

The Heavens 681

Chapter 681: Foundation Seizing Grand Magic

“What glory and honor, bitch!?” raged Meng Hao from within the war chariot. He was originally a scholar, and was not the type of person to curse at others. However, after the parrot awakened, it had quite a wicked influence on him, and he had inevitably learned to swear.

Unfortunately, after all the years, he had only mastered this one curse.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch laughed hoarsely. The sound of it was filled with ancientness, like a cold wind blown from somewhere amidst countless years of time.

“I’m sorry,” he said, “but all the women in my immediate family are dead. If you’d like, we could make a deal. I’d be happy to deliver their skeletons to you. What do you think?”

Meng Hao’s face was extremely unsightly as he sped along in the war chariot. The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch continued to follow, and actually gained on Meng Hao. Meng Hao could clearly sense that his own body was continuously emitting white mist. He was filled with the pain of having something within him forcefully separated, which caused anxiety to fill his eyes.

“It’s still not time to use the Immortal’s sword!” he thought.

“Foundation Seizing Grand Magic!” said the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. His voice echoed out in all directions, but Meng Hao was incapable of looking back. However, he could sense the speed with which the white mist poured out of him suddenly increase by severalfold. An indescribable pain filled him, and he couldn’t hold back from letting out a despondent shout.

Shockingly, something that looked like red veins could be seen pulsing on his face, and in fact, his entire body. It almost appeared as if he was about to be torn to pieces, from the inside out!

Meng Hao began to shake, and blood sprayed from his mouth. He was now unable to continue to employ the qi of Immortal Shows the Way, so the war chariot came to a stop and shrank down. He put it into his bag of holding and then, enduring the intense pain, lifted his right hand to produce the flag of three streamers. He waved it out in front of him, and instantly, dense fog billowed up.

Down below, the seemingly never-ending black seawater seemed almost to be congealed in place. Not a single ripple could be seen on its surface!

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch floated in the air some distance away, grinning at Meng Hao.

It was a ghastly grin, filled with greed, almost as if to him, Meng Hao was food. His expression caused Meng Hao's scalp to go numb. He waved the flag of three streamers, causing the monstrous black mist to sweep toward the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch.

"That magical item... looks a bit familiar," said the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, his eyes glittering. He performed an incantation with his right hand, and then pointed forward.

"Moonrise Over the Sea ," he said in his hoarse voice. Down below, the black seawater immediately turned violet. Then a red-colored moon suddenly rose up from within. The appearance of the red moon caused flames to fill the world. They transformed into a massive fireball that shot toward Meng Hao's flag of three streamers.

When they slammed into each other, the flag wasn't damaged, but the black mist immediately fell apart. The red moon, on the other hand, faded like an extinguished lamp, completely defeated and dispersed.

Next, the flag of three streamers expanded, spreading out to blot out the sky and also push Meng Hao and the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch apart.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch's face flickered, and he said, "This treasure... is very familiar. I'm sure that I've seen it somewhere before!"

Looking very serious, he performed a double handed incantation, then raised his hands high above his head and touched his ten fingertips together.

"Power of the rising sun, disperse all darkness of night!"

At the moment, everything was pitch black, with no light existing anywhere. The flag of three streamers seemed to have become part of the darkness of night.

But then, a beam of light appeared, shooting out from the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch to swirl around him. It was almost like... he had turned into a rising sun in the middle of the dark night!

The rising sun had appeared, and a bright glow began to spread out in all directions. Its power began to dispel the power of the dark night. The boundless blackness vanished under the light, and was completely cast away!

Meng Hao couldn't take it, and blood sprayed out of his mouth. The flag of three streamers rumbled and began to glow blurry. It spun backward, shrinking down at the same time. The entire world filled with brightness, and the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch floated there in mid-air. If you looked at him, it was impossible to tell whether he was a person or a sun!

Meng Hao's mind trembled. This was a divine ability, a Daoist magic that he had never even heard of!

"What divine ability is this!?" A tremor ran through his body, and blood poured from his mouth. When the sunlight had dispelled the darkness of night, it seemed he was considered to be part of the night. His body burst into flames, and he let out a shrill cry. Violet light flickered in his eyes as he frenziedly healed himself. However, it was still amid thunderous rumbling sounds that he fell down toward the black sea below.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch's voice was filled with pride as he said, "That was another art personally created by the Wang Clan ancestor. For you to have seen it with your own eyes means that you can wear a smile on your face as you go to the underworld." His face was a bit paler than before; clearly it was not a simple thing to use the art he just had. Were it not for the fact that he needed to end the battle, he wouldn't have used it.

The bright glow filled a vast area, and the seawater was turning violet. As Meng Hao splashed into the water, the Wang Clan Patriarch's eyes flickered.

"Even now, he still doesn't unleash the power of that Immortal's sword?" he thought. "When I first arrived, he could only use about half of the power. Now, on the verge of death, he still doesn't utilize it.... I can thus be seventy percent certain that the Immortal's sword is now useless!" He suddenly flashed through the air, stretching his right hand out to grab at Meng Hao.

"Foundation Seizing Grand Magic!" A black glow spread out from the five fingers of his right hand. The light transformed into something like a black hole that emanated a shocking gravitational force.

Meng Hao's entire person appeared to be decaying. His flesh split and tore, his hair fell out, and he looked withered to the extreme. His life force faded rapidly. Compared to the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch's peak Dao Seeking cultivation base, Meng Hao's own cultivation base... was too weak.

Even as the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch closed in, madness suddenly burned in Meng Hao's eyes. Despite the fact that his blood vessels were shattered, and he was gravely injured, he still managed to slap his bag of holding with his right hand. The alcohol flagon appeared, and he took a drink. Then the Immortal's sword could be seen, and he spit the alcohol out of his mouth.

Immortal qi exploded out, swift and fierce to the extreme. When the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch saw that it was about to slash toward him, his heart trembled, but after only a slight moment, he smiled coldly. He had long since prepared for exactly this situation. He immediately began to perform an incantation that would cause a body double to appear in his exact position. However, it was at this point that a violent tremor ran through Meng Hao. Apparently, he couldn't keep his grip on the Immortal's sword. Blood sprayed from his mouth, and his entire right arm instantly exploded into a haze of blood and gore. The Immortal's sword tumbled down into the sea.

No matter how you looked at it, it seemed clear what had happened. Meng Hao was not capable of handling the power of the sword, and yet had still tried to forcefully control it. His right arm couldn't sustain the power, and had exploded.

Meng Hao laughed bitterly, and a look of despair appeared on his face.

"I can't accept this!" he howled, his voice filled with extreme grief and indignation.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch watched on smiling. As of this point, he was now eighty percent certain that the Immortal's sword could be of no more threat to him. A ferocious expression appeared on his face.

Of course, having lived for so many years, he was wily and cunning, and even more so, cautious. Despite the current situation, and Meng Hao having lost an arm, he was still not off guard regarding the Immortal's sword.

Instead of trying to lay hands on the Immortal's sword, he headed toward Meng Hao.

When Meng Hao saw this, anger sprang up in his heart. However, it only took a moment for a completely ruthless idea to spring up in his head. The ruthlessness of the idea actually did not target the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, but rather, himself!

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch neared. Hovering in front of Meng Hao, he lifted his right hand up and pushed the shimmering blackness onto Meng Hao's chest. Then he dug his hand into Meng Hao's flesh, his fingernails literally ripping through Meng Hao's flesh.

"Your skin is thick and your body tough," grated the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. "Not bad. If you were able to take your fleshly body to the next stage, then perhaps I wouldn't be able to deal with you. But right now... it's just not quite good enough." His fingernails stabbed deep into Meng Hao's chest.

"Foundation Seizing Grand Magic!" A strange light appeared in the eyes of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, a thirst, a desire, and an excitement. His fingers tightened viciously, and a rotating black hole appeared inside of Meng Hao.

The gravitation force it exerted was shocking, and completely filled Meng Hao.

His body began to tremble as unthinkable pain filled him. Countless blood-colored strands appeared all over his body. These strands had long since fused into him; this was his Perfect Dao foundation!

It was the foundation upon which he would achieve his Dao in the future!

Now, though, the blood-colored strands twisted and distorted as they shrank down, relentlessly sucked toward the black hole in his chest.

They were sucked toward his chest from his legs, his arms, his head, from every position in his body.

"From now on, your Perfect Dao Foundation belongs to me!

"Henceforth, my path to Immortal Ascension will be open!

"I will no longer be a false Immortal, but rather, a true Immortal!

"I will pursue the path of the ancestor and become an almighty expert of Heaven and Earth!" The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch was so incredibly excited that he lifted his head up and laughed out loud.

He slowly pulled his right hand back, and as he did, countless red strands stretched out between it and Meng Hao's body.

The red strands shone resplendently, and anyone who saw them would think of Perfection. Absolute Perfection without blemish!

Meng Hao's body withered and grew old. His cultivation base also fell. He could feel his Qi Condensation foundation vanish. His Dao Pillar foundation disappeared. His Perfect Core also faded away.

His expression was hollow, as if he had lost all power to fight back. He lay there blankly, bitterness filling his face. Pain wracked his body, although it couldn't even come close to matching the pain he felt in his heart.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch looked at the red strands that were building up in his hand, and intense desire built up in his eyes. His heart filled with excitement and elation. In fact, he was more excited now than he ever had been in his entire life.

In this moment, he completely set aside any preparations he had made to defend against the Immortal's sword. His entire heart and mind was completely focused on extracting the Perfect Dao foundation.

It was then, after he had abandoned his defenses, that grim coldness suddenly appeared in Meng Hao's blank eyes.

"Anybody who wants to take my Dao foundation must first pay the price!"

"Immortal's sword!" Meng Hao's eyes were filled with madness that caused the Wang Clan Patriarch's mind to tremble. Suddenly, the Immortal's sword that had sunk down into the sea exploded with an earthshaking Sword Qi. It shot out from within the water, moving at incredible speed.

Chapter 682: I Will Become Immortal!

Shocking sword qi billowed out as the Immortal's sword flew up from the bottom of the sea, moving with indescribable speed.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch's face fell, and an intense sense of deadly crisis filled him. He was about to dodge to the side when Meng Hao's left hand suddenly stretched out and grabbed down onto the Wang Clan Patriarch's arm.

Meng Hao's eyes were shot with blood, and his expression was one of utmost ferocity, as if he were a devil or a fiend. He glared at the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, his hand filled with the power of his life force, his stubbornness, and his madness.

"You...." said the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, his face flickering as he sent the power of his cultivation base bursting out in all directions. His mind trembled with the sense of impending doom. He knew that he could not make any mistakes, but because the sword aura completely filled the entire area, he could not tell where exactly the Immortal's sword was coming from.

What he could do, though, was completely lock down the entire area.

RUMBLE!!

The Immortal's sword did not fly up out of the sea to attack the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch! That would slow it down a bit, and right now... at this juncture, each moment counted for everything!

In his madness, Meng Hao had been waiting for this very moment. In the end, he used the Immortal qi and the Immortal's sword to...

Stab himself!

The sword pierced into his back to appear directly in front of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch!

