

The Heavens 721

Chapter 721: You Must Know Liu Zichuan

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The hundreds of thousands of cultivators outside of the Ancient Dao Lakes region were bearing witness to a rare and shocking spectacle!

“That longsword... is two meters long, the nine shortswords are each one meter long. Look at the brilliant glow, and the lightning! It almost looks like Tribulation Lightning! Is it possible... is it possible that sword is the legendary Deadwinter Tribulation Sword?!?!”

“Why does that war drum looks almost the same as the Primordial True Spirit Drum that I read about in the ancient records...? And that puppet next to it.... I get the chills just looking at it!”

“What is that tree?! It looks so bizarre, and has three fruits on it!!”

“Check out that beast claw! It looks incredible! Could it be a Dao Seeking treasure?!”

“That’s... that’s a black dragon!? It’s a real-life dragon!! It looks relatively small, but its body is definitely a treasure!!”

The few dozen Spirit Severing cultivators immediately convened above the 30,000-meter main lake as one object after another appeared amidst the eruption of the lakewater.

Boom!

There were simply too many magical items! Fierce fighting broke out in the blink of an eye.

“Screw off!”

“Hey, I wanted that!”

“This is mine! Anyone who dares to fight me over it will die!!”

Explosions immediately began to echo out as the Spirit Severing experts shot toward the treasures they had taken a liking to. Shocking roars filled the air, and wild colors danced about.

The greatest focus of attention was the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect, then the Golden Frost Sect puppet, both of whom exuded Dao Seeking auras. Strangest of all were the three people from the Northern Reaches. They flew about in three different areas, causing the air to shatter around them wherever they went.

Their sudden appearance on the scene was quite a source of alarm for the Southern Domain cultivators. However, there was no time to try to uncover information about their origins and backgrounds. Everyone sped toward the treasures that they wanted.

The teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect flew at top speed toward the two-meter longsword. In the blink of an eye, his hand clasped the hilt.

The enormous puppet from the Golden Frost Sect exploded with a Dao Seeking aura as it headed toward the puppet next to the war drum, slamming aside several Solitary Sword Sect Spirit Severing cultivators in the process.

The Song Clan Patriarch flew along at top speed, his body pulsing with an aura that seemed to contain a force which was incompatible with the spiritual energy of Heaven and Earth. Everywhere he passed, shocking illusory blades flew about. His goal was one particular jade slip that glowed with violet light.

The 19th Li Clan Patriarch shot furiously toward the black dragon.

The only member of the Violet Fate Sect to make an appearance, Reverend Withered-Dao, headed toward the red-trunked tree with the black leaves, blue flowers, and three white fruits!

As for the barbaric, hulking Di Ye from the Northern Reaches, an enormous wolf-tooth club appeared in his hands. A savage and wild aura exploded out from him, reaching a pinnacle in the blink of an eye. His wolf-tooth club swept back and forth, shattering the surroundings as he charged toward his goal, the three-hundred-meter long black-colored claw.

“This claw belongs to Di Ye!”

Dao Child Zhou Chen from the Coffin Altar Sect, also from the Northern Reaches, looked incredibly soft and feminine. The air around him did not shatter, but rather his surroundings warped and twisted, causing everything he passed by to wither.

His expression was cold as he headed toward the enormous golden halo that emanated a pulsing power of sealing.

Last was one of the four Young Starlords of South Heaven, the number one figure under Dao Seeking from the Northern Reaches, Lu Bai of the Imperial Bloodline Sect, who could battle Dao Seeking even when in the Spirit Severing Stage!

As he hovered in mid air, the Dao Lake eruption surging around him, he almost seemed to exist in a different time and location. It was as if he could, at will, travel anywhere in space and time.

He glanced around at the various objects in the area until his gaze came to rest on the corpse of the enormous black dragon. As it did, a strange gleam began to shine in his eyes.

He immediately headed in the direction of the black dragon, and toward the 19th Li Clan Patriarch, who was clearly vying for the same object.

Everyone had their own targets and goals, some the same as others, some different. In addition, there were Spirit Severing experts from the other sects and clans who also headed toward their own favored objects.

The six Blood Demon Sect Patriarchs scattered and headed toward various things that attracted them.

The fighting seemed chaotic, but was in fact quite the opposite. Only the most powerful experts would actually fight over any of the visibly extraordinary items. Others weren't qualified to do so.

“Dammit! That’s mine!”

“Nobody owns the Dao Lakes! The treasures go to the lucky, and you’re not lucky! Screw off!”

“Die!”

Explosions rattled out, and in the blink of an eye, they were joined by miserable shrieks.

A Golden Frost Sect cultivator was cut down by Reverend Withered-Dao. A Li Clan member excitedly closed in on the black dragon, and was about to grab it when a soft sigh could be heard. The sigh caused his body to begin to tremble, and then blood sprayed from his mouth. His fleshly body immediately transformed into a pool of blood. His Nascent Divinity flew out without hesitation, but was then crushed by the power of Time.

Meanwhile, Meng Hao still sat at the edge of the dried-up 3,000 meter Dao Lake that bordered the 30,000-meter Dao Lake. His mind rang with thunderous roars as he gained further enlightenment regarding the Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao. He was finally able to thoroughly break it down.

“Withering. Flame. Demon. Magic. True. Self. Dao!” His eyes opened.

“This magic has three levels and seven parts! Each character represents a different secret art. Combined, they form something unbelievably powerful!

“The ‘self’ character is the clone magic!

“It’s too bad I didn’t understand it before, and pursued some incorrect theories. Were it not for that, I might have already been able to gain some true understanding, and therefore, some boosts in power!

“What I currently have the deepest understanding of is not the ‘self’ character and its clone magic, but rather the ‘withering’ character!

“All living things wither. However, a withered tree can grow anew in spring. The character ‘wither 枯’ has a ‘tree 木’ component on the left, which represents life. The ‘ancient 古’ component on the right represents death. The left is the past, the right is the future.

“The character ‘wither’ is also similar to the third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic. Once I enter the Spirit Meridians stratum, I will be able to consume spirit meridians, which in actuality... is very similar to the ‘wither’ character!

“Withering someone’s spirit meridians is akin to crippling their cultivation base and influencing time. It’s like planting a seed. The seed is planted, then reaped immediately, ignoring the time that normally passes inbetween!

“That is the true meaning of the Spirit Meridians stratum of the Blood Demon Grand Magic!

“All I need is some time spent in secluded meditation, perhaps half a month, and I should be able to step fully into the third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic!” Meng Hao’s eyes flickered with a brilliant glow. It was in this moment that shocking energy suddenly surged up from within him.

Instantly, the eyes of all the cultivators above the Dao Lake turned in his direction.

He raised his head, and a golden gleam could be seen in his eyes. Suddenly, he performed a minor teleportation and reappeared in mid-air above the lake.

“Meng Hao!!”

“He was meditating before, and based on his energy now... could it be that he made a breakthrough?!”

“Dammit! If he gets involved, that means there’s one more powerful foe in the mix!”

“Please, please, PLEASE don’t take a fancy to this magical item here, go look at someone else’s.”

Various thoughts and feelings such as these bubbled up in the blink of an eye.

Rumble!

When Meng Hao appeared above the Dao Lake, his energy immediately drew special attention from four people.

The first was the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect, whose pupils constricted.

The other three were the Chosen from the Northern Reaches. One of them, Dao Child Zhou Chen from the Coffin Altar Sect, frowned and stared seriously for a moment. A look of scorn appeared on the face of Di Ye, although his heart filled with vigilance.

The person who seemed most interested in Meng Hao was none other than Lu Bai. He turned to look at Meng Hao, and when he did, a tremor ran through him.

“It’s him!” he thought.

He sensed a feeling like destiny, and was instantly sure that the young man he was looking at was the person the esteemed Dawn Immortal had referred to, his destined adversary.

Meng Hao’s arrival on the scene shocked everyone. He glanced around, and then, to the shock of many, shot toward the black claw.

His decision caused quite a few people to sigh in relief, and continue fighting.

Di Ye’s eyes flickered with killing intent as he too barreled toward the black-colored claw.

The teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect had just grabbed the two-meter longsword. Energy exploded out, and he lifted his head back and laughed loudly. Next to the black dragon, the 19th Li Clan Patriarch coughed up some blood. He was no match for Lu Bai, who swept his sleeve to collect up the black dragon.

The Golden Frost Sect was after the enormous war drum and puppet. There were a few Spirit Severing experts fighting them over it, but with the power of their Dao Seeking aura, the Golden Frost Sect steamrolled everyone in their way and promptly seized it.

As for the red-trunked tree, no one else dared to fight with Reverend Withered-Dao over it. Everyone knew that Grandmaster Pill Demon could refine all types of objects into medicinal pills. Since the tree didn’t seem to be of much use to others, Reverend Withered-Dao was easily able to collect it up.

The Song Clan successfully acquired the violet-colored jade slip they had been after.

As for the golden halo, there were quite a few people who tried to fight Zhou Chen of the Coffin Altar Sect over it, but all were sent into retreat, blood spraying from their mouths. Two people were even slain. In the end, Zhou Chen took it.

Regarding the other miscellaneous objects, Spirit Severing cultivators from various sects and clans had already divvied them all up.

Di Ye arrived near the black-colored claw. His wolf-tooth club swept about, causing lake water to spray about. His left hand reached out toward the black-colored claw.

However, just when his hand was about to latch onto it, Meng Hao pierced through the air with indescribable speed to appear directly next to the claw.

Seeing that Meng Hao wanted to contend with him over the claw, Di Ye roared, “Screw off!” Then smashed his wolf-tooth club down toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever as his fist struck out. The fist had no Dao Seeking aura, but considering that Meng Hao was the number one figure under Dao Seeking, it contained explosive power, which smashed directly into the wolf-tooth club.

A huge boom rattled out. A tremor ran through Meng Hao, and the wolf-tooth club was sent flying back. Di Ye’s face fell as he was sent staggering back seven or eight measures. He looked up, and a vicious expression could be seen on his face.

“So you’re not on par with that inhuman Lu Bai!” Di Ye’s body flickered as he charged forward once more. Although Di Ye and the other two from the Northern Reaches had actually arrived quite a bit earlier, even Lu Bai wasn’t able to see what was happening inside the Dao Lakes. Only after the master lake had erupted, causing the surrounding air to distort and churn and allowing them to teleport closer, were they able to get a clear glimpse of what was going on. As such, he was unaware of the shocking things Meng Hao had done.

After looking more closely at Di Ye, Meng Hao realized that the hulking man had the familiar aura of a Northern Reaches cultivator. “Northern Reaches?” he asked.

“Yeah! I’m Di Ye from the Desolate Clan in the Northern Reaches!” Di Ye roared as he closed in on Meng Hao.

“You must know Liu Zichuan!”

Chapter 722: A Second Eruption!

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Rumbling echoed out and everyone looked over to watch Meng Hao and Di Ye fight over the black-colored claw.

The eyes of the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect flashed as he gripped the rotating two-meter longsword. In his mind, nobody here could possibly pose a threat to him except perhaps for the handsome Lu Bai, with his mastery of Time power.

The Golden Frost Sect puppet also looked over at Meng Hao, and its eyes glittered.

Reverend Withered-Dao said nothing, as if he didn't care to watch anything that was happening.

The 19th Li Clan Patriarch was severely wounded and in full retreat. As for the members of the Song Clan, after acquiring the item they sought, they seemed to be ready to leave.

Dao Child Zhou Chen from the Coffin Altar Sect seemed to be itching to fight. When he looked over at Meng Hao, he suddenly frowned.

“He's only at the peak of Spirit Severing,” he thought. “He can't compare to Lu Bai.”

As for the Imperial Sect's Lu Bai, he was also observing the fight between Meng Hao and Di Ye. After seeing them attack, his expression remained tranquil. From a young age his talent had been prodigious and no one from the Northern Reaches was a match for him. Even the Ji Clan from the Eastern Land's Great Tang had wanted to take him in as an honorary disciple. Afterwards, though, he had been favored by the Dawn Immortal, who guided him on his path of cultivation. Thus, he no longer cultivated normally, but rather, pursued the Dao of the Resurrection Lily.

What was more, the Dawn Immortal did not permit the Resurrection Lily to absorb him. Rather, she had planted a seed within him that had no consciousness, allowing him to consume it and acquire the power of the Resurrection Lily. It was as if she was trying to sow good karma with him.

Instead of saying he was a cultivator, it would be more accurate to say that he... was a Resurrection Lily!

Because of that, even the Fang Clan took him quite seriously, and expressed interest in bringing him into the clan as a son-in-law. Because of all these things, he had a unique status. There were even rumors that he was in fact some almighty expert who had descended to Planet South Heaven to be reincarnated and rebuild his cultivation base from the ground up.

Considering his mastery of Time power, he would be able to take care of Di Ye in only three moves.

“Too weak,” he thought after a single glance, shaking his head at Meng Hao.

However, it was in that exact moment that Meng Hao spoke the words “Northern Reaches.” The sound of it echoed out, evoking tempestuous thoughts in all the South Heaven cultivators. Even the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect turned to look at Di Ye.

Relations between the Southern Domain and the Northern Reaches was a sensitive subject. Although it had been many, many years since full-scale war raged between them, it wasn’t a rare thing in the history of the lands of South Heaven.

Every time there was a war, one side among the two would flow with rivers of blood.

“Northern Reaches?”

“No wonder the cultivation bases of those three seem so unfamiliar. It turns out they’re from the Northern Reaches!”

“The Northern Reaches are connected to the Eastern Lands, both of which are on the other side of the Milky Way Sea! It takes a long time to cross the Milky Way Sea. Did they really come here just for the Dao Lakes?”

