.

When he put the ten-thousandth Spirit Stone into the mirror, a bright light shone out of it, and then a second Foundation Establishment Pill appeared. Meng Hao was prepared; as soon as the fragrant medicinal aroma began to spread out, he put the two pills into his bag of holding, looking around cautiously.

Because of his speed, barely any of the aroma escaped out, and therefore no one noticed.

He sat cross-legged on the bed, his eyes filled with thought. After a moment, he slapped his bag of holding, producing a long, white robe. This was some clothing he had obtained from Ding Xin's bag of holding. He put it on, then hung Ding Xin's jade identification slip around his neck. He stood and started to pace back and forth in the room, looking even more thoughtful than before.

At dawn, two days later, Meng Hao once again donned the bamboo hat, as well as a long outer garment which concealed the white robe underneath. Lowering his head, he left the inn.

He strode directly toward the Milky Way Workshop, arriving in a very short period of time. A cold-faced middle aged man sat there cross-legged, a Cultivator of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Meng Hao walked past him, heading directly toward the stairs.

As he approached, a cultivator of the eighth level of Qi Condensation glanced at him.

"Show a minimum of ten thousand Spirit Stones to get access to the second level," he said."

"Beat it!" said Meng Hao, lifting his bamboo hat and glaring at the man threateningly. He filled his voice with as much arrogance as possible. "We're in a small town in the insignificant State of Zhao, and you dare to block the path of Ding Xin?" All of the Cultivators in the room looked at him.

The eighth-level Cultivator stared at him in shock. In all his years, no one had ever dared to speak to him in such a way. But considering the arrogance and veiled threats contained within Meng Hao's words, the man hesitated, unsure of how to respond.

The pleasant voice of a woman drifted down from upstairs: "Young Lord Ding, please come up."

The eighth-level Cultivator let Meng Hao pass. With a cold snort, Meng Hao climbed the stairs. As he turned the corner, his eyes quickly scanned the entire second floor.

The pleasant voice from just now belonged to a woman wearing a gauzy dress. She smiled at Meng Hao.

The second floor was richly decorated, and looked much more magnificent than the first floor, filled with a dazzling aura. There were no racks of treasures, but rather an enormous incense burner in the

middle of the room, so large that three people could place their arms around it. The thick aroma of incense wafted out from it.

The surroundings were luxurious but also refined. Several tables could be seen around the room, as well as ornamental rock displays. It was the type of place that would make one's eyes shine just upon seeing it.

The woman standing there in front of Meng Hao appeared to be about thirty years of age. She was elegant and poised, and didn't say anything at first. She simply smiled, making her seem very warm and considerate.

"Young Lord Ding," she said, looking over him causally, "please have a seat. I am the second floor attendant. Please do not hesitate to tell me how I can help you." She took a seat off to the side. When she caught sight of the white robe underneath his long outer garment, a look of surprise flickered in her eyes, and then quickly disappeared.

Meng Hao looked around thoughtfully. There were seven tables spread about in various positions. Without hesitation, Meng Hao chose to sit, not at a table next to the stairs, or a window, but right in the middle of the room.

"Do you have Foundation Establishment Pills here?" he said as he sat down, not beating around the bush. He stared at the woman, his expression somber.

When the woman saw him sit down where he did, her eyes flickered again, as if he had just confirmed something to her. And yet, she still seemed to be uncertain about something.

"There are not many things in the State of Zhao that we don't have here at the Milky Way Workshop," she said with a smile. "Of course we have Foundation Establishment Pills. The price is two hundred thousand Spirit Stones per pill."

Meng Hao nodded slightly, then slapped his bag of holding. A pill bottle appeared in his hand. He flicked his sleeve, and the bottle shot toward the woman.

Her eyes flickered as she caught the bottle. When she opened it and looked at the contents, her expression changed to one of surprise.

"One Foundation Establishment Pill," said Meng Hao coolly. "Name your price."

“Young Lord Ding, you are quite audacious,” she said calmly, an unusual expression in her eyes. “You dare to casually hand me something so valuable. Don’t you fear that I might take it and flee?”

Meng Hao didn’t say anything. Staring at her coldly, he loosened his outer garment, revealing more of the white robe, as well as the jade medallion hanging around his neck.

It was violet-colored, and emitted a soft, flickering violet glow.