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch had locked down all other avenues of approach, but he had forgotten about... Meng Hao's body.

There was no way he could ever have imagined that Meng Hao would possibly be so ruthless. This was not a ruthlessness toward enemies, but a ruthlessness toward himself. The Immortal's sword stabbed through his body with lightning-like speed, then shot out from his chest toward the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch's mind spun. His first mistake was not realizing that Meng Hao would actually wait until the very last possible moment to unleash his desire to kill. The second mistake was not realizing that Meng Hao would use his own body as the vessel with which to deliver the blow of the Immortal's sword.

He wanted to defend himself, but could not! He wanted to ward off the blow, but was unable!

"If I can't live, then we will perish together!" said Meng Hao. "What's to fear in death? Mortals can live for a hundred years at most. I, Meng Hao, have already lived more than two hundred years. What's the harm in dying?!?!"

"From the moment I stepped onto the path of cultivation, I was prepared. I don't care about dying, but what I do care about... is living a life of freedom and independence!"

"The Resurrection Lily turned into fetters that held me back. And as for you, 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, you want to do the same? Well then, I'll just have to sever you!"

Meng Hao's level of determination and decisiveness could shake Heaven and Earth!

BAM!

The Immortal's sword and its shocking sword qi stabbed directly into the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. He let out a bloodcurdling scream, then jerked his right arm to shake off Meng Hao's hand. Meng Hao's body lurched up as vast quantities of red, Perfect Dao foundation strands were wrenched out of him. They transformed into a resplendent red cloud that hovered up above.

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch immediately pulled the brightly shining red strands of Perfection into his body. It was a moment in which he should have been extremely smug.

Instead, he screamed in miserable and shocking fashion.

The Immortal's sword pierced through his chest, exploding his heart and sending blood spraying about in all directions. He retreated, his mind filled with astonishment and terror. The wound to his body was secondary to the unbridled Immortal qi which tore through his body.

But all of that was actually not even worth mentioning when compared to the trembling of his soul.

That was the most terrifying thing to him; his soul shook to the point where it felt as if it were going to be torn to shreds.

“NOOOO!!!”

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch howled as he sensed that the three spiritual aspects and seven physical aspects of his soul, which formerly had been fused harmoniously, were now being ripped apart by the stabbing of the Immortal’s sword. In fact, all aspects of his soul were rapidly beginning to fade.

“Meng Hao! DIIEEEEE!!” Unprecedented madness filled the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. He lifted his head up and howled as his entire body filled with rumbling sounds. Blood and gore oozed out from his mutilated chest. Suddenly, his withered body expanded as the red strands of the Perfect Dao foundation fused into his arm and the rest of his body. Suddenly, a trace of his own Immortal qi bloomed inside of him.

Unfortunately, it didn’t matter that Immortal qi had appeared, he was unable to prevent the collapse of his soul.

“Immortal!! I will become Immortal!!” he raved. Shouting, he flew toward Meng Hao, his expression vicious. He raised his right hand into the air; everything shook, Immortal qi rose up into the sky, and the seawater vibrated.

Meng Hao had lost his Dao foundation, and his cultivation base had fallen. He no longer looked like a young man. He was old now, withered, with only a single breath of life left.

And yet, he smiled, a smile filled with contentment, freedom, and viciousness.

“If you want to take away my Dao foundation, you have to pay the price.”

As the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch’s massive palm strike descended, the sky grew dim. Just as the power of the attack was about to envelop him, suddenly, a sigh could be heard coming from within the sea. Black fog roiled out, covering over Meng Hao. In the blink of an eye, the fog ebbed and he vanished from beneath the Wang Clan Patriarch’s palm.

Something else appeared at the same time as the fog. A ship.

Its aura was ancient, and it was filled with the vestiges of the passage of time. The deck was dilapidated, and the entire ship seemed completely ancient. This was none other than... the ancient Underworld Ship!

At the prow of the ship, a man sat cross-legged, wearing a dilapidated suit of armor. Next to him lay Meng Hao; his eyes were closed, and it was impossible to tell whether he was alive or dead.

The Wang Clan Patriarch's palm strike slammed into the sea, sending water splashing everywhere as a huge depression appeared. The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch was screaming and going crazy. Although the aura of an Immortal grew more clear on his body, his expression was one of madness. His soul was on the verge of dissipating. He had already lost one physical aspect of his soul, leaving him with only three spiritual and six physical aspects.

"I won't accept this!!" he roared. His hatred toward Meng Hao had reaching the pinnacle. His mind and thinking were no longer clear, and the only thing on his mind was that before he died, he needed to kill Meng Hao.

He charged forward, but at the same time, the Underworld Ship began to drift away. No matter how the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch pursued it, he couldn't catch up. He could only watch as the Underworld Ship disappeared off into the sea.

"DIIIIIIEEEEEEEE!!" roared the Wang Clan Patriarch. Blood oozed out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. He violently slammed his palm onto the top of his head, causing blood to spray out. However, in that moment, he suddenly regained some of his clarity.

"I will reach Immortal Ascension! My soul must remain complete! I can't die! I haven't reached Immortal Ascension yet! I'm just on the verge!!" His eyes bloodshot, he opened up a rift in the air and then vanished.

Shockingly, when he reappeared, he was back in the Southern Domain, in the Wang Clan.

"I will reach Immortal Ascension! I will become Immortal!"

"I cannot die! I will not die!"

“I have the Perfect Dao foundation, and am destined to be Immortal! Immortal qi has already appeared!

“How could I possibly die!?!?” As he raved, his mind was thrown into complete chaos. Right now the only thing he could think about was reaching Immortal Ascension. His eyes were completely bloodshot as he flew down toward one of the cities of the Wang Clan.

The city was populated completely by members of the Wang Clan. There were mortals and cultivators, elderly people and children. As he shot toward the city, several hundred cultivators flew out. When they saw the appearance of the 10th Patriarch, their faces fell.

“Patriarch!”

“Patriarch, you... AAIIEEEEEE!!” Even as the people opened their mouths to greet him, the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch grabbed one of the Wang Clan members and then crushed his fingers down. The cultivator’s head exploded, and his soul flew out to be inhaled by the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch.

The other Wang Clan members were shocked, but before they could react, the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch turned into a black wind that whistled toward them. Miserable shrieks began to echo out in all directions as hundreds of people were all eradicated, their souls absorbed by the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch.

“I will reach Immortal Ascension!” he raved. “I will not die!” His eyes red, he shot down toward the city. Everywhere he passed, bloodcurdling screams rang out. Countless souls flew toward him, which he absorbed. In the space of only about ten breaths, the entire city was deathly silent. Everyone in the city... was dead!

Only the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch remained. He flew up into the air, howling.

“Return to me, my soul!” he howled.

There were a total of three such cities within the Wang Clan. The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch suddenly vanished, to reappear outside the second city.

The scene that played out was exactly the same as before. Miserable shrieks could be heard as countless lives met heartrending ends. A black cloud covered the entire city as all members of the Wang bloodline had their souls consumed by the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. It all happened in the blink of an eye.

And yet, the spiritual and physical aspects of his soul were still dispersing; of the original ten total, one spiritual aspect and two physical aspects had already vanished.

“NOOOO!!!!” he howled, shooting toward the third city. This city was the location of the Wang Clan’s ancestral mansion in South Heaven. As he neared, thousands of cultivators shot out from within, including two Spirit Severing experts. Their faces were filled with shock.

“The Patriarch has gone mad!!”

“He massacred two cities full of clan members! He’s insane!!”

BOOM!

Within the the territory of the Wang Clan were the mountains in which successive generations of Patriarchs were buried. Seven mountain ranges in particular suddenly emanated shocking roars. In the blink of an eye, seven coffins appeared, from out of which exploded seven emaciated old men. Each and every one was in a rage.

“10th Patriarch, what are you doing!?”

“10th Patriarch, stay your hand!!”

Their shocking roars rose up like thunder, causing a bit of lucidity to suddenly appear in the eyes of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. In that moment, he realized everything that he had done, and his body began to tremble. In his heart, he felt pain from having slaughtered countless members of his own clan.

Intense pain filled him, but only for a moment. Then, his eyes shone with determination.

“I’ll kill you and consume your souls too! Then, I will achieve Immortal Ascension! The whole clan can die, as long as I remain alive!”

Chapter 683: Henceforth

He was willing to sink into depravity!

All for Immortal Ascension!

All to avoid death!

Tears streamed down the face of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch. He howled, and his eyes were completely bloodshot. He no longer even had a heart, but he still felt a sense of belonging to the clan and the bonds of kinship toward his fellow clan members. But now... it was too late to turn back.

He was not willing to die, especially not after he had acquired the Perfect Dao foundation and his body was filled with Immortal Qi. The only thing he could do was sink to the lowest level.

Regret? He did not know the meaning of the term. He could only consume. Consume the souls of his own bloodline. Only those souls could save his life.

This was... the only thing he could do!

All for Immortal Ascension!

The 10th Wang Clan Patriarch howled hoarsely as his consciousness grew murky. He slipped further into madness. KILL! KILL! KILL!

He had no idea how many people he killed, nor how many souls of fellow clan members he consumed. In one night, all the members of the Wang Clan in the clan's third city... died.

The Patriarchs buried in the various mountain ranges were destroyed amidst rumbling booms. The seven Patriarchs had incredible cultivation bases, but the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch now possessed Immortal qi, as well as a Perfect Dao foundation. They simply couldn't compare to him, and were no match at all.

One by one, they all died!

Mountains crumbled, and everything shook. In one night, the Wang Clan's entire foundation in the lands of South Heaven... was uprooted. This was genocide!

He was the 10th Patriarch, who had existed for ages in the lands of South Heaven. He was the Patriarch with the highest cultivation base in the clan, a person the clan members looked up to like a god.

But on that day, the god became a devil, and carnage reigned. During the massacre, he regained lucidity three times.

The first time was when he killed his younger brother, the 11th Wang Clan Patriarch who had stayed by his side for countless years. He ripped his soul out, then, tears streaming down his face, laughed maniacally and consumed it.

The second time was when he killed his most beloved member of the junior generation. The man cried, begging the Patriarch to spare his life. He crushed the man's skull, then, his hand still covered with blood and brain, grabbed the soul and consumed it.

The third time was when the world had grown completely silent. Beneath his feet was nothing but wreckage and bodies. No living person existed. At that point, he regained clarity.

However, that clarity only lasted for a few breaths of time. Then he slipped back into madness. By this point, his body was no longer injured. He was recovered. However, the souls that he had lost... would remain forever lost. Two spiritual aspects and three physical aspects were gone forever.

He now had only one spiritual aspect and four physical aspects.

This was a result bought by the lives of all the Wang Clan members in the lands of South Heaven. His soul did not dissipate, and he did not die. However... with only one spiritual aspect and four physical aspects to his soul, who knew if and when he would ever become lucid again.

For the most part, he was descended into madness and carnage. Before he completely sank back down into the depravity, he shed some tears, which spattered down onto the ruins of the Wang Clan. Perhaps years later, a field of blood colored flowers would bloom in that very spot....