Even as the crowds from the Southern Domain were reeling in shock, Meng Hao spoke the name Liu Zichuan.

Although the name was unfamiliar to the Southern Domain cultivators, as soon as Dao Child Zhou Chen from the Coffin Altar Sect heard it, his eyes flickered and he looked at Meng Hao.

Lu Bai was slightly taken aback. He was from the Imperial Bloodline Clan, Zhou Chen came from the Coffin Altar Sect, and Di Ye was from the Desolate Clan. As for the Liu Zichuan Meng Hao had just mentioned, he was also from the Imperial Bloodline Clan!

The Imperial Bloodline Clan was the number one clan in the Northern Reaches!

And Liu Zichuan was the Imperial Son of the Imperial Bloodline Clan!

His cultivation base was only at the First Severing level, but as far as his position went, he could be considered one of the top figures in the entire Northern Reaches.

“You know Liu Zichuan?” asked Di Ye, his pupils constricting. His Desolate Clan was an auxiliary branch of the Imperial Bloodline Clan, so although he had a high cultivation base, whenever he heard the name Liu Zichuan, he had no choice but to lower his head and voice greetings to the young Lord.

“He owes me 9,000,000 spirit stones!” said Meng Hao with a cold snort. “How could I not know him?!” He casually opened his bag of holding and pulled out a fistful of jade slips, which detailed the amount of spirit stones owed to him by the cultivators from the ancient Demon Immortal Sect.

“Xu Shouyan owes me 8,000,000 spirit stones!

“Tian Leifang owes me 7,800,000 spirit stones!

“Zhou Jie owes me 9,500,000 spirit stones!

“Di Luo owes me 11,000,000 spirit stones!

“And then there’s someone named Han Peng, who owes me the most. 15,000,000 spirit stones!

“All of these people are from your Northern Reaches, right?”

Every single sentence spoken by Meng Hao caused the faces of the three Northern Reaches cultivators to flicker. That was especially true when the names Zhou Jie, Di Luo, and Han Peng were uttered. Even Lu Bai gaped in shock.

Zhou Jie and Zhou Chen were from the same clan, and Di Luo was Di Ye's younger brother. As for Han Peng, he was a Chosen from the Imperial Bloodline Clan, with a position second only to Lu Bai.

"How... how could they owe you so many spirit stones?!" bellowed Di Ye, his eyes wide. Unfortunately, the jade slips in Meng Hao's hands were imprinted with life essence aura. Due to the fluctuations of these auras that emanated from them, the three Northern Reaches cultivators could not doubt their authenticity, nor the identities of who they belonged to.

The surrounding members of the various sects and clans of the Southern Domain were even more shocked than the three Northern Reaches cultivators. They looked at Meng Hao with expressions of disbelief and astonishment.

This was especially true of the cultivators of the Blood Demon Sect and the Violet Fate Sect. They stared with gaping mouths.

"What did the Blood Prince do in the past?"

"He.... How did he get so many people to owe him so much?"

"Th-th-this.... I noticed that when he pulled out those jade slips just now, he only took out a few, the ones that belonged to the Northern Reaches cultivators. Could it be that the rest of the jade slips include people from the rest of the lands of South Heaven?!"

"The Blood Prince must have done a lot of business in the past!!"

Di Ye's eyes were bloodshot, and he was filled with feeling of humiliation. Throwing his head back and roaring, he hefted his wolf-tooth club and charged toward Meng Hao.

"NONSENSE! I'm gonna smash you to death, fool!"

Meng Hao's eyes glittered brightly. As the hulking man bore down on him, he raised his hand up and pointed forward.

"Blood Demon Grand Magic!"

Immediately, a blood-red vortex began to spin around the man. As the vortex rotated, an enormous blood-colored hand appeared that grabbed onto Di Ye. He struggled, but was absolutely incapable of doing anything to free himself. He could do nothing but cry out in rage and look around with confusion.

It only took a moment for him to realize that his fleshly body was rapidly withering, his qi and blood pulsing out of him and speeding toward Meng Hao. As for Meng Hao, his fleshly body was rapidly becoming stronger.

Up to now, Meng Hao had not met anyone under Dao Seeking who could free themselves from the Blood Demon Grand Magic.

The scene didn't faze the Southern Domain cultivators at all. However, Zhou Chen of the Coffin Altar Sect from the Northern Reaches was completely shocked. His face flickered and his eyes went wide as he stared at Meng Hao.

Shocked, he began to pant, and any scorn which he had felt toward Meng Hao was now long since vanished. As far as he could tell, a magical technique like this was on the same level as Lu Bai's Time magic.

"Inhuman! Just as inhuman as Lu Bai!"

Lu Bai of the Imperial Bloodline Clan was also staring with a strange light in his eyes, and a slight smile on his face. Inwardly, the desire to do battle was growing stronger. "If that's how it is, he might be worthy of going up against me!"

Inside the Blood Demon Grand Magic, Di Ye's fleshly body was withering rapidly. Horror and astonishment filled his heart, and he was completely terrified of Meng Hao.

"Dammit! You're just as inhuman as Lu Bai!" he roared. He clenched his teeth and then slapped his bag of holding to produce a crystalline magical talisman.

The magical talisman glittered brightly; this was a life-saving treasure given to him by his clan before leaving for the Southern Domain. He never imagined that he would have to use it after making his first appearance. However, facing this deadly crisis, he ignored any consternation and instantly smashed it between his fingers.

The instant the magical talisman was smashed, a stream of Dao Seeking power descended. The intensity of the power caused a tempest to spring up and slam toward the blood-colored vortex.

Rumbling filled the air as the Dao Seeking power descended. The blood-colored vortex trembled, and Di Ye, taking advantage of the surge of power, burst out. However, in that exact moment, Meng Hao gave a cold snort and waved his finger.

“Wither!”

Instantly, the Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao that Meng Hao had just come to understand, sprang into action.

The single character transformed into a natural law of Heaven and Earth, replacing what currently existed. A will of Heaven and Earth descended. In the blink of an eye... the air transformed, and distortions appeared.

Di Ye let out a miserable shriek as his body once again began to wither. This time, the withering was not limited to his fleshly body. His cultivation base withered, his life force withered, everything withered.

Sensing his death approaching, Di Ye looked toward Lu Bai, who hovered off in the distance, his eyes glittering. “Lu Bai, save me!!”

Lu Bai lifted a hand and pointed out. “Reverse!”

As soon as he uttered the single character, the air distorted, and transformations of Time appeared around Di Ye. It almost seemed as if time were being forced to run in reverse, initiating an abstract struggle against the power of Meng Hao’s ‘withering’ character.

One moment, Di Ye’s body was almost completely withered; in the next, it had been completely restored. The sort of pain caused by going back and forth between these states made Di Ye intermittently issue bloodcurdling screams.

The entire process lasted for the space of three breaths.

However, to Di Ye, those three breaths were like three lifetimes.

In the end, there was a boom, and Meng Hao backed up four measures. The ‘withering’ character and the Blood Demon Grand Magic collapsed. Lu Bai fell back three measures, his face flickering. His secret art of Time magic also vanished.

Between them was Di Ye, his body half-withered. He was now bony and thin, but not dead. He had managed to scrape by with his life. Aghast, he shot toward Lu Bai, his terror regarding Meng Hao having reached a pinnacle.

As far as the struggle between Meng Hao and Lu Bai, it was hard to say who won and who lost. However, it seemed clear that Lu Bai was a bit more powerful.

And yet, even as Meng Hao backed up, he reached up with his left hand and slapped the 300-meter long black-colored claw. Immediately, the treasure was sucked into his bag of holding. The six Blood Demon Sect Patriarchs appeared behind him, having finished gathering up a large assortment of various items.

As for the surrounding crowds from the Southern Domain, they were all panting.

“He’s gotten stronger again!”

“Meng Hao only had a little flash of enlightenment, but his magical techniques actually advanced again. Dammit... He could already display Dao Seeking power, but now... if a Dao Seeking expert doesn’t appear, who could possibly suppress him?!”

“Meng Hao!”

Dao Child Zhou Chen from the Northern Reaches’ Coffin Altar Sect looked at Meng Hao with astonishment. He was well familiar with Lu Bai’s reputation. He wasn’t just famous in the Northern Reaches; he was also well-known in the Eastern Lands.

If he weren’t, how could he receive the honor of being deemed one of the four great Young Starlords of South Heaven?!

Starlord was an honorific title in the lands of South Heaven to refer to the four strongest people in the Spirit Severing stage.

“He was able to fight Lu Bai and even make him retreat three paces! This Meng Hao is too powerful!”

Lu Bai gazed at Meng Hao, and within his eyes the desire to do battle grew even stronger. He raised his right hand, and the air in the area distorted. A pulse of Dao Seeking power began to descend.

“I’m not in Dao Seeking,” he announced, “I’m only at the Second Severing level. However, I can enter the Third Severing at any time. It’s just that my Dao still requires refinement, so I haven’t performed it yet.

“Today, you will be the whetstone to sharpen my blade!” By this time, his desire to fight was raging to the heavens. He took a step forward.

However, even as his foot descended, the lake beneath him suddenly began to rumble. The water began to shrink down, as if... another eruption were about to occur!

“A second eruption!!”

“Heavens! The 30,000-meter main lake is going to erupt a second time! What... what exactly does this mean?!?!”

“It’s actually going to erupt a second time!!”

Chapter 723: True Immortal Soul

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The lands of the region of the Ancient Dao Lakes sank down once again into a concave shape, almost as if it were inhaling.

The sight of it instantly caused the hundreds of thousands of cultivators on the outside to gape with wide eyes and reeling minds.

“A second... a second eruption!”

“When the 30-meter Dao Lakes erupt a second time, there’s a good chance that treasured items will appear. It’s the same with the 300-meter lakes. For the 3,000 meter lakes... there’s no need to even mention that. But this is actually... a second eruption of the 30,000 meter lake!”

“It’s going to spit out a precious treasure! It will definitely be a precious treasure!”

“It will definitely exceed everything from before! A... precious treasure!” If the cultivators on the outside were aware of such things, then one can only imagine the understanding of the people above the lake itself.

Even Lu Bai’s mind trembled. Abandoning any thoughts of fighting Meng Hao, he looked down at the Dao Lake, his heart quivering.

The teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect stared down at the Dao Lake with glittering eyes, and began to breathe heavily. “Don’t tell me... that sword wasn’t the good fortune. Is this... the real good fortune?!”

A strange gleam appeared in the eyes of the Golden Frost Sect puppet. The Golden Frost Sect cultivators inside had already acquired a treasure, and planned to leave, but seeing the new development caused them to collectively change their minds and resolve to make one last gamble.

Reverend Withered-Dao stared in astonishment and stood there mutely, while the Song Clan cultivators unleashed their auras. As for the 19th Li Clan Patriarch, he wiped the blood from his mouth and glared about with wild eyes. He had been defeated earlier, but this time he was willing to pay any price to steal something away.

Di Ye grumbled inwardly. He was currently weak, and not in a condition to be fighting. Next to him, Zhou Chen’s eyes began to shine brightly.

It was then that more rumbling could be heard. The second eruption of the Dao Lake would begin momentarily. The lake water began to boil, and it seemed a huge blast was imminent.

Just when the lake was about to erupt... all of a sudden, Meng Hao flickered and shot toward the 19th Li Clan Patriarch.

“Dammit!!” The 19th Li Clan Patriarch’s face fell, and he retreated at top speed. The other Li Clan members behind him all had similar reactions.

“Lunatic! Madman! The second eruption is about to begin and you still think you have time to try to kill us?!”

“Meng Hao, what are you doing!?!?”

“You crossed the 30,000-meter line, so I’m going to kill you,” responded Meng Hao coolly. He had never had a good impression of the Li Clan. Whether it was Li Daoyi that year in the Blood Immortal Tournament, or the overbearing way that the Li Clan cultivators forced him into a corner outside the rebirth cave, they all caused Meng Hao’s killing intent to rise.

Currently, the qi and blood in his body was bursting with vigor. After having absorbed Di Ye’s fleshly body, he was ready to explode out with power at any moment. He moved forward with incredible speed, and as he neared, waved a sleeve.

Immediately, a gigantic hand magically appeared, which emanated a Dao Seeking aura as it shot toward the Li Clan members.

Surrounding cultivators watched on but did not interfere. The eruption was imminent, and they were more concerned with what treasures would appear.

BOOM!!

Five people, including the 19th Li Clan Patriarch, all spit out blood and tumbled backward. They were just about to employ teleportation talismans to leave, when Meng Hao pointed a finger toward them.

The Blood Demon Grand Magic appeared. A blood-colored vortex began to spin around them. The 19th Li Clan Patriarch and the others could only watch on in shock.

“NO!!”

“Meng Hao, let us go! Give us a chance!”

“We’ll leave immediately! IMMEDIATELY!”

“Did you give me a chance at the Rebirth Cave that year?” responded Meng Hao coolly. The blood-colored vortex began to absorb them, and miserable screams rang out. The bodies of all five, including the 19th Li Clan Patriarch, rapidly withered. Massive amounts of qi and blood power flew toward Meng Hao.

As that happened, Meng Hao’s fleshly body became even more powerful.

A Dao Seeking aura exploded out, followed by bloodcurdling screams as the Li Clan cultivators’ bodies turned into skeletons. As the skeletons shattered into dust, their Nascent Divinities flew out and tried to escape. Meng Hao waved his arm in response.

Wither!