When she caught sight of the jade medallion, the woman’s expression changed.

“If you dare to swallow that pill,” said Meng Hao coldly, “Milky Way City will be reduced to rubble in less than a month.”

The woman’s expression changed several times as she looked back down at the pill bottle. She glanced back at Meng Hao sitting there. Having taken note of all the various clues regarding his identity, she finally smiled again.

“Young Lord Ding, please don’t take offense. I was simply making conversation.” She tipped the bottle over, sending the Foundation Establishment pill tumbling into her palm. Then she held it up and examined it closely. When her gaze fell upon the demonic face carved into the surface of the pill, her expression changed dramatically, and she stood up.

Chapter 70: Breaking Through to the Ninth Level of Qi Condensation!

“This pill was concocted personally by Grandmaster Pill Demon of the Violet Fate Sect. Its.... Young Lord Ding, what is your relationship to Grandmaster Pill Demon...?”

“Name your price.” He said nothing else. He frowned, his eyes filled with a look that made it seem as if whether he wanted to or not, he had no choice but to sell the pill.

“A pill personally concocted by Grandmaster Pill Demon could be auctioned off for an amazing price. This pill....” The woman hesitated for a moment, then seemed to come to a decision. “I can give you two hundred fifty thousand Spirit Stones!”

Meng Hao was silent for a moment. Finally, he nodded and said, “Done.” He stood up.



The woman lifted her hand and flicked her finger toward the incense burner in the middle of the room. A clear and melodious sound rang out, and about ten seconds later, a young girl came down from the third floor bearing a jade platter. She quickly reached Meng Hao, then offered up the platter with both hands.

On the white jade platter was a bag of holding.

Meng Hao took it and looked inside, then turned and walked down the stairs. Amidst the gazes of the Cultivators on the first floor, he walked out of the Milky Way Workshop and off into the distance.

A while later, when he reached a place that wasn't very crowded, he ducked into an alley and stripped off the outer garment. He quickly changed into another robe and then made his way off as quickly as possible, his head lowered.

Meanwhile, back on the second floor of the Milky Way Workshop, the woman stood respectfully next to an old man. The old man, who wore a resplendent garment, was currently standing at the window, looking off into the distance. In his hand was the Foundation Establishment Pill that Meng Hao had sold.

A long time passed before he finally opened his mouth. "Are you sure?" he said coolly.

"I of the junior generation already did some checking," she said in a respectful tone. "There was indeed a Violet Fate Sect disciple surnamed Ding who arrived recently in the State of Zhao."

"Are you sure that was him?" said the old man slowly.

"At first, junior was not certain. After all, Ding Xin is of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, and this person was of the eighth. However, his arrogant behavior on the first floor certainly seemed like that of a disciple of a great Sect. This was the first clue.

"Upon reaching the second floor, he didn't select a chair near the window or the stairs, but rather in the middle of the room. This gives evidence of his confidence, as if he didn't care that we might have made a move against him. This level of confidence is impossible for someone of the eighth level of Qi Condensation to have, unless of course they are a member of a powerful Sect. That was the second clue.

“Moments later, junior saw his white garments, as well as a jade pendant from the Violet Fate Sect. He revealed it intentionally, but this is the State of Zhao, after all. He has to take some precautions. This was the third clue.

“More telling, he directly gave the pill bottle to junior, as if he didn’t care whether or not I might consume the pill. When junior inquired about this, his response was one that a member of a State of Zhao Sect could never match. This was the fourth clue.

“Finally, the Foundation Establishment Pill is marked with the seal of Grandmaster Pill Demon. No one would dare to make a counterfeit of such a pill. Furthermore, junior has researched such things, and am certain the seal is genuine.

“Because of these five clues, junior is certain that this person was Ding Xin of the Violet Fate Sect. It is said that two years ago, Grandmaster Pill Demon accepted a novice with that name. It seems the person here today was none other than him.” The woman smiled, her expression filled with confidence, shrewdness and intelligence.

“Unless....” She suddenly seemed to hesitate.

“Unless what?” asked the old man, turning to look at her, his expression both warm and encouraging.

“Unless the person today was incredibly intelligent, and purposefully did all of these things. Perhaps he created the perfect cover story, and the seal on the Foundation Establishment Pill is actually fake. But, the probability of such a thing is remote. There is no disciple among the so-called Sects of the State of Zhao who could accomplish something like that.” The woman smiled, her expression once again one of confidence.