He raised his head and let out a mournful, bitter laugh. Then he turned into a bright beam of light that shot off into the distance.

“Immortal Ascension!

“I will become Immortal!”

He left, forever submerged within his insanity.

Henceforth, there was no Wang Clan in the lands of South Heaven. In its place, a lunatic existed who constantly raved about Immortal Ascension. Of course, few people dared to provoke the madman.

That was because... he was halfway into Immortal Ascension. He possessed Immortal qi and only needed to pass through Immortal Tribulation to become a true Immortal!

Unfortunately, his soul was not complete, and he was eternally sunken into depravity. His day of Immortal Tribulation would never come.

...

In the depths of the Second Ring of the Milky Way Sea was an enormous Resurrection Lily, drifting back and forth in the water. It was impossible to see the number of colors, but what could be seen was the figure of a woman sitting on the flower. She almost seemed to be using the petals as a swing as she swayed back and forth.

“No Dao Foundation. He likely perished....

“In the League of Demon Sealers, the Ninth is the pinnacle. It seems the league... is broken.”

Outside the Fourth Ring of the Milky Way Sea, an island sped across the surface of the water. Suddenly, a tremor ran through it, and it stopped moving. After a long, long moment, an enormous head rose up out of the sea and looked off into the distance.

“His aura... is gone....

“The little bastard is full of schemes and wickedness. He’s dead? Good! Great! Wonderf... wait, he died?!?!” He head quivered slightly. Patriarch Reliance wanted to feel happy, but for some reason, he actually wasn’t.

“Dead.... Dammit, who killed him? He’s the Patriarch’s only Inner Sect disciple! The little bastard is endlessly scheming, how could he have died?!?!”

On the island, Guyiding Tri-rain also seemed to have sensed something, and her face paled. She leaned up against the old Boat Spirit, sorrow filling her eyes.

“Didn’t you promise me that you would help me turn into a sea...? You broke your promise....”

In the lands of the Southern Domain, in the Violet Fate Sect, Pill Demon was smiling as he concocted a batch of pills especially for Meng Hao. Recently, he’d gotten the feeling that Master and apprentice would be reunited before too long.

He wanted to finish concocting the special batch of pills before they met in person. However, it was in that moment that the pill furnace suddenly exploded. Pill Demon suddenly seemed to age by hundreds of years. He silently looked off into the distance for a long, long time.

Chu Yuyan was sitting cross-legged in meditation, practicing cultivation in her Immortal’s cave. Then, for some unknown reason, her heart suddenly felt troubled. Her eyes opened, and she looked up into the night sky. A shooting star flew by.

“When I was young, my dad always said that when you see a shooting star, it means someone just perished.”

In the Black Sieve Sect, Xu Qing sat with eyes closed, seeking enlightenment of a Daoist magic she had acquired in the Demon Immortal Sect. Suddenly, a tremor ran through her body, and her eyes opened. Her face was deathly pale, and she lifted her hand up to her chest.

An intense, uneasy feeling made her suddenly stop cultivating. She walked out of her Immortal’s cave, her face growing even more ashen.

“Pain. This is the second time I’ve felt pain like this.... The first time was the time by the Rebirth Cave.

“Meng Hao, is it you? What... happened? Why am I suddenly so frightened?” Xu Qing didn’t know why, but she suddenly found herself weeping. She didn’t dare to think too deeply about her sudden premonition. Trembling, she flew up into the sky.

Although she didn’t know the source of the feeling, for some reason she looked toward the Milky Way Sea and then began flying.

On that day, Fatty was very irritable. He violently lost his temper countless times in the Golden Frost Sect, although he wasn’t sure why.

On that day, Chen Fan killed. Although he looked calm, deep in his heart existed a boundless desire to slaughter. He flew out of the sect and killed numerous villainous cultivators.

On that day in the Blood Demon Sect, Wang Youcai made a cultivation base breakthrough into the Nascent Soul stage. However, he felt no joy. He looked in the direction where the State of Zhao used to exist, and thought of his childhood, and of his old friends.

On that day in the Northern Reaches, a Blood cultivator rose to prominence. Acting alone, he slaughtered an entire small-scale sect, then occupied the location. He was young, but unfeeling and coldblooded. In his blood-soaked hands, he held a magical item, a pearl. The young man had a name, too. Dong Hu.

On that day, in the Great Tang of the Eastern Lands, in a tall tower, a husband and wife got into an argument the likes of which was virtually unprecedented. The woman eventually stormed off, her eyes filled with tears. The man looked silently off into the distance. There was no one to see it, but tears streamed down his face.

Time slowly passed by.

Xu Qing arrived in the Milky Way Sea. No matter how she searched, she found nothing. An entire sixty-year cycle passed before she silently picked an area on the border of the Southern Domain where she sat down to meditate. Every day she would look out at the Milky Way Sea. She had the feeling that out there somewhere, was Meng Hao.

It was only a feeling, but she believed it.

As for the couple who had argued, the woman also reached the Milky Way Sea. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she went to the Third Ring, to the Second Ring, to everywhere. She found nothing. She searched and searched, and even fought a battle with the Dawn Immortal in the Second Ring.

The battle shook Heaven and Earth. All of the Sea Devils in the Second Ring were killed, and black seawater spread out to cover the entire Third Ring. Heaven and Earth grew dark, and as for who won the battle, and who lost, nobody knew.

One hundred years passed....

In the Inner Ring of the Milky Way Sea, the water was red. An ancient battleship floated across the surface of the water, at the prow of which sat an old man in a suit of armor. He sat there cross-legged, apparently looking off into the distance. It was impossible to tell what exactly he was looking at.

Next to the old man rested a body. It was a man with no hair or eyebrows; he was completely shriveled up. Wrinkles covered his skin, and he looked as if he had just climbed up out of a grave. The entire body stank of putrefaction.

He had no right arm, and a gaping hole could be seen in his chest, where there existed... no heart whatsoever.

A flame burned above him, casting out a gentle light that covered over his body. As the light was cast out, it transformed into glittering dots, within each of which could be seen flickering, incomprehensible magical symbols. Oh so slowly, those dots of light bored into the hole in Meng Hao's chest.

Inside of Meng Hao's chest, the flesh and blood writhed, as if it were slowly growing.

The years seemed as if they would flow by in this manner forever, and because they were in the Inner Ring of the Milky Way Sea, there was no one who could find the ancient ship, or Meng Hao.

On one particular day, the armored old man slowly opened his eyes. Hidden within them were the sun, the moon, and the stars. Endless years of time permeated those eyes, as if the man could see into their boundless depths.

He turned his head, and his abstruse gaze fell onto Meng Hao.

When that happened, Meng Hao's body seemed to experience the passing of thousands of years. The fire burned intensely, emitting more crystalline dots of light that merged into the hole in his chest. The wriggling of the blood and flesh increased, and soon the healing process was visible to the naked eye. A new heart formed, and the wounds were healed. Even the bones and flesh of the right arm slowly began to grow out.

In what seemed like the blink of an eye, Meng Hao was completely restored. Not a wound could be seen on him. However... his hair was pure white, and he looked incredibly old, as if he were an elderly man.

Weakness radiated out from him as he opened his eyes.

His eyes were filled with confusion. He lay there thinking for a long time before memories started to trickle into his brain. He thought of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch, and how he had chosen to end in common ruin with him rather than give up his freedom. In the end, he had landed a sword blow on the Wang Patriarch's soul!

"My cultivation base..." He closed his eyes and cast his senses inward. After a while, he slowly rose into a sitting position and looked at the armored old man, who sat with his back to him. The old man seemed as if he would sit on this ship for all eternity as it roamed about.

Meng Hao clasped hands and bowed deeply. "Senior, thank you for your kindness in saving my life!"

Chapter 684: On Board

The old man didn't say anything in response. It almost seemed like he didn't even know who Meng Hao was; he was simply roaming about, and happened to encounter him. Spurred by some distant memories, he had randomly reached out to save him.

"Heaven and Earth... have their end...."

"But what about me? Where is my end?" The old man's murmuring voice was hoarse, and incomparably ancient. He finally sighed and closed his eyes, seemingly slipping into a state of

lifelessness. Meng Hao could clearly see the old man sitting there with his back to him, but he couldn't sense his existence at all. In fact, he couldn't even sense the existence of the ship.

"Senior?" he said, gaping. Finally, he realized that the old man was immersed in his own world. Meng Hao crossed his legs reticently and then looked off into the distance and began to think.

"My Dao foundation... is gone." He felt empty inside, and could not sense a cultivation base. It was as if it had vanished like mist or smoke. An intense weakness filled him, and he felt so incredibly old that it seemed that death was just around the corner.

He now had absolutely no cultivation base whatsoever.

Filled with bitterness, Meng Hao tried to begin to practice cultivation, but his entire body was like a sieve. No matter what breathing exercises he did, he couldn't build up even a bit of spiritual energy.

However, he wouldn't give in so easily, so he produced a bag of holding. Although he himself had no spiritual energy, bags of holding from Seahold could be opened once without any spiritual energy.

He had bought quite a few such bags in the past. The parrot and the meat jelly were inside the bag, sleeping. It seemed Meng Hao's weakness had caused them to lose their own vitality.

He took a medicinal pill out from the bag of holding, then consumed it and started meditating. After attempting Qi Condensation techniques for a moment, he trembled, and his face went pale. Once again, he looked listless and dispirited.

"I can't practice cultivation," he murmured. "I have no foundation whatsoever to build on." As of now, Meng Hao was certain that his Dao foundation was completely and utterly gone.

Still not able to accept it, Meng Hao tried again. Time passed, and soon a month had gone by. Meng Hao tried a variety of methods, but none of them formed even the slightest bit of a cultivation base.

It was a complete failure.

He tried over and over again, but his body only continued to grow weaker. After another month, he finally accepted that he was in a hopeless situation.

Bitter laughter rang out, growing louder and louder, breaking the silence of the Milky Way Sea's Inner Ring as it echoed out from within the ship.

The laughter also contained intense hatred. "10th Wang Clan Patriarch!"

He wasn't sure if the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch was dead, but as of now, that didn't matter.

"I have no cultivation base, but I'm still alive.... However, considering my current life force, who knows how many more days I can stay alive...." His bitter laughter gradually grew weaker, and finally, he stared off into the distance, empty and numb.

He wasn't even sure what he was seeing. His mind was blank. He thought of nothing. He looked at nothing. Eventually, his gaze turned to fall on the armored old man, and hope suddenly flickered in his eyes.

His life had been saved by this old man, and considering how mystical he was, and how bizarre the ancient Underworld Ship was, Meng Hao was confident that if the man did something, his own cultivation base could potentially be restored.

Meng Hao stood, clasped his hands, and bowed deeply.

"Senior."

The old man didn't speak. He seemed as lifeless as ever.

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment, then walked around to stand in front of the old man. He was just about to bow again, when suddenly his eyes went wide with disbelief.

The old man's face was filled with boundless ancientness and time. However, when Meng Hao looked at it, his heart and mind trembled. The man's body was actually not material, but rather, faint and translucent.

Except, Meng Hao clearly remembered that the old man wasn't like this before.