A wind suddenly kicked up, and the five Nascent Divinities trembled for a moment, and then began to wither and dry up. It took only a moment for the five Li Clan cultivators to be dead in body and soul.

“It’s too bad I haven’t entered the third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic, otherwise I could use the Spirit Meridians stratum!” Even as Meng Hao sensed the ripples of strength inside his fleshly body, a massive roaring sound filled the air.

Down below, the 30,000-meter Dao Lake was beginning to erupt!

The second eruption!

All eyes came to be fixed on the lake down below, and the boundless lake water rising up into the air. There was only one person who wasn’t looking at the lake.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered over to Dao Child Zhou Chen of the Coffin Altar Sect. After a quick glance, he headed directly in the man’s direction.

Who would have ever thought that Meng Hao would actually attack Zhou Chen? Even Zhou Chen could scarcely believe it. After all, he had no enmity with Meng Hao.

Moving with incredible speed, Meng Hao punched out. A Dao Seeking aura surged out, and the air shattered as the fist sped toward Zhou Chen. Zhou Chen's energy surged; he performed an incantation and then shoved his hand out in front of him.

BOOM!

Blood sprayed from Zhou Chen's mouth, and he tumbled backward. Mind spinning, he roared, "What are you doing?!?!"

"I want the halo you took earlier and put into your bag of holding," said Meng Hao, advancing toward him.

"Dammit! DAMMIT!!" Zhou Chen was just about to retreat when suddenly the eruption of the Dao Lake grew more intense. A bright glow appeared within the water, as if treasured items were about to appear.

By this point, nobody was paying attention to Meng Hao and Zhou Chen, although they remained on guard. Virtually all attention was focused on the Dao Lake below.

Meng Hao punched again, and a shocking rumble sounded out. Zhou Chen's face paled as he tumbled back. He performed an incantation gesture that caused his body to distort and grow blurry, but he was still just as incapable of fighting back. More blood sprayed from his mouth.

"Too powerful! I'm simply not a match for him!" Zhou Chen's face was ashen. The timing of Meng Hao's attack couldn't be worse for him. Right now, teleportation was impossible; it only worked after the eruption had begun.

"It's going to erupt any moment now," he thought, clenching his teeth. "There's no way that I can't hold on for just a few breaths worth of time!"

Meng Hao's expression was cold. The reason he had attacked the Li Clan cultivators was to absorb their qi and blood, which he planned to then use to snatch away treasures that others had already collected.

There was no enmity between him and Zhou Chen. However, it was better to rob Northern Reaches cultivators than Southern Domain cultivators. That had nothing to do with any hatred between them, but rather territorial allegiances.

Of course, this was a line of reasoning that Zhou Chen wouldn't be able to understand.

“Give me the halo, or you die!” said Meng Hao, shooting in pursuit. The rumbling of the Dao Lake grew even more intense; the waters were boiling, and had sunken down so low that it appeared the eruption would occur in the next breath.

“Hold on!” thought Zhou Chen, gritting his teeth tightly. “Just hold on a few more breaths!” His face flickering, he retreated with all the speed he could muster.”

“You really are looking to die!” Meng Hao said with a cold snort. He waved his hand, causing the Ninth Mountain to appear, around which swirled the Black White Pearls. As it descended toward Zhou Chen, Zhou Chen's face filled with intense astonishment. He wanted to struggle, but Meng Hao's fleshly body was already comparable to Dao Seeking. Meng Hao raised his right hand up, seemingly fusing it with the Ninth Mountain. An indescribable force of destruction then rumbled down.

CRUSHING!!

An incredible sensation of deadly crisis filled Zhou Chen's heart. The sensation was intense to the extreme; Zhou Chen was absolutely certain that he was incapable of evading, and that if the mountain did strike him, he would be dead in body and spirit.

“Dammit!!” He was a decisive person, so with a snarl, he produced the glowing, golden halo from his bag of holding and tossed it out. The instant that Meng Hao laid hands on it...

RUMMMBBLLLEEE!

The Dao Lake erupted!

Endless amounts of lake water shot up into the air, within which could be seen, not vast quantities of treasures like the first time, but only one item!

It was an illusory object that shone with multitudinous colors, like a soul. It looked like a man, although the features were somewhat obscure. As soon as the soul shot out from within the lake water, the sky grew dark and the land below began to quake.

An unprecedented aura suddenly burst out, the intensity of which could suppress Spirit Severing and subdue Dao Seeking. This was....

Immortal!!

An Immortal aura surged skyward.

Furthermore, it was not that of a false Immortal but rather... a true Immortal! The area surrounding the soul instantly changed; natural law spun and altered, as if this object's existence could substitute its own laws for what already existed.

"The soul of a true Immortal!" said the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect, his voice hoarse and his expression one of extreme excitement.

"True Immortal's soul!" said the Golden Frost Sect puppet, panting.

Reverend Withered-Dao, the Song Clan Patriarch and everyone else were completely shocked. Although they had all braced themselves mentally earlier and knew that the second eruption of the Dao Lake would produce a precious treasure, none of them had ever imagined that it would actually be... the soul of a true Immortal!

"To someone at the peak of Dao Seeking, absorbing the soul of a true Immortal would create an incredible opportunity to achieve true Immortal Ascension!"

"It's actually a true Immortal's soul!"

Not many people actually recognized what it was, especially among the hundreds of thousands of cultivators outside. However, the majority of the people above the 30,000-meter lake could tell what it was at a single glance.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered.

There were both true and false Immortals. True Immortals were people who were enlightened regarding a personal Dao, and after reaching the pinnacle, experienced Immortal Tribulation. Those who survived passed from Dao Seeking to Immortal Ascension!

On the other hand, false Immortals faced no Immortal Tribulation. They carved their name onto the Immortality Bestowal Dais of the Ninth Mountain, and were bestowed with Immortality. They had Immortal qi, but... could only be Immortals in the Ninth Mountain.

Such Immortals could not step foot outside of the Ninth Mountain. Furthermore, were the Immortality Bestowal Dais to be destroyed, they would all perish. After all... they were all Immortals of the Ji Clan!

“Not good! The appearance of a true Immortal soul will definitely attract the attention of the peak Dao Seeking cultivators from the various sects and clans of the Southern Domain.”

“This aura is extremely difficult to seal. It won't get out of the Southern Domain, but as of this moment, there are definitely people here who have already sensed it.”

The Solitary Sword Sect teenager, the Golden Frost Sect puppet and Reverend Withered-Dao, as well as some of the other cultivators, all realized what this meant.

“Fight!!”

“I have to get my hands on it as quickly as possible! Even if I can't use it, I can give it as a gift, and still be rewarded with incredible good fortune!”

“I have to have it! Anyone who fights me for it is dead!”

The teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect shot out, his eyes bloodshot. Everyone else in the area also shot forward with glowing eyes.

In the blink of an eye, everyone surged into motion, even Meng Hao.

Fight for the soul of the true Immortal!

They would fight to gain control of the true Immortal soul as soon as possible, before the peak Dao Seeking eccentrics arrived. This was Immortal destiny, the opportunity to become a true Immortal. When opportunities such as this came along, nothing else was important.

The only important thing... was the Immortal destiny!

BOOM!!

Chapter 724: Pull Out All the Stops!

Deep within Mount Solitary Sword of the Solitary Sword Sect in the Southern Domain, a rumbling could suddenly be heard. An ancient aura exploded out, causing the sky to go dark. An illusory sword appeared, floating in midair.

At the same time, an ancient old man in a black robe appeared out of nowhere. As he stood there, his peak Dao Seeking aura burst out, causing everything to tremble. He turned to look in the direction of the Ancient Dao Lakes.

“The soul of a true Immortal!” A glow of determination appeared in his eyes, and he suddenly vanished, disappearing in the direction of the Ancient Dao Lakes.

In a restricted area of the Golden Frost Sect could be seen a tombstone with nothing written on its surface. It looked ordinary and unremarkable. However an ancient aura of decay suddenly emerged from inside the tomb, and a dried-up hand stretched out. The ground cracked and shattered as an ancient figure with disheveled hair abruptly flew out.

“The soul of a true Immortal! That’s the aura of a true Immortal’s soul!” A bizarre glow appeared in the figure’s eyes as it shot through the air.

Within the Violet Fate Sect, everything was still. A sigh rang out, and then the silence resumed.

A roar could be heard within the Li Clan. In the blink of an eye, an ancient man appeared. He wore a brightly brocaded robe, and had towering killing intent. He flew through the air in the direction of the Ancient Dao Lakes, accompanied by rumbling booms.

Deep in the Song Clan, a half-corpse sat as still as death. Suddenly, its eyes opened, and they shone with a bizarre light.

“A true Immortal’s soul! My chance to achieve Immortal Ascension has finally arrived! Flesh and blood suddenly appeared to fill out the lower half of his body. In the blink of an eye, he was a middle-aged man. He had no hair, and wore a long Daoist robe. He took a step forward and then vanished.

In the Black Sieve Sect, Patriarch Six-Daos could sense the same thing as everyone else. However, he hesitated, then let out a frustrated growl. “Dammit! My cultivation base has already dropped to the mid Dao Seeking stage. How could I hold my own in the fighting? Meng Hao! Blood Demon Sect!! I won’t rest until you’re dead!!”

Meanwhile, on a mountain in the border region between the Southern Domain and the Milky Way Sea was a hamlet populated by a hundred or so families.

Smoke curled up into the air, and crisp peals of laughter could be heard from children playing outside the village.

“Wheeee! You can’t catch me, old man!”

“Grandpa, your hands are too dirty, don’t try to grab me!”

“Try to catch me, old man! We’re right here!”

The children were playing hide-and-seek with an old man. His hair was unkempt, and he looked a bit crazy. His clothes were dirty, and even his skin had splotches of mud on it. It looked like his long, draping hair hadn’t been tended to in a very long time. The old man laughed foolishly as he chased the children back and forth, which made the children laugh merrily.

“Hahaha! I’m gonna getcha! I’m gonna catch ya! Hahaha! I have no soul! I’m gonna getcha! Meng Hao.... Who’s Meng Hao...? Immortal Ascension, Immortal Ascension....” In the middle of running back and forth, the old man suddenly stopped in place, as if he had noticed something. A tremor ran through his body, and he looked off into the distance, his eyes listless.

“The soul of an Immortal.... A true Immortal’s soul.... Who am I...? Who am I?”

The old man grabbed his head in his hands. “Immortal Ascension! Immortal Ascension! I will become Immortal!!”

He then lifted his head up and let out a disconsolate howl, filled with shocking ripples and Immortal qi. The amorphous ripples swept out in all directions.

The smiles on the faces of the children twisted, and then their bodies began to turn illusory. The entire hamlet twisted and distorted, and began to glow with glittering lights. The lights flew up into the air and then shot toward the old man, where they swirled together to form a heavy saber. The man gripped the saber in his hand and shot off into the distance.

The hamlet was never real, and neither were the people who lived there. They were all simply incarnations of the saber.

“Immortal Ascension! Immortal Ascension! I will become Immortal!!” The old man continued to roar as he shot through the air. His expression was one of confusion, and his soul was incomplete.

Meanwhile, back in Mount Blood Demon, Patriarch Blood Demon sat in the Blood Pond. His eyes suddenly opened, and he was about to rise to his feet, then hesitated.

“No Karma or destiny connected to me,” he said, shaking his head. He settled back down and continued to meditate.

Throughout the entire Southern Domain, all the great powers were shaken. A streak of colorful light shot out from the Western Desert. It was a black-robed young man who looked very similar to Meng Hao. His expression was grim as he sped through the air. If you looked at him from a distance, he resembled an enormous, black bat.

He shot toward the Ancient Dao Lakes at top speed.

“He’s there.... I can sense him....”

As the Southern Domain was shocked, back in the inner region of the Ancient Dao Lakes, booms rang out across the 30,000-meter Dao Lake.

The battle for the True Immortal's soul was not something that ordinary Spirit Severing cultivators could participate in. Even someone of the Second Severing would have a hard time wresting away this good fortune without perishing.

Although the mere thought of the opportunity caused everyone's hearts to shake. After experiencing the fighting after the first eruption of the 30,000-meter Dao Lake, the Spirit Severing experts of the various sects and clans were left shaken. Therefore, they now hesitated, and many of them retreated from the fighting.

The six Blood Demon Sect Patriarchs were the first to fall back. Then, Sir Jian and the others from the Solitary Sword Sect. As for the Song Clan, the Patriarch who had led them here finally gritted his teeth and departed.

Reverend Withered-Dao was the only one present from the Violet Fate Sect. A strange gleam appeared in his eyes and he hesitated for a moment, but in the end, chose to leave.

Booms rattled out, and violent pulses of magical energy spread through the air. Only a few people qualified to participate in this battle!

The mysterious teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect, the composite puppet from the Golden Frost Sect, Lu Bai of the Imperial Bloodline Clan from the Northern Reaches, and lastly... Meng Hao!

Di Ye had been seriously injured by Meng Hao, and Zhou Chen from the Coffin Altar Sect had experienced having his pride completely destroyed. The two of them didn't dare to participate in the fighting, and retreated off to the side.

The booms were shocking. The mysterious teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect wielded the two-meter longsword. As he slashed it out in front of him, a dazzling, resplendent crescent moon exploded out, sending out shocking ripples.

In the battle for the true Immortal's soul, no one had any allies; everyone was an enemy. Therefore, no one dared to fight one-on-one with anyone else, but instead used divine abilities that were essentially area attacks.

Currently, the path to victory involved blocking the way of others.

“All of you get out of my way!” roared the Golden Frost Sect puppet. Brilliant light rose up from it, and it raised its hand and then swept it forward. A black mass of seawater magically appeared, within which surged numerous black dragons. Each of the black dragons spit out a pearl, which became a world that surged out in attack.