“Correct,” said the old man. “Being able to sort through all these clues in this way shows how intelligent you are, Mu’er. It seems you’ve really grown sharper in the past few years. This medicinal pill is real. It seems eighty to ninety percent likely that this person was none other than Ding Xin.” He looked fondly at the woman.

“Many thanks for your praise, Patriarch,” she said with a smile. Looking up at him, she asked, “Are you really going to let him go, just like that?”

“We cannot afford to cause trouble with the Violet Fate Sect. As for Grandmaster Pill Demon’s Foundation Establishment Pill...” The old man seemed to think for a moment, before softly saying, “Mu’er, considering that your latent talent is ordinary, why don’t you give the pill to your father?”

When she heard his words, her eyes suddenly flashed.

“He’s back?” Her voice suddenly seemed grim.

“He came back a few months ago. He left all those years ago to join the Reliance Sect, but the Sect was disbanded. As usual, he has yet to reach Foundation Establishment... you should go see him.” Looking at the woman, the old man frowned, then sighed.

She was quiet for a moment. “I have my responsibilities here to take care of,” she said coldly. “Whoever Patriarch gives the Foundation Establishment Pill to, well, it doesn’t have anything to do with me.”

“He’s your father, after all. Furthermore, it seems to me he has some weighty matters on his mind, and might leave again soon. You should think about it carefully.” Shaking his head, the old man turned and left.

“Father...” Shangguan Mu sat down quietly, looking out the window, her eyes filled with bitterness.

As for Meng Hao, after changing clothes, he left the black-walled Milky Way City without the slightest bit of hesitation. Some distance away from the city, he hopped onto the treasured fan and sped off into the distance, his body turning into a prismatic rainbow.

He kept going for several days, until it became apparent that no one was pursuing him. At that point, he felt a bit more relaxed. In the wilderness some distance away from Mount Daqing, he used a flying sword to cut out an Immortal’s Cave for himself and then entered into secluded meditation.

This time, he was determined to break through to the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

He had plenty of Spirit Stones which he could use to duplicate Heavenly Spirit Pills. When he consumed enough Heavenly Spirit Pills, and his Cultivation base reached the appropriate level, he would begin to push toward the next level.

Time passed slowly. Soon, several months had passed. Meng Hao did not leave the Immortal's Cave. He sat there quietly, cross-legged, consuming medicinal pills and circulating his Cultivation base. As time passed, his Cultivation base grew more and more refined.

By the time the fifth month arrived, it seemed boundless. His Cultivation base roared, and his Core sea roiled. He had long since arrived at the peak of the eighth level of Qi Condensation. He was only a sliver away from the ninth level, and yet had been stuck at this sliver for two months already.

Thinking about the over one hundred thousand Spirit Stones he had spent already made Meng Hao's heart hurt. But what hurt even more was that after spending all of those Spirit Stones, he still hadn't been able to break through.

"Elder Xu told me that the fourth, sixth and eighth levels of Qi Condensation were bottlenecks. The year I broke through the fourth level, I had lots of Dry Spirit Pills. I broke through the sixth level when the North Sea demonstrated the Dao. Now I'm at the eighth level bottleneck... How do I break through?!" Meng Hao opened his bloodshot eyes.

Of the well over two hundred thousand Spirit Stones he'd had, only about fifty thousand now remained. The rest had been turned into Heavenly Spirit Pills. Currently, he was running low on Heavenly Spirit Pills as well.

As he had speculated, when relying only on medicinal pills to grow his Cultivation base, the effects grew weaker and weaker the more pills he consumed. He needed larger and larger amounts, a vicious cycle.

"I wonder what other people do in this situation," he thought, frowning. Despite pondering the situation over and over, he couldn't figure it out.

It seemed that no matter how many Heavenly Spirit Pills he consumed, and no matter how his Cultivation base grew, he just couldn't make that final step.

Another month passed. Meng Hao had already spent half a year in secluded meditation. Today, he sat there, hair in disarray, eyes bloodshot. In the past month, he had duplicated ten Plateau Charging Pills, which were supposed to be effective in the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He had hoped that using them would enable him to break through the bottleneck. While they had been somewhat effective, they hadn't produced the desired result.