After a moment of thought, he slowly reached up his right hand and attempted to touch the old man. His hand passed directly through him as if through empty space, and when he tried it a second time, the same thing happened. Finally, he stepped forward, and ended up walking directly through him. He turned his head to look back, and his eyes were filled with a complex expression.

“Was I simply mistaken before? Was he always like this? Is his existence tied into the meaning of the ship’s name? Underworld Ship.... Ship of the Underworld Specter?” Meng Hao laughed bitterly as he began to look around. The ship was broken down, dilapidated, filled with an aura of rot.

Several days later, he finished exploring the ship in its entirety, and never found anything out of the ordinary. Everything he saw and touched was ancient and archaic.

He stood at the prow and looked out as the Underworld Ship slid noiselessly across the water. Everything was quiet; the sea rose and fell, although there were no waves. They never encountered any other living things.

It seemed that wherever this ship went, everything became completely quiet.

“Well, this is fine, too....

“I can spend the last years of my life on an empty ship, all alone.

“I bet nobody knows that I’m about to perish,” he murmured. “At least that way, Master won’t be sad, nor will Xu Qing feel too much grief. Fatty, Elder Brother, and all my other friends... none of them will know.” He sat down cross-legged in the place where he had woken up earlier and looked off into the distance.

As he did, his heart slowly became peaceful. He no longer burned with resentment, nor did he ponder any more mysteries. He was left with only a bit of ruefulness. He regretted not being able to visit his Master ever again. He regretted not holding Xu Qing in his embrace just once. He regretted not returning to the Southern Domain and gathering with the friends of long ago.

Even more so, he regretted never being able to visit the Great Tang in the Eastern Lands. He regretted not being able to see his father and mother again.

“Old turtle Reliance, from here on out, you’re free....

“Ancestors of the Demon Sealing Sect, it seems that from now, there will be no more League of Demon Sealers.” Meng Hao sighed. He was now slowly growing calmer and feeling less restrained.

Death was something that could not be avoided, so he would not take it to heart too much.

“It’s too bad I have so many Spirit Stones in my bag of holding.... What a pity that I never got to spend them.

“And then there are all those debts people owe. Those people have gotten really lucky.... After the creditor dies, they won’t have to pay back their debts.

“Hmmm, I guess I really don’t have to pay those three silver pieces back to Steward Zhou after all.

“It’s such a pity I still have so many treasures. Well, some little bastard in the future is sure going to get lucky.” When he thought of this, he could only sigh.

“Perhaps my death will spare the world a bit of calamity. To all of you who would have been conned by me in the future, you don’t know how lucky you are!

“So, so lucky!” Meng Hao thought back through his life, to his youth spent studying and participating in the Imperial examinations. Then he ran into Xu Qing and joined the Reliance Sect. He stole Wang Tengfei’s good fortune and became an Inner Sect disciple. Patriarch Reliance conned him, so he conned back. Eventually, he made it to the Southern Domain, where he joined the Violet Fate Sect and then rose to prominence.

“Poor Xu Qing.... She loves me, and I love her. What a pity we won’t be able to get married now.... I’ve never actually even been with a woman....” When he thought of this, Meng Hao suddenly felt especially sad.

“And then there’s Chu Yuyan. She was definitely interested in me....”

Meng Hao continued to sigh and sigh.

He thought of how he had killed the Chosen from the Ji Clan, then escaped to the Western Desert. He recalled everything that happened with the Crow Divinity Tribes, and then couldn't help think of Han Shan, Demoness Zhixiang, and everything that happened in the Demon Immortal Sect.

“Senior Han Shan, I won't be able to keep my promise...”

“Demoness Zhixiang, don't worry about that favor you owe me.”

Then there was Ke Jiushi and Ke Yunhai. Meng Hao thought about many things, and eventually started thinking about his First Severing.

“I didn't even practice cultivation for three hundred years, and yet completed my First Severing. A great Dao descended, and the Resurrection Lily became my Spirit Severing Treasure. For me, Meng Hao, to live a life like this, well... it's enough for me!

“In all the lands of South Heaven, few people could even come close to comparing to me!” He suddenly felt very proud of himself. The laughter, the bitterness, the fury, and the memories of his entire life became images that flashed through his mind.

More time passed. Another half month went by, during which time Meng Hao continued to look off into the distance, thinking about the past. Finally one day, the illusory, armored old man suddenly caught his attention.

For months, the old man hadn't moved at all, and seemed completely empty. Now, his right hand raised up, and a sealing mark appeared. He performed an incantation, and gradually, two colors appeared in his hand, black and white.

However, when Meng Hao went over to try to touch the old man, he was as illusory as ever.

As more time passed, Meng Hao began to pay attention to the way in which the old man meditated. He observed his emptiness, and his incantation gestures, along with the blackness and whiteness that they summoned.

Gradually, he focused more and more on the black and white. It seemed to contain something important, although he wasn't sure what.

The white seemed to contain all of the colors in Heaven and Earth. It seemed to assimilate everything around and transform it into a similar whiteness. As for the black, it was incredibly potent and domineering, as if no colors were qualified to stand in its presence.

Gradually, Meng Hao immersed himself in observing the old man. Without even realizing it, he began to meditate in the same way, including the breathing exercises and the hand gestures.

Eventually, he even decided that he might as well sit in the exact same position as the old man, superimposing with his illusory form. That way, all of his motions would be exactly the same as the old man's.

He closed his eyes and immersed himself in the process. Time passed. In the blink of an eye, three years had gone by.

During the three years, Meng Hao grew weaker, and his life force gradually withered away. He didn't care about that, though. The only thing he was interested in was copying the movements of the old man, and finding a way to keep on living.

One day, he suddenly experienced an emptiness in which he found that neither life nor death were important. As he performed an incantation with his right hand, whiteness became visible.

Suddenly, an ancient voice filled his mind: "When you reach the end of your path, then you will have lost yourself."

Next, blackness appeared in Meng Hao's palm.

The ancient voice once again echoed in his mind. "When you reach the end of your path, then all you will have left is yourself." Meng Hao had the faint sensation that he was in the process of grasping enlightenment.

It was an enlightenment of an unimaginably vast and mysterious great Dao.

"White and black are like the daytime and nighttime...."

he muttered. He looked at his right hand and then slowly lifted it up toward the sky. He could sense that if he had a cultivation base, then considering his enlightenment of this Dao, he could turn the

sky as dark as night or as bright as day. The interlocking of black and white could unleash a supreme power.

“Too bad I don’t have a cultivation base,” he thought, shaking his head. “Even if I completely understood this Dao, I still couldn’t use it.” He was just about to stand up when suddenly, the ship... stopped moving.

Meng Hao looked up, his eyes wide.

Chapter 685: Traversing the Path

Up ahead, the Milky Way Sea could no longer be seen. It was as if the ship was passing through a river of time. All that could be seen were endless multicolored shards.

Within those shards existed endless worlds.

Meng Hao watched as the ship entered one of the shard worlds. It was a world of flames, filled with countless cultivators who kowtowed to the ship and offered up tribute.

They cultivated a fire technique that seemed to be linked to their bloodline. It seemed to supersede all of the other flames Meng Hao could see, and he could hear the people saying that their flame was the essence of all flames.

He couldn’t interact with the world; it was as if he were simply an observer. The ship passed through the flames for an indeterminable period of time until finally it pierced into another period of time.

Here, the starry sky looked unfamiliar, completely different from the sky of Planet South Heaven. It seemed like a vast and infinite expanse.

Occasionally strange life forms would pass by. Each one would drop to their knees and offer of bizarre and fantastic objects....

Meng Hao felt like he was a sightseer, a tourist hitching a ride on this ship. He saw a fluttering butterfly that was incredibly enormous. It was far off in the distance, and yet still clearly visible. When it neared, it could be seen that its beauty was actually formed by the combination of countless worlds.

“Are these things that have already happened, the recollections of this ship? Or is it something else...? What is happening?” Meng Hao wasn’t quite sure exactly what it was that he was seeing. The butterfly flew off into the distance, and the ship once again disappeared into the vastness.

When it reappeared, a boundless sea stretched out in front of Meng Hao. In the middle was an enormous tree stretching up into the Heavens. The tree had golden leaves, and was incredibly beautiful....

Down below sat a person, looking up silently at the tree. He stared for a long, long time, and it was impossible to tell what he was thinking. Finally, he smiled, and his body began to glow with a boundless light, as if he had just achieved enlightenment.

Meng Hao did not attempt to disturb him, but rather remained seated on the ship, as if this was simply a journey through life. Eventually, the man was left behind.

Meng Hao saw many, many worlds, and countless cultivators. He saw wars, and once, he even saw someone pointing at the ship and raving madly.

Meng Hao was somewhat at a loss. He had lost track of how many years had passed, and he also forgot that he was hovering on the verge of death. As the ship continued onward, he saw a featherless bird, a weeping crane.

A voice suddenly murmured in his ear, seemingly filled with a sense of time: “So many years. I think of you often....”

Meng Hao looked at the featherless, weeping crane, and for some reason, it seemed familiar.

“Don’t tell me I’ve seen it before?” he thought hesitantly.

Time changed again, and the scenery interweaved. He saw an enormous, cultivating tree, as large as the sky. It swept amongst the stars, running amok. However, when it saw the ship, it trembled.

Meng Hao was confused and at a loss.

He saw many types of cultivation, and countless Daos. He saw the cause and effect of Karma, he saw life and death, he saw the Yellow Springs, he saw eternal life and... he saw true and false. He saw a person walked down a path until he became a world. He buried himself to accompany others.

He saw a man who eternally roamed the starry sky, continuing onward, with his destination unknown. That person... appeared to be the armored old man.

A while later he saw another land where a man held the corpse of a woman in his arms. He lifted his head up and wailed, and within his eyes burned an insanity and a stubbornness that Meng Hao found shocking.

“The Heavens allowed you to die, but I WILL bring you back to life!” The man’s echoing voice filled Meng Hao’s heart with unprecedented waves of shock.

That shock was not because of the story of the man and woman, but rather, because the determination in the man’s words seemed indestructible. Even if Heaven and Earth collapsed, the steadfastness of his words could not be destroyed.

“I used to think I had determination,” thought Meng Hao, “but compared to that, I don’t know...”

“I’ve lost my cultivation base, and my life is waning away. However... can I really give up, just like that?” Meng Hao sat on ship, thinking about the question.

His eyes slowly began to burn with a spark of life. The flame was weak, as if it might flicker out at any moment. But right now, that flame... was resplendent. It was almost as if there was a will that burned within the fire.

Even as Meng Hao was lost in thought, the ship suddenly trembled again. The world around changed again, and nine mountains appeared out in the starry sky.

The nine mountains were lofty and ancient, filled with endless time. It was as if they had existed even if the primordial, distant past.... It was impossible to describe exactly how large they were, but they were enormously bigger, exponentially bigger than all of the other worlds he had seen up to this point.

Also in the starry sky were nine seas.

Nine mountains and nine seas, and in the middle of them all was a sea of stars formed by all the nine seas.

The first mountain had four planets. The sun and moon... rotated around the first mountain, sending sunlight and moonlight throughout the starry sky. The light spread out boundlessly, covering each mountain, illuminating all the seas.