Lu Bai of the Imperial Bloodline Clan let out a cold snort. He quickly performed an incantation gesture and then waved his finger. The air distorted, as if time were beginning to reverse. Everyone suddenly slowed down exponentially, and it seemed as if time were about to flow backward.

As for Lu Bai, in a scant moment, he was closing in on the soul of the true Immortal.

And then there was Meng Hao. He didn't employ any special divine abilities. All he did was summon the Black White Pearls and the Ninth Mountain, which then bore down directly onto the position of the true Immortal's soul.

The incoming Ninth Mountain caused Lu Bai's face to flicker. A moment ago, he had been on the verge of reaching the true Immortal's soul, but now he was blocked.

The other powerful experts in the area were all attacking one by one. Everything rumbled, and for the moment, all of the cultivators were prevented from advancing toward the soul. It was in this moment that the teenager from the Solitary Sword Sect lifted his head up and roared. His body began to grow; in a split second, he had become a young man.

His aura grew explosively. Dao Seeking power rose up, and he was no longer in the Spirit Severing stage. Apparently, he had stepped into Dao Seeking. Natural law formed around him, and he advanced forward through the black seawater. He broke through Lu Bai's time reversal and slammed into Meng Hao's Ninth Mountain.

A boom echoed out as the Solitary Sword Sect teenager lifted his hand and pointed. His natural law slammed into the Ninth Mountain and pierced it through. The man reached his hand out toward the true Immortal's soul.

“Dammit!”

“You're looking to die!”

“Kill him!”

Lu Bai's face fell and he quickly performed a double-handed incantation, then pointed out. Immediately, a beam of light flew out, and the power of time reversal instantly appeared around the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

The Golden Frost Sect puppet roared and then waved a hand. Monstrous black light transformed into a black rain, which then coalesced into ten thousand howling dragons that shot toward the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect.

Killing intent flickered in Meng Hao's eyes. He did not use any offensive magic, but instead, waved a finger to employ the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex!

It didn't matter that the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect had an early Dao Seeking cultivation base. The combined might of the three others was still enough to shake him. Lu Bai's bizarre magic made it so that he was almost stuck in time. Meng Hao's shocking divine ability thoroughly bound him in place and weakened his cultivation base. Then the Golden Frost Sect puppet closed in with raging killing intent.

The combined attack of the three different parties caused the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect to go pale in the face. Blood sprayed from his mouth as he tumbled backward.

Lu Bai was the first to make a move. Utilizing time reversal, he appeared next to the soul of the true Immortal, and was about to grab ahold of it when the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect roared. His sword raged, and ten thousand moons roared forth. They combined with the ten thousand snarling dragons of the Golden Frost Sect puppet and Meng Hao's irksome hex.

BOOM!

Lu Bai couldn't hold up. His scalp went numb, and blood sprayed from his mouth. He had no time to grab the true Immortal's soul, and was forced into retreat.

In almost that exact same moment, Meng Hao and the Golden Frost Sect Puppet flew forward toward the true Immortal's soul. Their speed was shocking, and only a tiny instant passed before both were about to lay hands on it. The Golden Frost Sect puppet's eyes flickered, and ten thousand dragons roared toward Meng Hao. At the same time, the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect and Lu Bai joined together to attack Meng Hao and the Golden Frost Sect puppet.

This was a battle royale, filled with strikes and counterstrikes of all sorts! If this continued, no one would be able to prevail. Furthermore, time was of the essence. They all knew that peak Dao Seeking experts were definitely approaching, and then none of them would be able to continue to participate in the fighting.

The Blood Demon Grand Magic was powerful, but Meng Hao wasn't confident that it could restrain all three of the others at the same time. If he missed even one, it would be difficult to fight that person while simultaneously maintaining the Blood Demon Grand Magic.

His eyes flickered as he saw the divine abilities nearing. He suddenly lifted his hand and clenched it into a fist. All of the power of qi and blood that he had absorbed merged together in that fist, creating the most powerful blow he had ever delivered.

This punch was comparable to Dao Seeking!

However, what he attacked was not a person.

The fist struck out, and the air vibrated. The land shook, and a deafening sound filled the air. He punched a gigantic hole into the air itself, after which, a shocking gravitational force exploded out from within.

It seemed that, in order to repair itself, it needed to suck everything from the outside world into it. This was a part of a natural law. Behind the emptiness was the void.

Chapter 725: Grab That Soul!

The power of the gravitational force within the gap in the void was actually not very great. However, Meng Hao's strike contained Dao Seeking power. An incredible wind arose which, in combination with the gravitational force, caused the others to gasp in shock.

The young man from the Solitary Sword Sect looked astonished as he was helplessly sucked toward the gap. It was the same with the Golden Frost Sect puppet, and even Lu Bai. In just a short moment, they were already nearing the rift.

Their expressions flashed again when Meng Hao, despite being as out of control as them, suddenly looked at them with flashing eyes.

“Blood Demon Grand Magic!”

An enormous vortex suddenly appeared around Meng Hao, and a gigantic red hand wrapped around him. He was using the Blood Demon Grand Magic, not on one of them, but on himself.

He was using the power of the red vortex to fight against the gravitational force coming from the gap.

A rumbling sound could be heard as Meng Hao instantly came to a stop. Everyone could see that, of the group, he was the closest to the soul of the true Immortal!

Fighting against the power of the gravitational force, he used the power of his fleshly body to shrug off the attacks from the Solitary Sword Sect teenager and Lu Bai, as well as the Golden Frost Sect puppet’s divine ability. After coughing up some blood, he stretched his hand out and grabbed the soul of the true Immortal!

“Dammit!!”

“Meng Hao, are you looking to die?!?!”

“Meng Hao!!”

As soon as he touched it, a rumbling filled his mind. At the same time, the soul of the true Immortal began to shrink. It took only a moment for it to transform into a crystal, which Meng Hao closed his fingers around.

“Got it!” he thought. His eyes glittered, and he prepared to teleport away.

However, it was in that instant that the 30,000-meter Dao Lake down below suddenly emitted an astonishing rumbling sound. At the same time, the lake water transformed into an enormous whirlpool that pulsed with an incredible gravitational force.

This intense gravitational force instantly superseded the gravitational force from the fissure in the air. Immediately, the Golden Frost Sect puppet broke into pieces, reverting to the five cultivators from the Golden Frost Sect. Their bodies were completely beyond their control, and they let out miserable screams as they were sucked down into the Dao Lake below.

Next were the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect and Lu Bai, whose faces instantly fell. The young man from the Solitary Sword Sect immediately crushed a jade slip. His body began to fade with the power of teleportation. However, it was not powerful enough, and he too was sucked down into the Dao Lake.

The power of Time immediately began to ripple around Lu Bai as he attempted to reverse the flow of time. However, after a single breath of time, the distortions shattered; time was incapable of being reversed. He was transformed into a streak of light and sucked down into the Dao Lake.

Meng Hao was the last person remaining. The Blood Demon Grand Magic remained, but it was trembling violently. Meng Hao's mind reeled as he fought to free himself from the gravitational force. However, he was only able to hold out for the space of three breaths before cracking sounds could be heard from the Blood Demon Grand Magic and the enormous hand. They shattered, and Meng Hao was violently dragged down into the Dao Lake.

Almost in the same moment that they were sucked down into the 30,000-meter Dao Lake, two beams of light appeared far off in the distance. It took only one breath of time for two old men to suddenly appear above the lake.

“Dammit!!”

One of them immediately gestured down toward the lake, but not even a single ripple spread out across its surface. At the same time, more beams of light approached from all directions, closing in on the same position. These were all the peak Dao Seeking eccentrics who had sensed the soul of the true Immortal.

All of them were just a moment too late. However, they wouldn't give up that easily. They joined forces to attack the lake, after which they guarded it, observing it for a long time. When they were finally convinced that they couldn't get inside, they left, sighing with regret.

It was at that point that the Ancient Dao Lakes were finally restored to peace and quiet.

As for Meng Hao and the others, they were considered missing. Of course, the fact that Meng Hao ended up obtaining the soul of the true Immortal was something that couldn't be kept under wraps. After all, Spirit Severing experts from all the clans and sects had witnessed the event personally.

More and more people across the Southern Domain learned of the matter, and the various eccentrics of the sects and clans nearly went mad. They even joined forces to perform auguries which revealed that Meng Hao was, in fact, not dead. A furious search then unfolded across the entire Southern Domain.

If Meng Hao appeared, then the sects would surely find out immediately. Of course, the Blood Demon Sect didn't agree to all of that. As such, random skirmishes between sects became common in the lands of the Southern Domain.

The entire Southern Domain was slipping into chaos. Rogue cultivators feared for their lives; although there was no formal declaration of war, minor battles and fights were a common occurrence.

As for Meng Hao, after he was sucked down into the Dao Lake with the others, he entered what seemed like a tunnel, and then lost consciousness. He was sucked along for an indeterminable period of time before an incredible roaring sound suddenly shook him awake.

When he came to, he found himself in mid-air. Above was not a sky, but rather a boundless solid surface inlaid with infinite shining pearls that lit the entire area as brightly as day.

Interspersed among the pearls were the mouths of tunnels, virtually endless. As soon as he saw them, Meng Hao could guess that he had dropped out of just such an opening.

“What is this place...?” he thought, his mind trembling. As he looked around, his eyes instantly went wide and his face filled with shock.

He was... not in the Ancient Dao Lakes!

He was surrounded by endless ruins, the sheer enormity of which was difficult to describe. Wreckage and corpses stretched out in all directions, some of them half-buried. From the look of it, there were even more ruins that were completely buried beneath the ground.

It seemed as if this place was filled with layers of ruins that had built up over countless years of time.

There were also mountains visible!

The mountains were not true mountains, but rather, enormous collections of magical items, medicinal pills and even corpses. There were tens of thousands of such mountains scattered about everywhere. The sight was completely shocking.

Even more shocking was that in the middle of the tens of thousands of mountains floated an enormous portal of flames.

The bright red flames of the portal shot up high into the sky, causing the entire world to be filled with the color of its fire.

Up above in the air flew vicious winged creatures which were too numerous to count. Their bodies were completely violet, and they carried armfuls of magical items that they tossed into the portal's flames, which then burned them to absolutely nothing.

Apparently, the magical items provided some sort of power, which caused magical symbols to occasionally appear on the flame portal. Every time the magical symbols flickered, a sea of flames would roil out.

Beneath the flame portal was a gigantic awl, fully 30,000 meters long. It was bright crimson, and was suspended in midair to point down toward a 3,000-meter wide abyss.

There were a few of the winged beasts who glowed with a silver light. They seemed as if they were in a position of great authority, and carried whips, which they used to lash the others. There were also some golden-colored beasts who lay prone near the flame portal, apparently asleep.

In addition to all that, there were also a variety of strange beasts going to and fro on foot. They emanated shocking auras as they made their way among the ruins, carrying all sorts of objects.

They carried corpses, magical items, spirit stones, and other wreckage.

Almost in the same moment that Meng Hao saw them, the denizens of this place seemed to notice him. They all stopped moving and suddenly looked in his direction.

Countless gazes came to fall on him, causing his scalp to go numb.

Meng Hao had actually seen the violet, winged, humanoid beasts being spit out from the Dao Lakes in the outside world. Each and every one he saw now was similar to the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and there were even some who had Spirit Severing auras.

As for the silver-colored beasts, each and every one.... was a Spirit Severing beast! There were even some who had Dao Seeking auras, nearly two hundred of them.

Most shocking of all... were the gold-colored beasts that lay prone by the flame portal. There were eleven in total.

From what Meng Hao could sense, the golden-colored beasts all had Dao Seeking power.

One of them was a violet-gold color, and Meng Hao could tell that it was even more powerful, at the peak of Dao Seeking.

It was even above Patriarch Six-Daos and the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch.

As for the beasts who walked about on foot on land, they were a bit weaker. Even still, the vast quantity of the beasts was in and of itself enough to fill Meng Hao with a sense of deadly crisis.

“What is this place?!” he thought, his scalp tingling. As he saw the beasts turning to look at him, he felt as if he were standing under the shadow of death. If the golden-colored beasts weren’t there, it wouldn’t have been so bad. But with them present, the threat Meng Hao sensed was just far too great.

Worst of all, there was a deep-gold-colored beast sitting in the middle of the fire portal. Meng Hao could sense an even more terrifying aura, the aura of an Immortal!

It was at this point that the gold-colored beasts laying prone around the flame portal all began to open their eyes. They stared over at Meng Hao with cold gazes. At the same time, the deep-gold-colored beast looked at Meng Hao, and he immediately felt as if he was being sealed in place.

“That thing is far more powerful than the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch!!” thought Meng Hao. “If Six-Daos were here, he wouldn’t be close to being a match.

“What kind of beast is this? I can’t believe this underground world has such shocking beasts in it. Or perhaps... they’re Demons?” His face flickered, and he edged backward. However, it was then that he suddenly saw a person pop out from one of the tunnel mouths up above.

It was none other than Lu Bai!

The instant he appeared, he looked around, and his face flickered.

After him came the young man from the Solitary Sword sect, and then the five Golden Frost Sect cultivators.

When he realized the order in which they emerged, Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“I was the last to be sucked in, but the first to be dropped out,” he thought. “The five Golden Frost Sect Spirit Severing cultivators were the first to be sucked in, and the last to drop out.”

When the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect and the five Golden Frost Sect cultivators saw the lands around them, their faces also fell.