“I must reach the ninth level of Qi Condensation!” He ground his teeth as he looked at what remained of his fifty thousand Spirit Stones. Not hesitating any longer, he took out the copper mirror. He had decided to duplicate the Foundation Establishment Pill!

A glow appeared, and there in front of him were two Foundation Establishment Pills. Including the original, he now had three Foundation Establishment Pills. If you showed these three pills to a disciple of one of the great Sects of the Southern Domain, they would gasp with astonishment. In the State of Zhao, it would be enough to cause a bloodbath if anyone saw them.

Today, Meng Hao would use these pills, not to reach Foundation Establishment, but to break through the bottleneck. Anyone who knew he was using the pills in this way would surely go crazy at the thought of such luxurious waste.

Through history, there were likely few people who would ever go to such extravagant lengths to break through a Qi Condensation bottleneck.

Meng Hao took a deep breath, then lifted up a pill, put it into his mouth, and swallowed it. A thunderous roar filled his mind, and his body shook. A majestic spiritual energy filled him that he never before could have imagined, exploding throughout his body.

...

During his half a year in secluded meditation, some events had occurred which he was unaware of. These events actually affected the entire State of Zhao. The first was the wildfire-like spread of the news of Meng Hao’s deal with the Violet Fate Sect disciples. It didn’t take long before Meng Hao’s name was known across the land.

Everyone knew that Meng Hao had mercilessly cheated the Violet Fate Sect.

Soon after this, the Cold Wind Sect and the Winding Stream Sect nearly declared war on each other. In the end, Sect priests of the Core Formation stage emerged and managed to calm things down. Shortly thereafter, the two Sects issued a joint order of arrest.

The evildoer Meng Hao of the Reliance Sect was now wanted. Anyone who killed him would receive a reward of Spirit Stones, medicinal pills and magical items. This was the first time in hundreds of years that two great Sects had joined together to issue an order of arrest. This news caused a great sensation in the Cultivation world of the State of Zhao.

Of course, no one really knew how to track down the man who had caused the bloody incident regarding the silver spear. But he had been marked for punishment, and the news spread quickly. Soon, Meng Hao was yet again the subject of discussion among all the Cultivators of the State of Zhao.

Whenever Cultivators gathered, they would end up talking about Meng Hao.

“I heard that when he was in the Reliance Sect, he robbed someone from one of the great Clans of the Southern Domain, a guy named Wang Tengfei who had joined the Sect. When he became a member of the Inner Sect, Wang Tengfei left in a rage.”

“That’s nothing. I heard directly from some former Reliance Sect members that Meng Hao opened a shop there. He ripped off a lot of his fellow disciples. They were all furious, of course, but didn’t dare to say anything.”

“Wow, it seems he’s been developing this devious personality for quite a while. It’s no surprise he cheated the Violet Fate Sect disciples, as well as Liu Daoyun and Sun Hua...”

“It looks like he just rips off whoever he runs into. He’s been cheating people ever since he left the Reliance Sect...”

Conversations and discussions like this filled the Cultivation World of the State of Zhao. If that was the extent of it, it would not have been a very big deal. Eventually the buzz would have died out. Except before that could happen, the three great Sects joined forces to recall the original arrest order and issue a new one. There was no discernable reason for this action.

The new arrest order was still for Meng Hao. However, killing him was now prohibited. Rewards would now be given, not for his death, but for his capture, or clues regarding his whereabouts!

According to the order, he could be injured or crippled, but not killed.

Such a strange arrest order instantly aroused the attention of quite a few people. Eventually, some of the most well-informed people were able to put the clues together to understand what was going on.

“The Core Formation Eccentrics of the three great Sects went last month to visit the State of Revelation. They paid respects to Lord Revelation, and asked him to divine whether or not Patriarch Reliance is really dead or not. According to his divination, Patriarch Reliance is weak to the point of death. However, the Immortal’s Cave he is in can only be opened by an Inner Sect disciple. Lord Revelation is already here with them in the State of Zhao, searching for where Patriarch Reliance is sealed in secluded meditation!”

As soon as the news began to spread, the three great Sects went to great lengths to stamp down the rumors. Anyone found spreading them would be punished by death penalty, and any city where the rumors appeared would be enveloped by a sealing spell casted by the three great Sects, preventing anyone from going in or out.