It was like a beautiful painting that filled Meng Hao's heart with intense waves of shock.

After seeing the nine mountains, a fantastic notion welled up within Meng Hao. "Don't tell me... that these... are the Nine Mountains and Seas? If I can use the Mountain Consuming Incantation to consume these nine mountains, would it restore my cultivation base?"

It was an audacious idea, but as soon as it appeared in his brain it rooted itself in deeply. Meng Hao began to pant as he thought of the scene of the man swearing his oath to the Heavens as he held the woman in his arms. Then he thought of his own path.

"Am I really going to give up?" The flame in his eyes grew more resplendent. His gaze swept over the Nine Mountains and Seas, and eventually fell onto the Ninth Mountain.

He took a deep breath, and then without hesitation... began to employ the Mountain Consuming Incantation!

The incantation actually did not require a cultivation base, only heart. He studied the Ninth Mountain, branding the image of the mountain into his heart and mind. It was as if every aspect of the mountain remained inside of him, and that he could take it with him.

His gaze remained locked on the Ninth Mountain. He became lifeless, and even forgot about the passage of time, and everything around him. The only thing that existed was the Ninth Mountain.

Losses come with rewards. He had lost his cultivation base, but in return had received the sublimation of his spirit. Right now, amidst the silence, he slowly gained enlightenment about the Ninth Mountain.

Gradually, the image of the mountain grew clearer and clearer in his mind. One year. Two years....

Perhaps it was a hundred years, or a thousand, or ten thousand.... Meng Hao was in a trance as the Ninth Mountain grew clearer and clearer.

Eventually one day, the image of the Ninth Mountain became completely clear in his mind. A tremor ran through him. The image disappeared, transforming into countless magical symbols, each one of which seemed to contain a multitude of Daos.

He did not understand these Daos. However, from the perspective of the Mountain Consuming Incantation, they could be considered the mountain soul of the Ninth Mountain. Absorbing these Daos could be considered consuming the soul of the Ninth Mountain.

Meng Hao focused on the magical symbols; each one contained infinite profundity and possibility. Meng Hao proceeded onward, losing himself in their midst. As this happened, he didn't notice that during the process of his observation of the mountain, various auras had appeared on his body that were different from before.

It was at this point that suddenly, a vast, archaic will stirred in the Ninth Mountain.

“Who... is gaining enlightenment of my Ninth Mountain?!”

“I am Ji Tian, the Heavens of Ji, the Lord of the Ninth Mountain and Sea!”

When the archaic voice thundered out, the entire Ninth Mountain instantly turned blurry. Massive ripples spread out through the world, and Meng Hao's mind trembled, instantly causing him to regain his senses.

The will swept about, but did not find Meng Hao or the ship.

The ship suddenly began to move forward. It left the Ninth Mountain and proceeded to the Eighth Mountain. Maintaining its speed, it went to the Seventh Mountain, then the Sixth Mountain....

Meng Hao was unable to see each mountain clearly. When the ship arrived at the Fourth Mountain, a gloomy aura suddenly spread out to cover everything.

An ancient voice suddenly could be heard.

“What is life? What is death...?”

“If the lives in the underworld do not transcend, then I will not live!”

“In the cycles of reincarnation, if laughter does not sound out from the underworld, then I will not die!”

“Returning souls, souls leaving to be reborn, your paths go through here... Why not return?” A rumbling filled the Fourth Mountain, and suddenly an enormous temple soared out toward Meng Hao.

From within the temple emerged an ox and a horse, completely pitch black. Massive ripples spread out from them, and their energy surged. An aura of death spread out from them to shoot toward Meng Hao.

As soon as he saw the ox and horse, he began to tremble. He felt as if he were about to fall asleep, and his soul were about to fly out....

“What is life? What is death?”

However, before the ox and horse could get close, the ship had already moved off into the distance.

From behind Meng Hao, a sigh could be heard from the Fourth Mountain. “Almighty one, you do not wish to rest... Reincarnation is the end of the Dao. Although you do not wish to rest, why must you take this person along with you on your journey through your life?”

When Meng Hao heard this, his mind trembled violently. The ship passed the Third Mountain, then the Second Mountain and finally it reached the First Mountain. As for what happened next, Meng Hao couldn't see clearly. Everything turned black and white, becoming two spheres of mist. They swirled around, and it looked as if two pearls were forming inside of them.

Meng Hao looked down at his right hand. There on his palm were two pearls, not corporeal, but formed of mist.

The Black White Pearls floated up from his hand and began to rotate, seemingly containing the secrets of Heaven and Earth.

Meng Hao watched on thoughtfully. He could sense that the enlightenment he had received from the armored old man regarding the black and white Pearls embodied a great Dao. Perhaps it was not the path of freedom, like his own Dao, but it could definitely extend that path further.

“Within this black and white exists all of the worlds that I saw, and all the Daos...”

“What is life? What is death...?” Meng Hao closed his eyes. It was at this point that he suddenly thought about Ke Jiusi’s shocking... Soul Divergence Incantation!

Chapter 686: Homeland

The Soul Divergence Incantation allowed one to cultivate an undying soul. Once that soul appeared, the cycle of reincarnation in Heaven and Earth could not destroy it. Even if you died, your flesh and blood would be reborn years later.

It was not one of the three thousand great Daos of the ancient Demon Immortal Sect, but rather, something that Ke Yunhai had acquired by chance and taken to be a priceless treasure. Because he could not cultivate it successfully, he passed it on to Ke Jiusi.

However, it was too difficult for Ke Jiusi, despite his incredible latent talent. He could not acquire full enlightenment; in the end it had required the precious treasure that Ke Yunhai had forged before his death, coupled with the vast changes Ke Jiusi experienced, in order to comprehend it and form an undying soul that the cycle of reincarnation could not destroy.

“Life and Death,” murmured Meng Hao. “The Soul Divergence Incantation...” He seemed to have gained partial enlightenment, but the matter was still hazy. It was like he had grasped a vague direction, but when he examined it closely, there was nothing there.

Eventually, Meng Hao opened his eyes and looked down at the black and white pearls in his hand. He gazed at them for a long time, until it seemed that his will itself was fusing into the blackness and whiteness.

The black and white seemed to transform into a vortex that could consume everything. As it rotated slowly, a vision appeared in Meng Hao’s mind. In the vision, he stood there, his cultivation base fully active. His right hand stretched up, and the Black White Pearls rotated in his palm.

Indescribable ripples spread out from the two pearls, filling the entire world. Countless living things all prostrated themselves, and Meng Hao could easily decide whether they lived or died. It was as if the two pearls contained a great Dao which could determine and control life and death.

One day, the ship finally stopped moving. Meng Hao was in a bit of a daze as he opened his eyes and caught sight of a familiar body of water. It was the Milky Way Sea. He also saw a familiar land mass, the Southern Domain.

The ship had stopped at the border of the Milky Way Sea and the Southern Domain, and it was at this point that Meng Hao fully regained his senses.

Everything he had experienced seemed like a dream. The dream had been a dream of a journey, or perhaps a search for the Dao.

“The truths of life and death are something that cannot be understood by someone who has not died.”

Meng Hao sat there silently for a long time before finally rising to his feet. He turned to look back at the Milky Way Sea. Its surface was calm, and no waves could be seen. He took a deep breath.

“It seems the time has come for me to leave, and so the ship has delivered me here.

“Through the Soul Divergence Incantation, I could gain enlightenment about the difference between life and death. Yet even now I’m standing outside of the door, pacing back and forth in hesitation.

“Well then, am I willing to pass into death so quietly?”

“No! I’m not willing!” His eyes filled with intense determination that burned like a fire. It kindled the flame of life inside of him, incinerating his confusion and a bitterness regarding his future.

“I still have hope. My Dao Foundation may be gone, but I still have hope!

“And my hope... lies in the Rebirth Cave!!” His eyes shined with an intense glow. The Rebirth Cave was where his hope lay, and it was his last resort.

Although he didn't understand much about the Rebirth Cave, there were many, many legends about the place in the Southern Domain. Most spoke of powerful experts who, when their lives were reaching the end, when they were about to die, would enter the Rebirth Cave, hoping that inside, they would somehow be able to find a way to cause their life force to burn bright once again.

If you likened birth to a starting point and death to a finish line, then life and death form a cycle. As for the Rebirth Cave, according to the legends... it allowed for a second cycle, almost like a second life.

Meng Hao had heard many such legends in the Southern Domain. Actually, he had personally stepped foot into the region of the Rebirth Cave, although only the outer area, not the cave itself.

To experience rebirth, one's body must first die. Only after death could one have life in defiance of the Heavens!

"According to the legends, not just anyone can enter the Rebirth Cave," he thought, "only people who have an overwhelming desire to live, people who are pervaded by an aura of death, who have incredible determination and willpower. Only people like that can enter.

"Otherwise, one will automatically perish along the way." He looked in the direction of the Southern Domain, and the brightness in his eyes grew more and more intense. It was filled with stubbornness, with the unwillingness to accept what the future seemed to hold. He took a deep breath.

"I, Meng Hao, will enter the Rebirth Cave! I will see what exists inside, and will find out whether or not I can acquire that second cycle, and live a second life!" He walked across the deck of the ship, then disembarked. When he stepped onto the sandy shore, he looked back to see the ancient Underworld Ship slowly drifting away. Fog spread out over the sea, covering the ship up.

In the moment before it vanished, the armored old man's eyes suddenly flickered with profundity as he looked at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao looked back, and their gazes met through the fog. What the old man saw was not Meng Hao's world, and what Meng Hao saw was not the old man's world.

Gradually the ship disappeared into the fog. Eventually, the fog dissipated. The ancient Underworld Ship was nowhere to be seen.

If the ship did not wish to be seen, then no one would ever be able to see it.

On the border between the Southern Domain and the Milky Way Sea there was a barren beach. Occasionally, the remains of various birds or beasts could be seen, but there was no sign of human habitation.

Meng Hao's hair was gray bordering on white, and although he wore the robe of a cultivator, his features were elderly. No matter how you looked at him, he appeared to be nothing more than an ancient, mortal man.

"I wonder how far away I am from the Rebirth Cave...." he thought as he trudged up the beach, his feet sinking into the sand with each step he took. After a time, he reached the end of the beach, where it turned into forested mountains. He glanced around, then continued to walk.

He had not walked on foot through mountainous forests for a very long time. He thought back to the time before he reached Foundation Establishment, when he had often traveled through mountainous forests like this. After Foundation Establishment, however, he had always flown up above in the air.

The mountains were not easy to travel through. There were thorns and thistles everywhere, and the sun was already beginning to set by the time he passed over the top of the first mountain. He gasped for breath the entire time, and his body ached. As evening fell, he sat down cross-legged beneath a tall tree to meditate.

Meditation was something that had become a force of habit. Although he had no cultivation base to rotate, simply meditating left him feeling calm and relaxed.

The sky grew darker, and then black. It was at this point that howling drifted through the trees, along with an acrid odor. Next, a savage three-headed dog appeared in front of him. One of the three heads was withered, another emanated a chilling cold Qi, and the last appeared to be extremely foul-tempered.