All eight of the cultivators backed up, fearful of offending the terrifying beasts and provoking an attack.

“Foreigners!” an ancient voice said. It echoed out through the entire world, from none other than the most powerful of the beasts, the deep-gold-colored one that sat in the flame portal.

It flew up into the air and suddenly began to grow larger. In a brief moment, it was 300 meters long, and it appeared to be the overseer of the place.

“You are the second group of foreigners to arrive during this era...”

Chapter 726: Trial by Fire!

“In accordance with the ancient treaty, you may take part in the life-or-death trial by fire here. If you succeed... then according to the ancient charter, you may acquire treasures from this place.

“If you fail, then this place shall be your grave!

“There are three levels, and by passing the second level, you earn the right to leave if you wish.

“If you make it past the third level, you can enter the land that has been guarded by my clan from generation to generation. There... you can acquire the ultimate good fortune.

“That good fortune is the Divine Flame Essence, the most supreme flame that exists in Heaven and Earth. Even the tiniest spark of that flame can burn an Immortal to death!

“In this age, you are the second group to enter this place. As for the first group, it consisted of nineteen people in total. Of that group, two made it through the second level. One left, and the other died in the third level.”

As the voice echoed out, Meng Hao’s mind trembled, and he stopped in his tracks. The young man from the Solitary Sword Sect, as well as Lu Bai, both had strange gleams in their eyes. As for the five Patriarchs from the Golden Frost Sect, their eyes were glittering brightly.

“You of this second group are quite powerful, more powerful than the first group....”

One of the old men from the Golden Frost Sect hesitated for a moment before tentatively asking, “Can we decline to participate in the life-or-death trial by fire?”

As soon as the words left the man’s mouth, the deep-gold overseer’s eyes flickered and it looked over at the old man. “What was that?!?!”

The old man immediately began to quiver, as if his cultivation base had suddenly become unstable.

A look of scorn appeared in the eyes of the deep-gold overseer. “Once you come to this place,” it said coolly, “you must participate! If you choose to quit... you die! Those were the terms of the ancient treaty. Our clan gave its approval, so the agreement will not be changed!

“Once you pass the second level, then you may choose to depart!

“The first level, is none other than our current location!

“You will battle with my fellow clan members. If you can enter the flame portal, then it signifies that you have passed the first level!” The deep-gold overseer’s voice echoed out in all directions.

Lu Bai’s eyes glittered and he cautiously said, “Senior, you’re at the peak of Dao Seeking! How can we compare to you?”

“I will not participate,” was the calm reply. “Furthermore, only one of my gold-colored fellow clan members will join the battle.”

The golden-armored man from the Golden Frost Sect immediately asked, “Do we fight one at a time, or can we go together?”

“One at a time. One person, one level. You will have three chances to get past a level. If you lose on your third chance, you die!”

Next to speak was the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect. “What if we kill too many of your people, and then you regret letting us fight?”

“Kill too many?” The deep-gold overseer laughed heartily. “Our clan descended from the Undying Divinity Clan. Do you really think you can kill us?” As his voice echoed out, black flames sprang up from the bodies of the beasts down below. As soon as the fire appeared, the level of their auras shot upward!

The explosive growth was terrifying; many of the violet-colored beasts, which were at the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, actually completely exceeded the limits of the Nascent Soul stage and stepped directly into Spirit Severing.

As for the silver-colored beasts, their energy also shot up.

“Fine. I, Gu Tianxiang, will be the first to go,” said the young man from the Solitary Sword Sect. He lifted his right hand, causing the two-meter longsword to appear, as well as the nine one-meter shortwords that circulated around it. The energy that surged out was that of the early Dao Seeking stage. The young man’s eyes flickered as he shot forward.

The instant he charged forward, the violet-colored beasts began to fly toward him one after another. Booms rang out without cease as Gu Tianxiang of the Solitary Sword Sect shot forward with incredible speed, slaughtering the entire way. However, his expression soon began to flicker; the

violet-colored beasts were extremely valiant. When they were injured, the flames that covered them would heal their wounds in a flash.

However, Gu Tianxiang was also incredibly valiant. As he fought his way on, silver-colored beasts appeared. He fought his way onward until he was about 1,000 meters from the flame portal. It was at that point that he fell, surrounded by a group of twenty silver-colored beasts. With a miserable shriek, he retreated back to his original position.

“1,000 meters. Your first attempt has failed,” stated the deep-gold overseer in a cool voice. “Although, the fact that you were able to retreat in one piece is quite an accomplishment. You have the potential to make it past the first level.”

The expressions of Meng Hao and the others sank when they saw the incredible power of the beasts’ fleshly bodies. They didn’t seem to possess any divine abilities or magical techniques, but their physical might really was too powerful, to the point that they seemed virtually unkillable. Furthermore, after being injured, their flames would immediately heal them.

Lu Bai’s eyes flickered, and he suddenly strode forward. He was a powerful expert from the Northern Reaches who wielded the power of Time and Space, and possessed no scant amount of life-saving treasures. In the Spirit Severing stage, he had already slaughtered experts of the early Dao Seeking stage.

He immediately transformed into a streak of light that charged forward, surrounded by distortions of space-time. As he proceeded along, it almost seemed as if the beasts were incapable of even touching him. Every blow landed on thin air.

Gu Tianxiang’s pupils constricted, and unsightly expressions could be seen on the faces of the five men from the Golden Frost Sect. As for Meng Hao, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“Eee?!” said the deep-gold overseer, its expression one of surprise as it watched Lu Bai. “A master of the secret arts of Time, with your own Dao. Excellent. You are qualified to match up to the two members of that first group of foreigners who entered here.”

Boom!

Lu Bai slaughtered his way on, passing the 1,500-meter mark, where he was immediately surrounded by twenty silver-colored beasts. When that happened, he began to sweat, but still managed to kill his way more than 500 meters further. By now, he was only about 500 meters away

from the flame portal. Gu Tianxiang from the Solitary Sword Sect had a very unsightly expression on his face.

“Is this really my limit...?” Lu Bai’s eyes were shot with blood as he performed an incantation with his right hand and then pointed up into the sky.

“River of Time!” he cried. Immediately, countless sparkling lights appeared around him, which transformed into a river that stretched out far and wide. The twenty silver-colored beasts had no choice but to fall back. Lu Bai charged forward 250 meters. He was now only 250 meters away from the flame portal!

The deep-gold overseer up in mid-air watched on with a strange gleam in its eyes.

It was at this point that a gold-colored beast suddenly rose to its feet. It shot with incredible speed toward Lu Bai, and when the two met, a huge boom rose up into the sky. Blood sprayed from Lu Bai’s mouth, but his expression was one of savagery as he backed up and slapped his bag of holding. Immediately, a black dragon corpse appeared.

This black dragon corpse was none other than the one he had procured during the eruption of the Dao Lake.

“Time Reversal, Resurrection!” Blue veins popped out on Lu Bai’s forehead, and he suddenly seemed to age by ten years. The River of Time exploded into countless colorful lights which then inundated the black dragon.

It was now possible to see the dragon apparently returning to life from the dead. Its eyes suddenly snapped open, and a shocking aura roiled out which contained the power of an Immortal!

The power exploded out for only a moment. Then it vanished, and the dragon was once again dead.

But that one moment was shocking to the extreme!

Gu Tianxiang of the Solitary Sword Sect gasped, and a look of astonishment could be seen in his eyes. How could he have imagined that Lu Bai... would have such an amazing secret art?!

The five men from the Golden Frost Sect all looked shocked, and their minds were filled with roaring. A secret art like the one they had just seen was unbelievable!

Meng Hao's eyes widened. Earlier, he had been able to sense that Lu Bai was powerful, but now he realized... Lu Bai was even more powerful than he had imagined!

"However, he was only barely able to use that secret art!" he thought. Suddenly, the same desire to do battle that he had seen in Lu Bai's eyes now appeared in his own. "I wonder who between the two of us... is stronger!?"

Surrounded by the beast horde, Lu Bai's secret art unleashed the explosive power of the dragon, which turned into an incredible attack that shot toward the gold-colored beast. The gold-colored beast's face fell, and it wanted to flee, but before it could, the attack slammed into it with a boom, shredding its flesh into ribbons. It let out a miserable scream and fell back at high speed. Flames burst out, rapidly healing the wounds.

It didn't die, but it was forced into retreat. That gave Lu Bai the opportunity he needed. Coughing up blood, he shot forward at top speed, crossing the final 250 meters and stepping up into the flame portal.

He coughed up some more blood, then waved his hand to collect up the black dragon corpse.

"What an incredible cultivator!" said the deep-gold overseer, an expression of admiration on its face. "To have passed the first level in one attempt... you may proceed to the second level. I look forward to seeing how you perform there. After passing the second level, you will acquire a precious treasure from our clan.

"When your secret Time art has reached its pinnacle, you can bring dead things back to life. Unfortunately, your cultivation base is too weak. If you can achieve true Immortal Ascension, and then utilize that art... you can resurrect that Nightmare Dragon to aid you for an entire battle!"

"There's no need to wait to be a true Immortal!" said Lu Bai coolly, wiping the blood from his lips. "The day I reach the peak of Dao Seeking, I can resurrect it to use in battle!" He turned to look back toward Meng Hao who was standing 3,000 meters away.

His gaze passed through the hordes of beasts to lock with Meng Hao's.

“Meng Hao, can you pass through?” he asked coolly. “Don’t disappoint me, now.” With that, he turned, paying Meng Hao no more heed as he stepped into the fire portal. In the blink of an eye, he was gone.

“Your turn,” said the deep-gold overseer, his gaze sweeping over Meng Hao and the others. “If you’re not confident, you can wait here until you are.

“Time means nothing to us. If you wish to practice cultivation here for a few thousand years before you try to charge through, you may.

“Normally speaking, it’s quite lonesome here. Now that I’ve been able to lay eyes on you foreigners, I feel... it would be a shame to see you die here.

“However, if you fail three times in a row, then I will personally slay you. And of course, there is always the possibility that you will be killed trying to break through.”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“Thousands of years...? I can’t wait at all. Elder Sister Xu won’t even stay alive for another ninety-nine years. I need to spend this life with her, not end up getting stuck in this place!” His eyes shone with coldness as he stepped forward, transforming into a beam of light that shot toward the beast hordes.

This time, it was the Solitary Sword Sect’s Gu Tianxiang whose eyes were fixed on Meng Hao as he shot forward.

“I always thought Meng Hao was the most inhuman cultivator I’d ever seen. I never imagined that Lu Bai would be even more shocking... Although, it took a bit of effort for Lu Bai to pass the level. This Meng Hao... won’t be able to make it across.”

The five Golden Frost Sect cultivators were looking on with unsightly expressions. If they joined forces, they might have a chance. But alone, none of the five had any confidence at all.

To them, this place was a dead end. After seeing Gu Tianxiang suffer defeat, and then seeing Lu Bai succeed, they were filled with many complex emotions. At the moment, they were watching Meng Hao.

Meng Hao shot forward with incredible speed, smashing into the beast horde with a bang.

Chapter 727: Completely Golden!

Immediately, countless violet-colored humanoid beasts surrounded him with flapping wings. All he could see was a mass of violet.

Of the 3,000 meters to the flame portal, the first 1,500 meters were firmly occupied by the violet-colored beasts. Only after passing through that region would they stand down. The silver-colored beasts made their move at the 1,000-meter mark, which was where Gu Tianxiang of the Solitary Sword Sect had been defeated.

If one could pass the silver-colored beasts, the next challenge was a gold-colored beast.

Meng Hao's eyes glittered. He didn't have time to waste here, so he immediately went on the offensive. The Black White Pearls and the Ninth Mountain rumbled out. As the Ninth Mountain descended, with the Black White Pearls circulating around it, everything trembled. The air vibrated, and multiple layers of ripples expanded out, transforming into an astonishing pressure that weighed down on everything.

The intense pressure was like a wall that crashed into the violet-colored beasts. As Meng Hao charged forward, they tumbled back, howling. Even the most outstanding of the violet-colored beasts were incapable of even getting close to Meng Hao before being smashed backward.

250 meters. 500 meters. 750 meters. 1,000 meters....

Within in the space of only a few breaths of time, Meng Hao proceeded forward as if he were walking along a paved path. He quickly reached the 1,500 meter mark, with the violet-colored beasts left behind in the dust. They glared at him, but didn't pursue or attack him any further.

Up ahead was a glittering, silver glow, which was a silver-colored beast. It shot forward with a ferocious expression and incredible speed. Its power seemed equivalent to the Second Severing.

Meng Hao gave a cold snort as he waved his right hand. The Ninth Mountain arrived, crushing the silver-colored beast. It let out a miserable howl as its body began to fall apart. However, the flames leaped out and quickly restored it.

Meng Hao quickly advanced by about 250 meters, putting him only 1,250 meters away from the flame portal.

It was then that six more silver-colored beasts joined the beast from earlier. Seven total, five with Second Severing cultivation bases, and two with Third Severing cultivation bases, charged toward Meng Hao.

“Crushing time!” Meng Hao advanced, waving his right finger. The Ninth Mountain grew in size, rumbling as it crushed down onto the seven silver-colored beasts.

Meng Hao charged onward. He was now only 500 meters away from the flame portal.

At this point, more than ten silver-colored beasts attacked him furiously. Booms rang out from the Ninth Mountain as the seven silver-colored beasts being suppressed burst out from within, their bodies wreathed in flames. They joined in to completely surround Meng Hao.

The five men from the Golden Frost Sect were watching intently as all of this happened. Off to the side, Gu Tianxiang’s eyes glittered. Meng Hao was now in the same position he had been when in when he suffered defeat. “That Lu Bai is inhuman!” he thought. “Meng Hao might be powerful, but if he thinks he can get any farther, well, that’s impossible!”