Obviously, these mountains were the domain of this creature, and Meng Hao's incursion caused its eyes to be filled with killing intent.

However, it did not near him, but merely circled around him. Its cultivation base was profound; it was already at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. It had the faint sensation that Meng Hao was filled with boundless danger. Yet, within that sense of danger, it could also sense that he was as weak as a mortal.

The contradiction caused it to hesitate.

However, it could only be so patient. It managed to restrain itself for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, then let out a vicious howl and transformed into a beam of colorful light that shot toward Meng Hao.

The two non-withered heads opened their vicious mouths, and an acrid odor filled the air as they closed in on Meng Hao. It was at this point that Meng Hao's eyes opened.

His body was weak, but when his eyes opened, they were filled with a cold gleam.

The cold gleam contained all of Meng Hao's killing intent. In his years leading the Crow Divinity Tribes in their migration, he had killed countless numbers of cultivators. The killing intent that existed in him was something usually suppressed by his cultivation base. But now, there was no way to suppress it, and it exploded out fully.

"Screw off!" said Meng Hao with a cold snort. Although he was incredibly weak, some of his energy could still turn into a pressure that bore down onto the three-headed wild dog.

The wild dog trembled, and its fur stood on end. It stopped in mid-air, its expression one of terror. When it heard Meng Hao speak, it instantly turned and sped away.

After scaring the wild dog away, Meng Hao stood up. It might be evening, but he still wanted to hurry on his way.

He was exhausted, but within that exhaustion, he found power, despite the weakness of his body. That was the former power of his fleshly body.

Of course, he couldn't utilize all of that former power. Because his life force was wasting away, he was incapable of supporting the previous level of power.

Even still, that made him like a strong, young man who caught a disease. Although he could only wield ten percent of his previous incredible power, it was still enough to give him hope. Of course, Meng Hao's situation was far worse than some sort of disease. His life force was wasting away, and he knew that if he allowed the power of his fleshly body to explode out, then he would surely perish.

Traveling took great effort. However, regardless of whether the sun rose or the sun set, he continued onward. The hope he placed in the Rebirth Cave was as strong as ever.

One day, he reached the end of the mountain range. As he stood at the top of one particular mountain peak, he looked out and saw a huge lake. It was at this point that he gaped.

That lake was actually large enough to be called a sea.

It was impossible for Meng Hao to forget that this place... was his former hometown.

This was where the State of Zhao had once existed. When Patriarch Reliance left, it turned into a huge pit. By now, hundreds of years had passed, and it had turned into a lake.

"So, that ship delivered me here...." he murmured. He kept walking until he reached the edge of the lake, where he stood looking out at the water. Finally, he understood.

"I was born here, and this was my starting point...." He sat down cross-legged next to the lake, stared at the water, and thought of home.

There was a boat floating next to the shore, old and dilapidated. There was also a log cabin, ancient in appearance. It didn't look like anyone had lived in it for a long time.

Dark clouds filled the sky; thunder rumbled and lightning flashed. Rain... began to fall.

Meng Hao walked over to the cabin, sat down under the eaves, and looked out at the rain. His back was stooped, his face ancient. The rain pattered onto the lake and tapped onto the roof of the cabin. Those were the only sounds he could hear.

When evening fell, the sky turned dark. The crescent moon was mostly hidden by the clouds; only a tiny corner was visible. As the sibilant rain continued, a cold wind sprang up, blowing across the

lake and causing the old, dilapidated boat to rise up and down. When the wind brushed against Meng Hao, he tightened his robe and looked out over the lake. There, he saw a white-robed woman walking across the water.

The instant he saw her, his eyes went wide. Then, he lowered his head.

Chapter 687: You Live, I Live

The woman walked until she reached the shore. The rain fell around her, but didn't touch her clothing at all. She was beautiful, and had the aura of a cultivator, which gave her an otherworldly grace.

Her face was cold, and she was frowning. A bitter look could be seen in her eyes, and she seemed to be concealing great anxiety and confusion within her heart.

She was Xu Qing.

She had been searching for Meng Hao for many years, but had found nothing.... She was thinner than before, more lean.

She had followed her heart until she found this lake, which was also her former hometown.

When Meng Hao saw her, she also caught sight of aged Meng Hao. There was something strangely familiar about him, so she changed directions and headed over toward the log cabin.

“Are you the boatman here?” she asked, looking him over. Her face was filled with an expression that could cause one's heart to tremble. Meng Hao lowered his head and sighed inwardly.

Xu Qing's voice was calm, and just as cold as it had always been. However, Meng Hao's appearance had changed far too much. Even people very familiar with him would have a hard time recognizing him based on his physical appearance.

After a long moment, Meng Hao nodded.

Xu Qing's frown deepened. “Have you seen anyone else pass through here?” she asked. She had searched for a hundred years, and had failed repeatedly, yet had never given up. If he was alive, she

wanted to see him. If he was dead, she wanted to see the corpse. If she couldn't find him... then she would just keep on searching.

Her personality was simple, but it was that very simplicity which gave her such determination.

For some reason, she had the feeling that if she couldn't find Meng Hao, then perhaps...she wouldn't ever be able to find her way in life again.

"I haven't seen anyone," replied Meng Hao levelly, shaking his head. His voice was hoarse, and sounded nothing like it had before. He was happy to be able to see Xu Qing, but he didn't want her to realize who he was, not when he looked like this.

What was the point? It would just lead to her waiting for him outside once of the Rebirth Cave. Then, if he never came back out, she would become a woman sorrowed because of a lifetime of gloom and listlessness.

Wouldn't it be better to forget about each other....?

Xu Qing looked around the area, and then sighed inwardly. After scanning Meng Hao with Divine Sense, all she had seen was a mortal man. And yet, she also felt something familiar that made her give him a second look over.

"Have we met before?" she asked.

"No," he replied with the shake of a head.

She gazed at him for a very long moment, and a complex look appeared in her eyes. The intense complexity turned into sorrow, and a slight tremor ran through her body.

"I'm looking for someone," she said. "My beloved. If you see him, please pass a message along for me. In this life... if he lives, then I live. If he dies, then I die!"

Bitterly, she turned and began to walk off into the downpour. Surrounded by the rainfall, wearing her white robes, she looked like a white lotus, beautiful, unsurpassed, and yet also poignant and sad.

Meng Hao looked at her walking away, and a gentleness appeared in his eyes. He could see her exhaustion and anxiety, and it made him sigh.

“Some people,” he thought, “chose not to let anything encumber their cultivation, and are thus able to do so with minds and hearts free of obstruction. Others have hearts filled with obsession, which enables them to achieve great Daos of Heaven and Earth.

“She... started out incorruptible. It was me showing up that changed everything...”

Finally, he spoke up, his voice soft. “Hold on.”

Xu Qing stopped in her tracks, surrounded by rain. She turned back to look at him sitting there in the shadows of the wooden eaves, ancient, old, decaying.

He continued, “Is the person you’re looking for a twenty-something scholar, wearing a long green robe...?”

Xu Qing trembled, and after a moment of silence, she nodded.

“I saw someone who looked like that many years ago,” he said, his voice hoarse. “He lived here for about a year, after which... he died and was buried. He said this place was his home.

“Before he died, he gave me a bag. He said that if anyone came looking for him, then I should give them the bag.” With that, he pulled a bag of holding out of his robe and placed it off to the side.

As Xu Qing stood there in the rain, the water began to seep past the invisible barrier and soak her clothes. She stared deeply at Meng Hao, then walked back and looked blankly at the bag of holding. As she picked it up, tears filled her eyes.

Of course, it was impossible to tell how much of the water flowing down her face was rain, and how much was tears.

A bitter smile appeared on her face, and she looked back at Meng Hao. Finally, she turned and headed once again out into the rain, taking the bag of holding with her.

As he watched her leaving, his expression was complex, but he said nothing.

Xu Qing walked about seven steps before she stopped. She didn't look back, but when she spoke, her voice echoed out in all directions.

"I might be not be very smart, but... I'm not an idiot."

Meng Hao didn't say anything for a moment. He knew that his words couldn't fool Xu Qing. However, sometimes it doesn't matter what is true and what is false. Sometimes... the result is all that matters.

Meng Hao had hoped that instead of tormenting herself by searching for him through all eternity, she could at least cut him off. After that, she could return to her incorruptible self, simple and pure.

It is better to forget....

He closed his eyes, and his heart filled with pain.

Xu Qing was quiet for a while, but finally, she smiled. It was a smile of determination and resolve that contained no regret....

She lifted her hand, and the glow of a sword flew out. It stabbed into the ground, sharp and powerful, rapidly carving out a deep, rectangular pit.

At the same time, mountain crag flew out from the nearby mountainous forest. When it arrived in front of her, she waved her hand, causing it to spin in the air. The sides were then shaved away until the crag turned into a stela.

She then rubbed her hand gently across the surface, causing words to appear.

Grave of Meng Hao and Xu Qing.

A bang rang out as the stone stele sank down into the ground next to the pit. She looked back at Meng Hao, her eyes filled with staunchness and determination.

We met on Mount Daqing.

Because of the Cosmetic Cultivation Pill in the Reliance Sect, and the way you called me Elder Sister, our fate was sealed forever.

That time in the Blessed Land in the Southern Domain, in my moment of despair, even the tears in my eyes could not obscure the image of you and your burning rage.

That time in the Black Sieve Sect, you appeared and helped me when my soul was on the verge of fading away. The way you smiled before we parted made my heart tremble.

That time by the Rebirth Cave, when you turned back to look at me, your image had already long since been imprinted in my heart.... I will never forget you, never!

I looked for you in the Western Desert Violet Sea. I searched for a long time, until finally my teardrop fell into the water. I don't know if you were able to feel it.

I don't know if you realized how happy I was when we met again in the Demon Immortal Sect. Those were the happiest days I've ever experienced. Life was calm, and we accompanied each other as we practiced cultivation. I was there at your side, you by mine.

Eventually, a day came in which I was incapable of practicing cultivation. My heart was in chaos, and an indescribable unease filled me. That was when... I went to look for you.

"You live, I live. You die, I die!" she said softly.

Meng Hao's mind trembled, and he suddenly opened his eyes. His eyes were murky, but not murky enough to hide the intensity of his gaze.

He looked at Xu Qing, and he looked at the gravestone. He could see her determination, and he could see her sorrow written on the surface of the gravestone.

You live, I live. You die, I die!

These were not words of endearment, they were a promise....

“I’m a simple person,” she said softly, “but just because a person is simple doesn’t mean they lack determination. When a person has determination... then they will never forget. The path of cultivation is a long one, and I can’t keep going on alone.

“Since that’s the case, let’s go together to the Yellow Springs. What do you say? I can only hope that if there is another life after this one, then we will meet again.” Although her voice was not loud, and the gurgle of rain filled the air, Meng Hao could hear her words clearly.

The trembling of his heart increased, and he stood up. He walked out from under the eaves, allowing the rain to drench him as he walked over to stand in front of Xu Qing.

The ground was slippery, and the wind cold. Meng Hao was freezing, and he looked more elderly than ever.

Xu Qing looked at him. To her, it didn’t matter how much he had changed. To her, he was still that young man from Mount Daqing, her Junior Brother.

Rain fell onto them, and even between them, but it couldn’t stop them from looking into each other’s eyes.

“Take me to the Rebirth Cave!” Meng Hao said. The determination in his eyes grew more intense. He wanted to keep living, and he wanted that second life from the Rebirth Cave.

He was doing it for himself, for the obsession in his heart, for Xu Qing, and for all of his friends and family!

Xu Qing smiled and nodded. She stepped forward and took hold of his hand. Despite Meng Hao’s weakness, her face still flushed when she found herself up against his chest.

Time seemed to slow down for an eternity.

At some point, it stopped raining. A rainbow appeared in the morning sunlight, and it was beneath that rainbow that Xu Qing and Meng Hao transformed into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

Meng Hao could not fly, but he did have magical flight items. Under the control of Xu Qing, the flying shuttle transformed into what looked like the eighth color of the rainbow.

Time passed by. The flying shuttle was powerful enough that it only took ten days to fly from the State of Zhao to the Rebirth Cave. When they finally landed outside, Meng Hao's face was even more ashen than before.

The closer they got to the cave itself, the more Meng Hao felt his life force withering away. He was shriveling up, and the death aura that surrounded him only grew stronger.

Things were different than they had been last time he was here. Perhaps then, Choumen Tai's presence had caused things to change from their normal state, and now that he had entered the Rebirth Cave, everything had returned to normal.

Life was prohibited.

This was the Rebirth Cave.

Living beings were not allowed.

The aura of death in the area made Meng Hao feel even weaker. As it thickened, however, Meng Hao could sense that a trace of opportunity existed within.

To experience rebirth, one's body must first die. Only after death could one have life in defiance of the Heavens!

Meng Hao took a deep breath and walked forward. Even as he took his first steps forward, Xu Qing reached out to support him. He looked back at her, and she returned the look but didn't say anything. The determination in her eyes said what thousands and thousands of words could not.

"Living beings cannot enter this place," he said softly.

She smiled faintly and then led Meng Hao toward the inner region of the Rebirth Cave.

As soon as they entered, Meng Hao became weaker than before. His body withered even faster, as if he were burning with an invisible fire. Every step forward, every step closer to the Rebirth Cave, caused his body, his soul, his everything... to waste away rapidly.

At the same time, more than ten streams of will spread out from within the Rebirth Cave. They looked coldly as Meng Hao and Xu Qing approached.

Chapter 688: Together

The Rebirth Cave was one of three Danger Zones in the Southern Domain. However, it ranked above the Dao Lakes and the Ancient Temple of Doom in terms of how mysterious it was!

That was because the Dao Lakes could be viewed as having been formed by ancient almighty figures who passed away in meditation. After they perished, their Daos dispersed, then experienced the vicissitudes of time, leaving behind countless shadows.

As for the Ancient Temple of Doom, its history was also a matter of record.

The Rebirth Cave was unique. To say that it was the number one Danger Zone in the Southern Domain was no exaggeration. In fact, if you looked at the entire Southern Domain as a whole, nothing was more shrouded in mystery than the Rebirth Cave. Throughout countless years, innumerable people had studied it in an attempt to pierce its secrets.

It was said that inside, one could be reborn to live another life!

For ages, many almighty experts came to the Rebirth Cave as they neared death. Not willing to follow the precepts of fate, they entered the cave to search for that opportunity. Unfortunately, those who actually succeeded were as rare as phoenix feathers and qilin horns.

One thing was certain: cultivators who entered the Rebirth Cave either succeeded, or remained inside forever as nothing more than skeletons.

The Rebirth Cave was surrounded by a forest of stones, which was a bit different than how Meng Hao remembered it from the first time he was there. The stones were scattered haphazardly in all directions, and seemed to be imbued with ancientness and mystery, as if they passed through time in some strange and unique way.

In the very center of the forest of stones was a squat mountain, seventy percent of which was made up by the entrance to the cave. It looked like a ghastly mouth, waiting to swallow up anyone who neared.

The entire area was gloomy and cold, and the ground was covered with bluish, frosty ice. Everything was quiet, a quiet that for countless years had almost never been disturbed by anyone.

With the exception of Choumen Tai....

There were cultivators scattered around the region of the Rebirth Cave. Most were alone, or perhaps in small groups. Such people were here to try to get close to the Rebirth Cave and use its bizarre power to cultivate certain unique techniques.

Most of them were rogue cultivators, and none dared to get too close to the cave. When Meng Hao and Xu Qing entered the area, there was a group of three such people sitting cross-legged not too far off, meditating. Their eyes opened and they looked at Meng Hao.

When they saw how weak he was, and the aura of death that surrounded him, their eyes glittered.

They could immediately discern exactly why he was there.

“His aura of death is thick, and he clearly has no cultivation base... Rebirth... how could it be that simple!?”

“Another person here attempting to be reborn. Although, why does that woman next to him seem so familiar?”

“That’s Goddess Xu Qing from the Black Sieve Sect!”

Meng Hao left the Southern Domain hundreds of years earlier, and during that time, Xu Qing’s name had long since spread near and far. Not only were many people familiar with her personally, she was also the focus of quite a bit of public attention because of her position within the Black Sieve Sect.

For her to appear at the Rebirth Cave was shocking to these three cultivators, and they immediately began to pay close attention. They also produced jade slips that they used to send messages and notify others of what was happening.

It took only moments for large numbers of rogue cultivators to hear the news, who then rushed over to that area of the Rebirth Cave to watch Meng Hao and Xu Qing.

The sounds of discussions echoed about, and soon, people began to speculate who the man next to Xu Qing was.

Xu Qing completely ignored all the people watching on. In her world, there was only Meng Hao.

It was difficult for Meng Hao to continue walking, but his eyes were filled with determination. His gaze was focused on the path ahead, and on Xu Qing, who held his arm to support him. Together, they proceeded onward.

Occasionally they would look at each other and smile. Meng Hao's expression was gentle; Xu Qing's eyes were filled with tenderness. If this path were the road of life, then the two of them walked it side by side.

It was not an easy path to follow. They were 30,000 meters away from the Rebirth Cave itself when Meng Hao began to shiver. The death aura now covered his entire body, and he looked almost exactly like a corpse.

His face was ancient, and his eyes deeply clouded. Next to him, Xu Qing was also showing signs of aging.

Her eyes were as resolute as ever, though, and every time Meng Hao looked over at her, his heart filled with pulses of tender affection.

30,000 meters. 25,000 meters. 20,000 meters.... When they were only 15,000 meters away, Meng Hao's mind filled with intense exhaustion. He knew that by this point, the aura of death had entered into his soul.

Xu Qing was trembling, and her face was pale. Her life force had once been vigorous and strong, but now, it was rapidly fading, to the extent that random streaks of white could be seen in her long black hair.

She looked at least five years older than she had before, and the further along she proceeded, the more she seemed to wilt.

Meng Hao stopped walking and looked over at her. It was clear that he didn't want her to proceed along any further.

"If you grow old, then I'll grow old with you," she said softly, gazing at him with a tender expression.

He closed his eyes for a moment. When they opened, they glowed with a brilliant light. His withered body suddenly seemed to be filled with energy, as if the last sparks of his life force had been unleashed. He lifted his right hand, and power surged within him.

This was the last bit of power that he could unleash from his Spirit Severing fleshly body. He waved his sleeve, and power wrapped around Xu Qing, sending her flying out from within the Rebirth Cave area.

She was powerless to even struggle. Meng Hao's Spirit Severing strength sent her away in the blink of an eye. When she reappeared, she was outside of the region of the Rebirth Cave. She bit down on her lip.

She couldn't help but think back to the last time she and Meng Hao were here by the Rebirth Cave. She had only been able to stand there alone off in the distance, struggling inwardly as she watched him depart.

"This time, I won't sit by idly!" she thought, her eyes filling with determination.

Meanwhile, Meng Hao's aura had exploded out, filling the rogue cultivators in the area with complete shock. They instantly felt an incredible, indescribable pressure weighing down on them.

Their minds trembled and their faces fell. One by one, they looked in the direction of the Rebirth Cave.

"Is this being caused by that old man?"

“Is it that guy who was walking with Goddess Xu Qing?”

“What cultivation base is that? Don’t tell me... it’s Spirit Severing!!”

At the same time, Meng Hao’s body transformed into a prismatic beam of light that shot toward the Rebirth Cave 15,000 meters away.

In the blink of an eye, he passed the 10,000 meter mark, and was at the border of the forest of stones. It was at this point that Meng Hao’s body trembled as the last bit of his cultivation base power scattered thanks to the power of the stones in the forest. He dropped to the ground and leaned up against one of the stones. His face was deathly pale, and his eyes blurry.

He felt an indescribable aura of death in the area. It was so strong that it turned into a white mist that covered the ground in all directions. Every inhalation and exhalation was filled with death and decay.

After a long moment, he struggled to lift up his head and then looked at the remaining 5,000 meters that lay between him and the Rebirth Cave. He gritted his teeth and slowly began to walk forward, one step at a time....

Never before in his life had 5,000 meters been such a difficult distance to cross. After walking only about 1,500 meters, he coughed up a mouthful of blood, which was purplish-black and exuded an aura of rot.

His eyes were even more cloudy than before, and his body was ice cold and stiff. His consciousness was fading, and the only thing he could think about was walking forward....

He proceeded on toward the Rebirth Cave, where he would struggle for his chance to be reborn.

He didn’t know how much time had passed. He walked on, trembling, his death aura growing stronger with every step. In the end, his consciousness grew even weaker. Behind him, the path he had walked was stained with the purplish-black blood that he had coughed up, although he couldn’t see that.

Everything was quiet, as quiet as a world of death....

Inside the Rebirth Cave, the ten streams of will stared at him coldly. From further within the depths of the cave, eight other streams of will emerged to sweep over him. They were filled with the feeling of ancientness and time, as if they were archaic divine beings.

As Meng Hao got closer and closer. He walked on further until he was only 500 meters away. It was at this point that a single stream of will silently appeared deep within the Rebirth Cave. When it did, all the other streams of will scattered, trembling.

The solitary stream of will focused on Meng Hao, 500 meters outside of the cave.

Eventually, Meng Hao reached his limit. A tremor ran through him; his head began to sag, and his knees were so stiff they couldn't bend. He looked almost like a dried up corpse.

There was no life force left in him, only a tiny strand that was his stubborn determination to resist fate!

However, as his consciousness faded, even that strand turned dark. He fell to the ground, 250 meters away from the Rebirth Cave.

"Is it over...?" he murmured as his consciousness disappeared.

In the moment that he fell, a sigh could be heard echoing out from within the cave. All of the wills present slowly retracted, apparently no longer interested in what was happening. Only the solitary will from earlier remained, looking at something behind Meng Hao.

Then, the wills which had retreated just now slowly began to tremble. All of them appeared once again, to look at what was behind Meng Hao.

Within the white mist of death, a woman could be seen trudging along. Each step was taken with difficulty as she entered the forest of stones. Her life force seemed to be filled with determination, dredged up from some unknown place within her.