The deep-gold overseer up in mid-air was also watching the proceedings closely, and thought, “He’s definitely going to be defeated.”

However, it was then that Meng Hao’s right hand flashed with an incantation gesture, and he waved his sleeve.

“Blood Demon Grand Magic!”

Rumbling could be heard as a gigantic vortex formed, enveloping the roughly twenty silver-colored beasts. At the same time, an enormous blood-colored hand appeared, which firmly grasped the beasts.

“Qi and Blood stratum!” roared Meng Hao. The more than twenty silver-colored beasts began to tremble, and expressions of astonishment could be seen on their faces. Their bodies began to wither rapidly as vast quantities of qi and blood shot toward Meng Hao.

A tremor ran through him. The qi and blood was incredibly powerful, and in an instant his body had already reached the limit that Spirit Severing could accommodate.

The more than twenty silver-colored beasts struggled violently, to the point that the vortex seemed to be on the verge of collapsing. Apparently, the limit of the second level of Meng Hao’s Blood Demon Grand Magic had been reached.

Gu Tianxiang’s eyes glittered. “He’s going to be defeated!”

The five members of the Golden Frost Sect sighed. If Meng Hao couldn’t get past the first level, then there was no hope at all for them.

Up in mid-air, the deep-gold overseer eyed Meng Hao’s Blood Demon Grand Magic, and its expression flickered, but then quickly returned to normal.

Currently, the more than twenty silver-colored beasts were struggling and roaring so violently that the vortex couldn’t handle it. Cracking sounds could be heard, and rifts spread out. However, Meng Hao then pointed his finger and cried, “Wither!”

The ‘withering’ character from the Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao caused the silver-colored beasts’ bodies to tremble. Their fleshly bodies began to wither even more rapidly, and their cultivation bases were instantly suppressed. Even their life forces showed signs of withering.

Because of their weakening, the Blood Demon Grand Magic vortex was no longer under the strain it had been. It once again rumbled into motion. From a distance, the vortex was incredibly huge and shocking.

Boom!

Even denser streams of qi and blood poured from the vortex to be absorbed by Meng Hao. He trembled violently as his fleshly body suddenly burst out of the Spirit Severing stage and into Dao Seeking.

The more than twenty silver-colored beasts were withering rapidly, and seemed to be just on the verge of death. Flames appeared to restore their bodies, but their power was sucked away by Meng Hao even as the restoration occurred.

It was a cycle that became like a wellspring of power for Meng Hao. It was almost as if he could continue to grow stronger... forever!

Early Dao Seeking. Mid Dao Seeking....

He lifted his head up and roared as he felt an unprecedented level of power coursing through him. Along with this incredible fleshly body power came an increased self-confidence.

This was the Heaven-defying might of the Blood Demon Grand Magic!

This intense, unprecedented strength also caused Meng Hao to be wracked with severe pain; it felt as if his body might be ripped apart. When Gu Tianxiang saw what was happening, he gasped. The five cultivators from the Golden Frost Sect watched with wide eyes.

The deep-gold overseer up in midair was even more astonished. He gasped and thought, "What divine ability is that!? It's so shocking!! It's completely different than the River of Time, and, in fact, far more terrifying!"

Furthermore, the regeneration of the more than twenty silver-colored beasts was actually not able to keep up with the absorbing power of the vortex. Looks of despair could even be seen on some of the beasts' faces.

Meng Hao seemed as if he had become the vortex itself as he gobbled up all the incoming power of blood and qi.

The deep-gold overseer's face fell. "Dammit! If this goes on, he might really be able to wither my clan members to death!!"

Meng Hao's eyes flashed as his fleshly body exploded with power. It burst through the mid Dao Seeking stage and then stepped into the late Dao Seeking stage!

In that moment, the Blood Demon Grand Magic vortex suddenly changed color, turning from red to gold!

When it became gold-colored, intense rumbling sounds filled the air and an incredible pressure weighed down on everything. The five Golden Frost Sect cultivators' faces were filled with shock, and their hearts trembled. They could clearly sense the fearsomeness of the golden vortex, and they knew that even if they combined into the puppet, they would be incapable of fazing Meng Hao in the least bit.

Gu Tianxiang of the Solitary Sword Sect was even more shocked. His pupils constricted as he realized that Meng Hao was actually just as inhuman as Lu Bai!

The golden vortex seemed to have transformed on a fundamental level. The pressure exploded out tenfold, and Meng Hao trembled inwardly as he sensed the terrifying nature of the golden vortex.

“No wonder I wasn't ever able to cultivate the third level. The blood-colored vortex... isn't the final limit of the second level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic! Only by turning the vortex golden can I reach the great circle of the Qi and Blood stratum!”

Enlightened, Meng Hao was now confident that he could easily suck the silver-colored beasts out of existence. However, that was not the course of action he chose.

After all, the deep-gold overseer was in control of this entire place, so it was best not to go overboard.

“Dammit!” thought the deep-gold overseer. “One inhuman is bad enough. How could a second one have appeared! And this new one is even more shocking than the previous one!!”

Lu Bai had passed through the first level by using his River of Time to avoid the silver-colored beasts. Meng Hao, on the other hand, was relying on the power of his magic to crush everything in his path. It was easy to see which of the two was superior!

The deep-gold overseer was getting anxious, but because of the ancient treaty there was nothing he could do to interfere. Just when he was at the peak of anxiety, Meng Hao waved his hand, causing a boom to rattle out. The golden vortex faded away, and the more than twenty silver-colored beasts were sent spinning away, blood spraying from their mouths. They were listless and dispirited, and they looked at Meng Hao with expressions of unprecedented fear and awe.

They had not feared Lu Bai; were Lu Bai to be even stronger than he was, he still wouldn't be able to kill them.

Meng Hao was quite different, though. He was qualified to utterly exterminate them!

Even as rumbling sounds continued to echo out, and the more than twenty silver-colored beasts retreated, Meng Hao proceeded onward. He had absorbed a virtually inexhaustible amount of qi and blood. Although it didn't truly belong to him, he was temporarily incredibly powerful, and could explode out with fleshly body power that was almost completely equivalent to the peak of Dao Seeking.

He proceeded forward, and natural law spread out around him. The world rumbled, the air distorted, and shocking energy filled him. As he charged forward, the deep-gold overseer's eyes flickered. It had a certain amount of control based on the treaty, so it quickly called upon a gold-colored clan member that was more powerful than the one that had attacked Lu Bai. It roared and charged toward Meng Hao, its Dao Seeking cultivation base surging. Its body was surrounded by flames, and it streaked toward Meng Hao like a shooting star.

Meng Hao could instantly see the difference between this beast and the one that had attacked Lu Bai. He snorted coldly and then clenched his fist.

"SCREW OFF!" he roared, punching with all the strength his fleshly body could muster. Everything dimmed as an insane, earth-shattering wave of power rocketed forth which seemed capable of covering the sky and burying the earth.

The incoming gold-colored beast looked shocked, and was instantly filled with an intense sensation of deadly crisis. Without hesitation, it attempted to dodge. However, the wave of power generated by Meng Hao's fleshly body was far too shocking. In the blink of an eye, it completely inundated the gold-colored beast.

A bloodcurdling scream echoed out. Flames completely covered it, but they were incapable of preventing the creature's body from beginning to fall apart completely.

Seeing that its fellow clan member was about to die, the deep-gold overseer shot down in a flash of light. It grabbed the gold-colored beast, then slapped out to disperse the wave of power generated by Meng Hao. It managed to save its fellow clan member in the nick of time.

The gold-colored beast was panting for breath and staring at Meng Hao with intense fear. It wasn't just this particular gold-colored beast. All of the others were watching on with intense shock.

“You have passed the first level!” said the deep-gold overseer, staring at Meng Hao with a deep look.

Chapter 728: Second Level!

The gold-colored beast that had attacked Meng Hao was clearly far more powerful than the one that had been dispatched against Lu Bai.

Despite that, it almost died. Were it not for the intervention of the deep-gold overseer, it would surely have been destroyed.

However, Meng Hao was also only capable of throwing this one punch!

That strike had contained all the power he had just absorbed. At the moment, his body was returning to normal. Although his aura was quite a bit weaker, there was no one who would dare to look down on him.

The five Golden Frost Sect cultivators were thoroughly shaken.

“He's... even stronger than before!!”

“Don't tell me that golden vortex appeared because he was just enlightened?! Or, was he simply holding back before?!?”

The five men exchanged glances, and each could see how shocked the others were. If they were to fight Meng Hao, and he used the golden vortex, then even in their puppet form, they would still be... completely defeated!

Gu Tianxiang from the Solitary Sword Sect had a face filled with shock. His eyes were wide, and his heart trembled. “He's clearly only at the Second Severing level, but that Blood Demon Grand Magic... it's simply... simply terrifying!!”

He was a powerful expert from the Solitary Sword Sect, and had previously viewed himself as quite knowledgeable regarding the Blood Demon Sect. As of now, though, he realized that the magic of the Blood Demon Sect was beyond imagination.

The deep-gold overseer was also shocked, and could do nothing but stare wordlessly at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever as he slowly walked forward. When he reached the flame portal, he stepped in without hesitation.

On the other side of the flame portal was what seemed to be a completely different world. As soon as Meng Hao entered, he saw Lu Bai off in the distance, coughing up blood as he tumbled backward like a kite with its string cut. The black dragon in front of him was returning to its usual lifeless state.

This world was a world of fire. A sea of flames stretched out in all directions, from within which emerged an enormous, towering altar. The altar was colossal, hundreds of thousands of meters tall, arranged into nine levels.

Just now, Lu Bai had met defeat on the third floor, and was ejected, blood spraying from his mouth. He hovered in mid-air, his face pale. He looked back and saw Meng Hao, and his eyes began to shine with a bright glow as well as complex thoughts.

"So, you're here," he said as he floated down to the ground. Paying Meng Hao no more heed, he sat down cross-legged and began to meditate.

Meng Hao looked up at the enormous altar stretching up out of the sea of flames. For some reason, he got an odd feeling about this place. For some reason, he felt more relaxed, as if some intangible shackles had been removed from him. His mind felt clearer.

"Foreigner!" said an ancient voice, which echoed out from up above. Looking up, Meng Hao was shocked to see a white, humanoid beast, another overseer.

It hovered up above at what seemed to be the very top of the world, emitting absolutely no cultivation base aura whatsoever.

It looked down at Meng Hao and said, “You have passed the first level, which is your good fortune. If you pass the second level, you will be qualified to leave this place and can also receive a treasured item of our clan.

“This is a life-or-death trial by fire, the result of the treaty with our benefactor long ago. Any foreigner who enters, regardless of which clan they come from, may participate in the trial by fire.

“Step across the flames and onto the altar of nine floors. Defeat the enemy you find on each floor, and you may pass to the following floor!

“You may employ any magical technique, any divine ability, any means or method you wish!

“You have three chances. If you suffer defeat on your third attempt... you will be blotted out of existence.”

When the white-colored overseer finished speaking, it closed its eyes and said nothing further.

Meng Hao took a deep breath and then immediately sat down cross-legged to meditate. After fine-tuning his cultivation base for a day, he opened his eyes and stepped out over the sea of flames.

In that instant, Lu Bai opened his eyes and looked at Meng Hao.

“Be careful of the third floor,” he said slowly. “There, you will find a copy of yourself.”

Meng Hao stopped for a moment, looked at Lu Bai, and nodded. Then, he flew across the sea of flames and stepped onto the first floor of the altar. As soon as he did, he saw a human-shaped statue, which immediately melted and transformed into a young man wearing an azure robe.

The young man’s eyes were listless at first, but when Meng Hao looked at them, they suddenly began to shine with a brilliant light.

“That kid from earlier got past me by a fluke. You... won’t be so lucky.” Even as he spoke, he lifted his hand up into the air and then pointed forward. Behind him, a single, black bee appeared. Immediately, ghost images sprang up around it. In the blink of an eye, Meng Hao was facing over ten thousand bees.

Buzzing sounds could be heard as the bees shot toward Meng Hao. The young man's fingers flickered in an incantation, and he pointed out again. This time, shockingly, more than ten thousand centipedes appeared.

"A Dragoner?" thought Meng Hao, shocked. Everything that was happening seemed very familiar. In the Western Desert, Dragoner cultivators attacked in much the same fashion. Meng Hao didn't immediately respond, but rather backed up a bit and looked the situation over. After a moment, he realized... this was not Dragoner magic, but overall, it was very similar.

As for Meng Hao, when it came to the Dao of Dragonering, he was once a Grand Dragoner of the Western Desert. In fact, it could be said that he was the most powerful Grand Dragoner of his generation.

Meng Hao's face was the same as ever as the bees and centipedes closed in. He performed an incantation gesture to employ Dragoner magic. His divine sense rolled out, and the bees and centipedes immediately stopped short.

They looked a bit confused, and as for the young man, his face filled with shock.

At the same time, Meng Hao pointed out, causing the Black White Pearls and the Ninth Mountain to appear. Roaring sounds filled the air as they crushed down. Meng Hao shot forward with incredible speed to appear directly in front of the young man. He waved his right hand, and the Blood Demon Grand Magic appeared.

The shocking golden vortex appeared, as well as a golden hand that grabbed ahold of the young man. Immediately, his body began to wither as his qi and blood were absorbed. It only took a moment for him to completely collapse.

After collapsing, the young man reappeared in another location. He looked deeply at Meng Hao for a moment before coolly saying, "I am merely a Dharma Clone created by a strand of qi. However, you were able to rout me, which is something no one has ever done before. You... have passed."