Her body was slowly withering, her cultivation base dim, and her previously lovely features now elderly as she walked slowly toward Meng Hao.

This was Xu Qing.

She was different than Meng Hao, who had lost his Dao foundation. Her once flourishing life force had been fused with the soul of Matriarch Phoenix. Therefore, she could proceed further in toward the Rebirth Cave than he could. To her, it was just a matter of struggling forward.

When she looked down at fallen Meng Hao, within whom no life force existed, tears began to stream down her face. She gently lifted him up so that he lay against her, then tenderly kissed him.

A strand of life force emerged from within her, passing through her lips into his mouth. Her face flushed with an unusual redness, within which would be seen weakness, but also life.

“This is a secret art from the Demon Immortal Sect... I give you my life...” As she watched Meng Hao once again filling with a bit of life, she smiled. Then she thought back to the time they had walked through the Reliance Sect in the moonlight, watched by everyone.

She looked up toward the Rebirth Cave 250 meters away, and then began to walk forward, carrying him in her arms.

Her face continued to grow more wrinkled, and her body trembled. Her life force was fading away, and yet with every step she took, she continued to pass some of it to Meng Hao.

Every time she did, she grew weaker and older. Yet no regret existed in her heart whatsoever.

Carrying Meng Hao, she walked the entire 250 meters, all the way to the entrance of the Rebirth Cave. Then, without any hesitation...

She walked in.

You live, I live. You die, I die!

If you grow old, then I'll grow old with you....

Chapter 689: Is There Really Such a Thing as Rebirth?

Xu Qing was smiling, and it was beautiful. Although her hair was white and her face covered with wrinkles, her smile was as beautiful as ever.

She gazed softly at Meng Hao, and a glow filled her face that could almost be described as holy. She appeared to be seeing everything that had happened on Mount Daqing and in the Reliance Sect. Each scene ended with Meng Hao, and when that happened, her eyes seemed to fill with all of the love that existed in her life.

She had a simple personality, and was not the type of person to allow the seeds of love to be planted easily. However, once those seeds were planted... they existed for a lifetime.

She held Meng Hao in her arms as she walked forward step by step, directly into the ghastly cave mouth in the side of the mountain, the Rebirth Cave.

Stepping into the cave was like passing through the barrier that existed between life and death. In that instant, everything turned black, and no more warmth existed. There was not even a scrap of the life that existed in Heaven and Earth. The only thing that remained was stifling death and infinite coldness.

The outside of the Rebirth Cave, and the inside of the cave, were two different worlds.

One was a world of life, the other was a world of death.

When Xu Qing carried Meng Hao inside, all of the wills inside the cave retreated back into the recesses of the cave to watch from afar.

To them, when Meng Hao and Xu Qing were on the outside, they were people from a different world. Not only were they envious and jealous of them, they also scorned and disdained them.

But now that Xu Qing had carried Meng Hao into the Rebirth Cave, they were all the same, and all existed in the same world.

Here, there was no power of Heaven and Earth. When living things entered the cave, their life force would fade away even more rapidly than before. When it disappeared, when they were inundated with death, then all they could do was wait for the supposed... awakening.

Xu Qing walked onward with Meng Hao, her face pale, her body trembling. Her life force was rapidly fading away, and as for the single strand that existed within Meng Hao, it would soon be completely gone.

In the moment when Meng Hao's strand of life disappeared, Xu Qing kissed his lips again, delivering more of her own life force... into him.

By the time she had walked a few dozen meters into the cave, Xu Qing's face was completely ancient, and her body was extremely withered. She was thin and emaciated, with no trace of youth left in her at all. She had lost everything.

She sat down cross-legged.

"Meng Hao," she murmured, "I can't go any further..." He now lay resting across her legs, his face devoid of blood, his features ancient. She looked down at him. "When I joined the Reliance Sect, I had already promised myself that I would never marry anyone, not for my entire life. I would not become someone's beloved. Instead, I would focus solely on cultivation..." She stroked his face with a hand that had once been as lustrous as jade, but was now dried up and old.

"But then you came along..." she said. Her face flushed a bit as she looked at him for a long moment. Then she leaned down and kissed him again, delivering more of her life force.

As the life force entered him, a bit of color returned to his face. On the other hand, Xu Qing's only became more withered. The amount of life force she had was only growing less and less.

"You had only been in the sect for a short time when you happened to get that medicinal pill," she murmured. "When you ended up giving the pill to me as a gift... my face was calm, but my heart was actually filled with joy.

"Not because of you, but because of the pill." She smiled. "I gave you the Immortal's cave because I figured it would make us even. But then, you crafty little fox, you managed to entangle me even further. You got your hands on a Cosmetic Cultivation Pill..." When she thought back to everything that had happened back then, her smile grew sweeter, and she gently stroked Meng Hao's cheek.

"Did you know that when you killed Zhao Wugang, I secretly helped to make sure no one found out? Down to this day, I don't think you ever realized that.

“And then you opened your shop in the sect.... Ai. If I wasn’t there... well, let’s just say that by that time a lot of people had taken an interest in you.” Xu Qing wanted to smile, but suddenly was overtaken by a fit of coughing. Fearful of disturbing Meng Hao, she covered her mouth. When she lowered her hand, it was covered with purplish blood.

“If the Reliance Sect hadn’t been destroyed, I wonder how things would have turned out.... When I was taken to the Black Sieve Sect, I was met with coldness. Everything was strange, and I had to deal with that malicious Elder Brother....

“Back then, I really missed the Reliance Sect, and I missed the State of Zhao. I missed... you.” She looked down, and delivered another strand of life force to Meng Hao.

Her face was pale white, and her body frail and withered. She looked like a lamp that was on the verge of flickering out, and she was well aware that every bit of life force she gave to Meng Hao caused her own death to approach even more quickly.

Right now, she could still abandon Meng Hao. If she left the Rebirth Cave, because of her special soul, she could easily return to the outside world and recover all of her life force.

But she did not do that. Nor did she regret the decision.

“You don’t know it,” she murmured, “but when I saw you in the crowds of people, at first, I thought I was dreaming.... Then, in my moment of despair in the ancient Blessed Land, you appeared. From that moment on, you were in my heart.

“Not long after, you saved me again, from the discarnate soul of Matriarch Phoenix.

“Later, outside the Rebirth Cave, I could only weep as I watched you disappear into the distance. My heart hurt so bad....

“When I went to the Violet Sea, I couldn’t find you, but I could sense that you were so close....

“Finally, I saw you again in the ancient Demon Immortal Sect. Meng Hao... I was so happy then. Thank you.” She looked down at him for a long moment.

She didn't speak very often about how she felt, but her actions showed how deeply her love went. Anyone in Heaven and Earth who could have a companion like this could die without any regrets.

"Meng Hao, I can't hold on much longer..." She was not a flickering lamp any more. She had reached the end of the road. If she closed her eyes now, then she would never open them again.

Perhaps if she closed her eyes, then years later, someone would come into the Rebirth Cave to find their bodies. A woman, sitting cross-legged. A man, reclining across her legs.

One sleeping. The other smiling. Through all eternity....

"You live, I live. You die, I die...."

"If you grow old, then I'll grow old with you."

"If you slumber here, then I will accompany you...." Xu Qing lowered her head and began to deliver the last bits of life force she had to Meng Hao through a kiss.

As the life force left her, she shivered, and her hair began to fall out. Everything started to go blurry. However, she gritted her teeth and once again prepared to give some more.

By this point, even all of the observing streams of will were shaken by what they saw. It was then that the stream of will that belonged to the roc suddenly emerged, transforming into a woman.

She stood there in front of Xu Qing, indescribably striking and matchlessly beautiful.

She was the embodiment of the roc. She came from the bones that existed in the coffin in the Milky Way Sea. She was... the goodness of the Resurrection Lily that had reached Immortal Ascension at dawn.

Back then, she had fallen in love with a man. From that moment on, she willingly sank into depravity. Because she faced pain and sorrow, she took her goodness and severed it away. Then she became the Dawn Immortal.

That goodness now appeared in front of Xu Qing, in the form of this woman.

“If you keep that up, your soul will scatter,” said the woman softly.

Despite her muddled consciousness, Xu Qing heard the woman’s words and looked up.

“If you keep it up, you will lose your life for all eternity...” The woman looked down at Xu Qing, and almost seemed to be looking down at herself. “From time immemorial, the League of Demon Sealers have been heartless. Is it really worth it to do what you’re doing?”

“I don’t know if it’s worth it or not,” murmured Xu Qing. “I only know that without him in my life, then I can only live a life of pain. In that case, why not die together? I don’t fear death. What I fear is the pain of being alone.”

The woman seemed to shiver, and she looked down thoughtfully at Xu Qing. Finally, she sighed softly. “You’ll regret it.”

Xu Qing smiled but didn’t say anything. She was confident in her heart.

“Don’t believe me, huh...?” said the woman. “I didn’t believe either. Well, in that case, I’ll help you to see. We will find out who is right, you, or me.” A strange light began to glow in the woman’s eyes.

“You have the vestiges of a discarnate soul on you,” continued the woman, “as well as the Daoist magic of the Black Sieve Sect. Within the Black Sieve Sect is a precious medicinal pill. It’s called the Soul Birth Pill. If you can get that pill, then he will have a chance to live.” With that, the woman waved her sleeve, causing a cold wind to spring up around Xu Qing. It picked her up and carried her far off into the distance, out of the Rebirth Cave and into the world of the living, all the way to the vicinity of the Black Sieve Sect.

When the wind faded away, Xu Qing stood there ashen-faced. Her consciousness was no longer muddled, and she looked like her old self. She turned her head to look back toward the Rebirth Cave, and began to breathe heavily. Then she turned and headed toward the Black Sieve Sect.

Back in the Rebirth Cave, the woman stood next to Meng Hao, looking at him.

“Is there really such a thing as rebirth...?”

“I have been to every corner of this cave. I left no rock unturned. And I can tell you... there is no rebirth in this place.

“The only thing here is a Ninth Mountain and Sea lodestone. It fell here countless years ago, and enables souls around it to exist forever and cultivate Ghost Immortality.

“Rebirth, ah, rebirth.... It’s a beautiful dream, and nothing more. It’s merely a fiction, invented by people who aren’t willing to die.

“The rosy picture such stories paint gradually obscured the truth, from one generation to the next.....” The woman’s voice was strange and filled with bitterness, as well as exhaustion. As she lost herself in memories of the past, her body gradually faded away.

Meng Hao lay there in the silence. He had no more consciousness, and everything around him was still. It was so quiet that it seemed as if no voices had existed in the area since ancient times.

Without the support of Xu Qing’s life force, Meng Hao’s own life force was rapidly diminishing. After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn... it had completely vanished.

Within him, Immortal Shows the Way also withered, and gradually lost any usefulness to him. When that happened, a tall man sitting cross-legged deep within the Rebirth Cave looked up and sighed.

“There really is no rebirth in this place,” he said. “There is only a Ninth Mountain and Sea lodestone....

“So, he is not the one who can help me.... Who have I been waiting for, then?”

“Where is the person I’ve been waiting for...?” This man was none other than Choumen Tai.