Meng Hao frowned slightly. He had not absorbed very much qi and blood, and he was still unable to see the young man's cultivation base. Without another word, he flashed toward the second floor.

As soon as he stepped foot onto the second floor, an incredible power surged toward him.

Meng Hao's face flickered and he raised his hand and pushed it straight out in front of him.

Rumbling filled the air as an incredible surge of energy bore down on him. Meng Hao trembled, and his face flickered as he retreated at full speed.

He looked up to see a giant minotaur, looking back at him with an expression of surprise. "At the very least," thought Meng Hao, "he also has Dao Seeking fleshy body power. It also seems like the attack just now was casual! How did Lu Bai get past this part?"

"Hahaha!" the minotaur laughed maliciously. "Excellent! Excellent! Finally somebody with some real power has arrived! That brat with the Time powers was much weaker than this!" The minotaur's muscles bulged as he stamped his foot into the ground and charged at Meng Hao.

"Don't let me down, now!" he roared. "That brat from before was a complete hassle! That secret Time art he used was strange and difficult to deal with. Fighting that fool wasn't fun at all! He pestered me to the max until I finally let him past. But you.... I like you, punk!"

BANG!

The minotaur punched out with explosive Dao Seeking power, causing Meng Hao's face to flicker. He rotated his cultivation base and immediately sent out his own punch.

A massive, astonishing roar rippled out, and Meng Hao's face went even paler. He was now in full retreat; the minotaur lifted his head back and laughed heartily.

"Excellent! Excellent!" he said, charging toward Meng Hao once again at full speed.

Meng Hao's eyes widened.

"He's using more power this time!!" he thought, and the desire to fight gleamed in his eyes. Power surged throughout his fleshy body, and he once again counterattacked, adding the power of vibration into his attack.

The two massive powers collided, and Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood as he was sent tumbling backward. As for the minotaur, his body vibrated, and the ground beneath his feet cracked and split. When he looked up, his eyes shone with a bright light.

“This is awesome! Awesome! You’re not bad at all, brat. Come come, allow Grandpa Minotaur to smash you to death!” With a hearty laugh, he charged again.

Meng Hao’s face flickered, and his entire body was shaking and numb. In contrast, his opponent didn’t seem to be even slightly hurt. In fact... Meng Hao could sense that the thing’s fleshy body was actually growing increasingly powerful.

“I can’t compete with him in terms of physical strength!” thought Meng Hao, his eyes flashing. As the minotaur bore down on him, he performed a minor teleportation to evade.

“Why are you running away!?” fumed the minotaur, charging him once again. Meng Hao performed another minor teleportation, leaving the minotaur enraged.

“Dammit! You’re pissing me off as much as that other guy!” roared the minotaur. He suddenly stamped his right foot onto the ground, unleashing an incredible boom. The air distorted, making it impossible for Meng Hao to teleport. He quickly performed an incantation and then pointed out.

“Blood Demon Grand Magic!”

Immediately, the golden vortex appeared around the minotaur, who was immediately stuck in place. As his fleshy body began to wither away, his eyes bulged, and he howled, “What kind of crappy magic is this!?”

With that, power seemed to explode from within him, surging out to fight back against the vortex. For the first time ever... the vortex collapsed.

Meng Hao’s face fell and he shot backward in retreat. The minotaur laughed maniacally and then unleashed another punch.

Meng Hao was barely able to dodge it, and yet was still forced to cough up a mouthful of blood. He retreated again, a thousand ideas flitting through his mind.

“Extraordinary strength, an incredibly tough body, can lock down teleportation in the area, and even the Blood Demon Grand Magic is useless against him.... What do I do?!” Meng Hao fell back constantly, and was wounded constantly. Blood sprayed from his mouth, and the minotaur continued to get more and more excited as he battled on.

“If I could absorb his fleshly body, then I would definitely turn this around and win! But he simply shook off the Blood Demon Grand Magic vortex.... Wait....” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“Hold on a second. The Blood Demon Grand Magic first binds, then absorbs. That’s why it requires such a huge vortex. That means its power is spread out. If I focus the vortex on the smallest area possible, and don’t attempt to absorb everything, but instead only do a quick absorption....” Meng Hao’s mind was now thinking incredibly clearly. Enlightenment had come suddenly, right in the midst of battle. At the same time, the minotaur was yet again almost on top of him.

Meng Hao had no time for further consideration. He waved his hand, and again the Blood Demon Grand Magic appeared. However, it was not a large-scale version, but rather, a vortex the size of the inside of his palm.

The vortex spun rapidly in his palm, fusing into his hand to such a degree that it seemed to replace his palm print.

“Well, it’s go time. Will it work?!”

Even as the minotaur closed in, Meng Hao shot forward, extending his palm out in a strike.

“Blood and Qi stratum!”

Chapter 729: Spirit Meridians Stratum!

[/expand]

Boom!!

Blood sprayed from Meng Hao’s mouth. He could tell that the minotaur’s punch contained an incredible fleshly body power. Such power and ferocity was something he himself couldn’t withstand.

However, before the blow could land, the qi and blood absorbing suction power in his hand, which was even more astonishing than before, immediately absorbed a batch of power, strengthening his own fleshly body.

Meng Hao's eyes gleamed brightly.

The minotaur stared in shock and astonishment.

“Well, that worked!!” thought Meng Hao. “The Blood Demon Grand Magic doesn't just have to be used externally. I can employ it using other methods, for example, fusing it with my fleshly body!” Meng Hao laughed out loud, and his eyes gleamed with the desire to do battle. However, instead of rushing to attack, he fell back into a pattern of retreat just like before.

Every time he dodged or evaded, he would find ways to get close to the minotaur to touch it with his palm.

“Dammit! This is like getting bitten by a mosquito!” roared the minotaur. “I dare you to fight head on!” Meng Hao didn't respond with a single word. However, his eyes began to glow with increasingly bright light. Every time he touched the minotaur, he would absorb a bit of qi and blood. Gradually, the power of his fleshly body increased, and he grew more powerful.

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao's body trembled, and in the instant the next attack was leveled against him, his fleshly body burst out of Spirit Severing into Dao Seeking.

“Wanna fight? Let's fight!” As he spoke, he ceased retreating, and punched directly toward the minotaur, who was a bit slow to react.

The minotaur actually seemed to be rejoicing, and was laughing wildly as he charged forward.

BOOOOOMMMMMM!!

Meng Hao and the minotaur exchanged blow after blow in mid-air. Each time, Meng Hao would end up tumbling backward, but at the same time, his fleshly body grew more and more powerful.

In contrast, the minotaur grew more and more shocked. His strength was slowly diminishing, and his previous hulking and sturdy body was gradually withering.

“You’re so strong!” he exclaimed. “Don’t tell me you were just going through the motions before? How dare you toy with me!!” Now that it realized something was going on, it went on a rampage, charging Meng Hao relentlessly.

Another incense stick worth of time passed.... Meng Hao could now battle head on, back and forth, with the minotaur and did not need to retreat. The minotaur’s rage continued to intensify.

Yet another incense stick worth of time passed....

“Y-y-you... you’re so powerful! How is it possible?!?” Now the minotaur was retreating, and was completely struck dumb by Meng Hao’s display of ferocity. He punched and punched, but the result was only increasing weakness.

After enough time passed for three incense sticks to burn, a boom rang out and the minotaur tumbled backward head over heels. He slammed hard onto the surface of the altar, his body withered and incredibly weak. Compared to his previous stalwart frame, he was much weaker, though this still made him far stronger than the average person.

“How come... how come I’m skinny now? AGHHHHHH! I’m skinny!!” The minotaur saw Meng Hao closing in again with another attack, and suddenly gave a start. “Demon magic! You little punk, you’re using Demon magic!!”

The minotaur was now in full retreat, it’s face filled with fury. “Okay, I quit! Dammit! The contest is over! You win, you pass!”

Meng Hao stopped in place. He actually felt a bit bad. Thanks to the minotaur, he had gained a new understanding of yet another unique usage of the Blood Demon Grand Magic. This new technique made the Blood Demon magic even more useful.

“Many thanks, senior,” he said, clasping hands and bowing deeply.

The minotaur gave a cold snort and ignored Meng Hao. He looked down at his body and scowled miserably. “I’m skinny now.... So skinny.... I’m finished. Finished! When I get home, my woman is gonna beat me for sure. What... what if she gets some crazy ideas about what happened? What am I supposed to do?”

Meng Hao felt even more guilty now. He cleared his throat; aware that no explanations could fix the situation, he quickly headed toward the third floor.

On the third floor, he found himself facing a huge, glittering mirror. From within the mirror emerged a person who looked completely like Meng Hao in all aspects. He glanced down at his body, then smiled bashfully and looked back at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao's eyes flashed, and then thought back to Lu Bai's warning.

“Fighting myself? Black White Pearls and the Ninth Mountain!”

“Black White Pearls and the Ninth Mountain!” Both people attacked at the same time, and instantly, shocking booms rattled out. Outside the altar, Lu Bai lifted his head and looked up toward the third level, his eyes gleaming.

Meng Hao retreated, as did his doppelgänger.

“Blood Demon Grand Magic!”

“Blood Demon Grand Magic!”

BOOM!

Both attacked with exactly the same divine abilities and magical techniques. After fighting for several hours, Meng Hao's doppelgänger suddenly changed strategies. No longer did it do exactly the same thing as Meng Hao. Instead, it used Meng Hao's various techniques and magics to attack in its own unique way.

Rumbling filled the air as Meng Hao saw a gigantic Blood Immortal face appear in front of him, along with a blood-colored vortex that began to spin around him. His face was extremely unsightly. This magical incarnation was incredibly troublesome. A real headache.

All of a sudden, he realized what it must be like for other people to fight him.... What a feeling! That was especially true when he thought of... the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex. His doppelgänger actually utilized the technique perfectly, and Meng Hao had to admit that this opponent... was much better than he was.

Every time the doppelgänger attacked, it would use the Eighth Demon Sealing Hex at just the right time. Meng Hao wanted to bellow in rage.

“So, you can use the technique in THAT way!” he thought. Even in the midst of his frustration, he began to imitate how this magical doppelgänger used his own battle magic.

The Eighth Demon Sealing Hex was incredible!

An incredible booming sounded out as the two of them attacked each other. By now, they had been fighting for close to a day. Every time Meng Hao used the Blood Demon Grand Magic to absorb some of his opponents qi and blood, the same would happen to him.

It seemed that it would be difficult for either party to clinch victory. However, Meng Hao was learning a lot over the course of the fighting.

“At this rate, I won’t be able to wrap things up any time soon!!” He was starting to get anxious. It was at this point that the white-colored overseer up in mid-air suddenly opened its eyes.

“You may not battle for more than a day on any given level. You still have enough time left for an incense stick to burn. After that, if the battle has not been concluded... then it counts as your loss!”

“Why?!” asked Meng Hao, looking up at the white-colored overseer.

“Defeating others is easy and while defeating yourself is difficult.... if you can’t even come up with a method to defeat yourself, then how can your Dao heart be stable? How can you face Immortal Tribulation in the future?!”

“In the earliest of times, any foreigner who came here would die. However, the ancient will arrived and my clan had no choice but to enter into the treaty. After that, this place became a location for deadly refinement. According to the treaty, the purpose is to train true Immortals!

“For example, the first level tests your survival capabilities. If you reach true Immortal Ascension, you will face many Tribulations. You must have the power to protect yourself!

“This second level tests your powers of perception and understanding. If you are perceptive enough, you can naturally gain enlightenment regarding various magics that are currently stuck in atrophy. The Dao heart is only one aspect.

“Defeat yourself, strengthen your Dao heart. That is only the first step toward being a true Immortal. If you can’t pass this first step, then of course you fail!”

Meng Hao’s mind reeled.

“Don’t tell me that you haven’t noticed that this place is different from the outside?!” continued the overseer.

“Well, forget it. You’re only in the Spirit Severing stage. You are incapable of seeing how extraordinary this place is. Let me tell you, kid... there are no natural laws here!

“The second level is a place with no laws. Here, everything is a blank!

“Therefore, you have even more opportunity to gain enlightenment regarding your magical techniques, and even your Dao. Understand your divine abilities and your path to enlightenment. Because, this place... has no law to interfere with or distort your true heart!”

Meng Hao stared in shock. Before, he hadn’t put too much thought into why this place seemed a bit strange. All he knew was that he felt somehow freer, and his mind clearer.

He had never imagined that this place... lacked natural law?!

“You have the time it takes an incense stick to burn. If you can’t defeat yourself in that time, then you fail!”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. Rumbling filled the air as his doppelgänger closed in. The two of them once again began to battle back and forth. Time passed, and soon, half an incense stick had burned.

“What do I do?” thought Meng Hao. “What do I do?! If I fail the first time, the second time will be even harder!

“If I could gain enlightenment into the third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic and cultivate it successfully, then I could probably slay this doppelgänger!”

“Another possibility would be to gain enlightenment into my Third Severing! Or perhaps, if I understood how to use one more of the characters that make up the Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao!

“If I could use the soul of the true Immortal to make a second true self, it would definitely be terrifying in the extreme!

“Another option is the Nine Heavens Treasured Body Seal!”

Unfortunately, there was not enough time for any of those things. He only had the time it takes half an incense stick to burn!

Meng Hao’s eyes were shot with blood as he fell into retreat. Suddenly, his doppelgänger utilized the Blood Demon Grand Magic; so Meng Hao did as well.

Instantly, the doppelgänger’s fleshly body began to wither. However, at the same time, he absorbed Meng Hao’s qi and blood, replenishing himself. Such a circumstance had occurred many times throughout their battle.

“The third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic, the Spirit Meridians stratum! All cultivators have spirit meridians running through their body. Such spirit meridians are essentially the cultivation base. The purpose of the Blood Demon Grand Magic is to stir the spirit meridians. In much the same way that a miner deals with a vein of gold, the spirit meridian is dug up and consumed!

“But, how exactly am I supposed to absorb the spirit meridians?!”

Time was running out!

“Spirit meridians!!” Meng Hao and his doppelgänger ceased using the Blood Demon Grand Magic and began to utilize other divine abilities. Meng Hao’s mind was racing as he tried to come up with a solution. This was a world with no natural law, and his mind was extremely clear. It was in that moment that he suddenly thought of... the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch!

He recalled the scene of the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch absorbing his Perfect Dao foundation.

When he thought back to that time, he remembered the various transformations that occurred in his body. His cultivation base had rotated in reverse, and then collapsed, transforming into an energy which was then sucked out of him. Recalling that feeling suddenly caused a tremor to run through Meng Hao.

“Reversal. I understand now! The key to the third level is reversal! When the vortex of the second level reaches maximum rotation, I can suddenly reverse the flow, which will unleash an incredible power!”

His eyes shone with a bright light.

Boom!

In that moment of enlightenment, he utilized the Blood Demon Grand Magic, then immediately pushed it through from the second level... to the third!

When he entered the third level, energy exploded around him. A strange light glowed in his eyes, and he lifted his hand to point at the doppelgänger. Instantly, a golden vortex appeared around the doppelgänger, which caused it to give a cold snort. It raised its hand and pointed toward Meng Hao as it too once again employed the Blood Demon Grand Magic.

However, at this point, when the golden vortex was rotating at full speed, Meng Hao suddenly reached his hand out and then turned it over.

Immediately, the vortex surrounding the doppelgänger reversed. The doppelgänger’s expression flickered as its cultivation base suddenly collapsed, completely beyond its control. It rushed out through the doppelgänger eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, to shoot toward Meng Hao.

Simultaneously, the doppelgänger’s entire body collapsed, and it disappeared without a trace. The only thing left behind was the glittering mirror.

“In your first tempering, you defeated yourself in less than a day,” said the white-colored overseer, looking deeply at Meng Hao. “As such, it is unnecessary for you to participate in the following

floors. Please go directly to the ninth floor. If you can pass the ninth floor, then you may leave this place! In addition, you can acquire one of our clan's valuable treasures!"

Chapter 730: Another Lord Fifth!

[/expand]

Outside the altar, Lu Bai suddenly looked up. His eyes shone with shock as he caught sight of Meng Hao on the third level, and heard the words of the white-colored overseer up in mid-air. He suddenly grew incredibly taciturn.

"He... successfully defeated himself?" thought Lu Bai, slowly lowering his head. A moment later, he looked up again, and his eyes shone with the intense desire to do battle.

"I don't care about my status as a Young Starlord, nor my titles in the Northern Reaches, nor the rumors about me being a reincarnated, almighty cultivator. The only thing I care about... is that I must be... the strongest person in my stage!

"According to my Dao, I must become a true Immortal! My heart must be intensely staunch!

"If Meng Hao can do it, then I... can do it too!" With that, Lu Bai took a deep breath. Eyes radiating unprecedented resoluteness, he slowly rose to his feet and then strode back toward the first floor of the altar.

"This time, I'll definitely pass the third floor!"

Meng Hao stood on that very same third floor to which he referred. He didn't proceed onward immediately. Instead, he closed his eyes to feel the surging of his cultivation base, and the majestic third level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic. Now that he was in the Spirit Vessels stratum, he could absorb cultivation bases into his own body and transform that into incredible power.

"No wonder Patriarch Blood Demon said that if I get to the fourth level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic I can hold my own against early Dao Seeking cultivators!

"This Blood Demon Grand Magic is incredibly astonishing. It's especially useful when fighting against groups. The more enemies that get stuck inside... the more powerful I can become!

“Black Sieve Sect....” Meng Hao’s eyes suddenly snapped open, and they shone with incredible killing intent. His hatred for the Black Sieve Sect had long since seeped into his very marrow. If it weren’t for the Black Sieve Sect, Xu Qing wouldn’t have to enter the cycle of reincarnation, and could have had the chance at Immortal Ascension in this lifetime.

Now though, they only had a hundred years, after which, this lifetime would be destroyed. This enmity... was absolutely irreconcilable!

Meng Hao took a deep breath and then took a step forward, whereupon he vanished. When he reappeared, he had passed the fourth and fifth floors... and gone all the way to the ninth floor!

The ninth floor was the smallest of all the floors.

This was the pinnacle of the altar!

This was the final barrier of the second level!

After passing this floor, Meng Hao would have the option to either leave this world or, of course, enter the third level.

Boom!

The instant he stepped foot onto the ninth floor, he felt almost like he was at the pinnacle of the sky. Around him stretched a world of boundless flames, beyond which was nothing but pitch black.

In the instant that he stepped foot onto the ninth floor, he also heard an ear-piercing, squawking laugh.

The laugh sounded almost like the call of a male duck, and was filled with an indescribable arrogance.

“It’s been many years since someone has stood in front of Lord Fifth, bitch! Come come, allow Lord Fifth to see how much fur you have on your body!”

As soon as he heard that voice, all the noble and lofty feelings that had existed inside of Meng Hao instantly vanished. His eyes went wide with disbelief as he stared at something appearing out of thin air in the middle of the ninth level. It was...

An enormous parrot!

The parrot was covered with motley feathers that all stuck out on end. Its expression was one of extreme arrogance and pride, as if it was the only important thing in all of Heaven and Earth. As soon as it appeared, a shocking energy exploded out from its body.

“You...” said Meng Hao, his breath quickening. This parrot appeared to be exactly the same damnable bird that had fled the instant Meng Hao faced true danger.

“What do you mean ‘you,’ huh? Bitch! What, you’ve never seen a Lord Fifth as handsome as me before?” As the parrot flew out, it seemed to be completely displeased with the way Meng Hao was looking at it. Its eyes gleamed with a sharp light, and its voice was jarring.

Even as it spoke, the parrot went on the offensive, charging at incredible speed. Meng Hao could barely see it, and before he could react, he was sent tumbling backward. The parrot re-formed in midair and then squawked and attacked again.

Meng Hao’s face flickered. The parrot was moving so fast that he couldn’t see it clearly. Nonetheless, he was able to determine that this parrot was actually not exactly the same as the damnable bird that he remembered.

As for what exactly about it was different, he couldn’t quite say. It was more of a feeling.

Booming sounds echoed out as the parrot attacked relentlessly. However, it didn’t seem to be able to completely overwhelm Meng Hao within a short period of time. Meng Hao retreated without hesitation; every time the parrot attacked, it almost felt like a mountain was bearing down on him.

He tried using the Blood Demon Grand Magic, but the parrot was too fast and impossible to entangle. It was as if it was surrounded by some strange power that enabled it to break through anything that stood in its way.

“This damned, wretched bird! How could it be so strong!?” Meng Hao frowned. At the same time, the parrot appeared suddenly in mid-air up ahead of him.

Staring seriously at Meng Hao, it said, "I'm gonna screw you, bitch! Screw you, ya hear? How could your body be so tough? Well fine, the tougher the better. Screw you, screw you, screw you into a pulp...!" With a piercing cry, and incredible speed, it circled around Meng Hao, and its eyes shifted maliciously in the direction of Meng Hao's rear end....

When Meng Hao sensed that, his scalp went numb, and his heart trembled. The first thing he thought of was the parrot's vile hobbies, and then, images of the parrot exploding rear ends suddenly flashed through his mind.

These thoughts stabbed through his mind, causing his train of thought to be upset and fall into disarray, such that it caused Meng Hao to begin to shake uncontrollably. It didn't matter how vicious he had become inside, the images left him profoundly frightened.

Normally speaking, he was the one to hear the miserable shrieks of others. There was absolutely, positively no way that he wished to experience such things himself.

"Dammit! DAMMIT!" Beads of sweat broke out on his forehead. Even when facing the challenge on the third floor, he had not sweat, but as of this moment, he was tempted to concede defeat.

This... this was a power that cultivators were fundamentally incapable of matching up against.

Especially the incessant hooting call of the damnable parrot, and how its previously curved beak suddenly transformed, becoming ever longer and straighter....

A few times, it opened its mouth, after which a perverse aura blasted out, causing Meng Hao's heart to tremble.

Having no other options, Meng Hao anxiously cried out, "I know you!"

"Huh?" replied the parrot, gaping. "Well, Lord Fifth doesn't know you, so you're gonna get screwed anyway!" With that, it prepared to charge again.

"I'm your master!!" said Meng Hao, slapping his bag of holding to produce the copper mirror.

“You’re insulting me!!” said the parrot, completely ignoring the copper mirror. It transformed into a black streak of light that shot toward Meng Hao.

“What do I do? What do I do?!” Having noticed that the black streak of light was curving through the air to flank him from behind, Meng Hao was now in a state of complete emergency.

As the black beam of light closed in, Meng Hao had a sudden flash of inspiration as he recalled the damned bird’s fatal weakness. Without hesitation, he cried out, “Even if you were more powerful than you are now, who cares? I don’t believe for a second that you could drill a hole through this altar! You can’t, can you?!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, the black beam stopped in mid-air. The parrot appeared again, and it glared at Meng Hao, as if infuriated.

“What did you just say? Did you say there’s something Lord Fifth can’t do?”

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered, and his thinking was suddenly stable. A look of scorn appeared in his eyes.

The expression immediately caused the parrot to go mad. Its voice shrill, it yelled, “How dare you look down on Lord Fifth! Lord Fifth is omnipotent! Y-y-you....”

“Pshh.” Meng Hao gave a cold snort.

“AHHHHHHHHH!” To be scorned with such words caused the last bit of the parrot’s powers of reasoning to be scorched away.

“You just watch, bitch!” raged the parrot. “Watch Lord Fifth! Watch Lord Fifth bore a massive hole into this altar!” With that, the parrot flew up into the air and then turned to charge toward the altar.

The white-colored overseer immediately flew down to intercept the parrot.

“Immortal Fifth, please calm yourself. Calm... There’s no need to get impulsive, right? Listen to me....”

“Screw off and listen to this, bitch!” roared the parrot.

“Immortal Fifth, I....” The white-colored overseer smiled wryly and was about to expound when....

“I said screw off, bitch! If you don’t, I’ll screw you along with him!”

The white-colored overseer was getting extremely nervous. This was the first time it had heard of the parrot having such a weakness. It looked over angrily at Meng Hao, and was about to rebuke him, when Meng Hao saw the look in his eye, rolled his eyes and then snorted coldly.

“He doesn’t believe you can break through the altar either. Forget about the altar. I bet you couldn’t even screw that white-colored overseer!”

“AHHHHHHHH! How dare you look down on me like this!” The parrot’s fury raged to the Heavens. It jerked around to glare at the white-colored overseer, who immediately began to tremble.

Seeing that the parrot was about to attack, the overseer immediately roared without hesitation, “You pass!! Pass!!!”

Instantly, the altar began to rumble, and an incredible force enveloped the parrot, who did nothing to fight back. As the power covered it over, it stared fixedly at the rear end of the white-colored overseer.

“When this place was built, Lord Fifth helped out, and therefore left behind a stream of divine will,” said the parrot. “Truth be told, it would be difficult to break a hole through the altar. However, if I have the chance, you cheeky little beast, Lord Fifth will definitely give screwing you a try!”

With that, the parrot gave a cold snort, then glared over at Meng Hao. It said nothing, but the look in its eyes was clear.

You just wait, brat. If I get a chance, I’ll screw you too!

Meng Hao glared back at the parrot. He didn’t say anything either, but his meaning was equally clear.

You just wait, you damned bird. When I get out of here, I'm going to track you down, and then we'll see who's boss!

Meanwhile, in the Milky Way Sea, on the shore near the Northern Reaches, a hulking, dark-faced man currently hovered in mid-air. Surrounding him was a group of smaller cultivators, all of whom looked at the man with fawning eyes. The dark-faced man seemed quite pleased with himself.

In his arms he carried a black bear, which he would occasionally lean down to kiss, his expression one of intoxication. The bear had a luxuriant coat of fur, and it was hard to tell where he had found something like it in the Milky Way Sea....

“Ah, this is the life! Don't be despondent, little Third. It's merely a master we're talking about. We can always get a new one! Look, after somebody else gets the mirror and refines it, then we can go back. Look at how free and unconstrained we are now! This is the good life!”

Suddenly, the dark-faced man sneezed, then shuddered. A strange look appeared in its eyes, and suddenly two voices began to argue inside of him.

“What's going on? What was that? Lord Third just sneezed!”

“Screw off, it was obviously Lord Fifth who sneezed!”

“You'll even steal that from me?!”

“Something fishy is going on here, bitch! Something's off! I feel an evil wind stirring, as if something bad is about to happen!”

“Huh?! Don't tell me Meng Hao is alive!! Finished! We're finished! I'm gonna die, we're finished! When we ran off that time....”

“What do you mean ran off? That was a strategic transition! You don't understand crap!”

“Dammit! Last time, you said we needed to give him a chance to temper himself. You're changing your mind again?”

“Are you absolutely sure that’s what I said?”

“You did! You said it! You said....”

Despite the bickering, the dark-faced man turned and flew toward the Northern Reaches.

“Let’s go to the Northern Reaches, it should be safe there....”