

The Heavens 81

Chapter 81: The Patriarch's Immortal's Cave

In Patriarch Reliance's meditation zone, all of the Cultivators from the State of Zhao were staring at the stone stele which had been left behind by Chen Fan. With great enthusiasm, they copied the text onto jade slips.

"This stone stele is the Sublime Spirit Scripture!"

"I never imagined it would be so simple to get! Haha! Even though I've already established my Foundation, with this scripture, I can form a second Core sea. With this Qi Condensation manual, I can raise the Dao pillars of my Foundation from Fractured to Cracked. It might even be possible to form a Flawless Foundation!"

Lord Revelation approached, followed by the dignified old woman. "No," she said, "only half of the scripture is here...." She could tell the truth of it from a single glance.

Lord Revelation continued forward a few steps, his eyes shining with a strange light.

Suddenly, the stele, as if it couldn't withstand being the subject of so many gazes, began to fracture. Popping sounds could be heard as cracks spread out across it. Everyone watched on in shock.

As the cracks spread, the golden characters faded, to be replaced by another set of characters, these ones dim and barely readable. These characters were the second half of the Qi Condensation manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture.

Before everyone could finish reading the text, a boom rang out and the stone stele exploded, fragmenting into eight pieces.

Eight multicolored beams of light could be seen as the pieces flew off in various directions.

The onlookers were shocked, but immediately scattered about. The seven Core Formation Eccentrics each shot after one of the pieces, as did Lord Revelation. The eighth piece was left to the ten or so Foundation Establishment experts to deal with.

Within an instant, everything was thrown into chaos. Upon scattering, the newcomers discovered that Patriarch Reliance's meditation zone was filled with magical items, spirit stones and medicinal pills. This of course caused quite a sensation among them. Unfortunately, all of the items were protected with restrictive spells. Unless they could force the spells open, the items were untouchable.

Suddenly, roaring sounds erupted within the meditation zone. Within the gray light appeared multiple figures. With crazed appearances, they charged toward the intruders.

As for Meng Hao, as soon as the chaos broke out, he pulled out a Vorpall Jade Blood Crystal and stepped off to the side. He had used quite a few Blood Crystals the last time he was here, but in the end had two left over, which he'd stuffed into his bag of holding. After pulling one of them out, the crazed automatons which had suddenly appeared refused to approach him.

"I've brought everyone here. Now let's see how Patriarch Reliance deals with them." Meng Hao's eyes glittered coldly. He didn't have any good feelings whatsoever about these people. He watched as they went chasing after the fragments of the stone stele, a cold smile on his face. He couldn't wait to see them dead.

Of course, the stone stele was a fake. He'd known that the instant it had appeared, a year ago. Exercising caution, he slowly walked forward, avoiding the other Cultivators. He wasn't sure of the exact location where Patriarch Reliance sat in secluded meditation. But he knew that he couldn't leave this place until the Patriarch helped him dispel the poison from his body.

Also, there was the reward that the Patriarch had spoken of.

Shortly afterwards, Meng Hao stopped and looked around. Booms filled the air and explosions shook the ground. Off in the distance, he could see the dignified old woman, her hair flying about in disarray as she used one magical art after another to batter a glowing shield in front of her.

Within the glow of the shield was one of the stone stele fragments.

The old woman was of the Core Formation stage. Her attacks caused everything around her to shake wildly. Her magical arts shot out one after another like a silver river, sending out bone-piercing coldness which caused everything around her to freeze into pieces of ice. Within the river, there could be heard what sounded like the shrieks of countless wailing souls from the yellow springs of the underworld. It was as if the river itself had sprung from the nine hells.

She flicked her sleeve, and the murky image of a mountain appeared, bearing down toward the glowing shield. The mountain, which seemed to be composed of stars, solidified into a burning point, which then became black. Despite being black in color, it radiated a bright light.

In a spectacular display, the river and mountain began to interlock with each other.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. The silver strands which surrounded the old woman made it seem as if she had the power to destroy heaven and earth. She could definitely slay him as easily as stepping on an ant. There wouldn't even be a need for her to use the river from hell or mountain made from stars.

“So this is Core Formation....” Meng Hao watched closely, at the same time moving a bit further away. He didn't dare to get any closer.

The woman let out a howl, and an explosion reverberated out. Despite being some distance away, Meng Hao's body was shaken, and he spit up some blood. He moved back further, watching as the woman spit out a round pill from her mouth. The pill was composed of three intertwined colors. As soon as it appeared, Meng Hao felt a sensation as if everything in the world was about to crumble to pieces. In his eyes, this multicolored pill was the beginning and end of everything.

Shining brightly, the pill shot toward the shield, whereupon a massive explosion rang out. Meng Hao continued to retreat backward, his face pale.

“A Core Formation Cultivator could wipe me from existence in the blink of an eye!” As he moved backwards, he thought back to the Dao Protector Wang Xifan from the Wang Clan.

“I'm at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. But even if I could get to the tenth... I would be so weak I couldn't stand up to a single bit of battle magic from a Core Formation Cultivator!” He stared at the proceedings, continuing to retreat.

“All these people are over one hundred years of age each. In terms of wisdom and experience, I can't match up to them.... It's a good thing my schemes just now all worked, otherwise....” When he thought about this, his heart twitched with fear.

“After the Core Formation stage is the Nascent Soul stage. I wonder how truly powerful a Nascent Soul Cultivator is....” When he thought of this, his heart began to thump, and he thought about Eccentric Song, whom he still had never met.

“What is the level of Patriarch Reliance’s Cultivation base again? I remember the Sect Leader talked about it before. He’s at the Spirit Severing stage... That’s even beyond the Nascent Soul stage!” Meng Hao began to pant, and a look of envy appeared in his eyes. Stubbornness filled his heart. He desired to be powerful. He knew that only by being powerful could he avoid being an insect that others could trample upon and crush. Only by being powerful could he achieve his desires and fulfil his dreams.

On a more practical level, only by being powerful would he be able to survive in the Cultivation world!

Meng Hao watched in awe as the power of a Core Formation Cultivator was unleashed. Massive explosions filled Patriarch Reliance’s meditation zones. The explosions did not sound out from one location, but from seven. The entire area filled with thunderous roars, and the various protective spells appeared to be rippling.

The explosions caused by the seven Core Formation Eccentrics seemed as if they would cause the entire place to collapse.

“The Patriarch just said to bring the State of Zhao experts here. He never said what to do after that....” Meng Hao hesitated, and he considered making an escape. But then, a massive roaring sound could be heard, and far off in the distance a beam of light shot up.

From this distance it didn’t look very thick. However, Meng Hao could tell that it must be approximately thirty meters in diameter. It filled the sky of the Immortal’s Cave with its power.

A laugh echoed out from the same direction as the beam of light, and Meng Hao recognized Lord Revelation’s voice. He had obviously broken the shield and acquired one of the fragments of the stone stele.

Just then, another boom rang out, and another beam of light ascended up. This beam shot up from the direction of the dignified old woman. Her hair flew about wildly as the shield shattered. She stepped forward and took the stone stele fragment.

Meanwhile, within the secluded meditation zone, Patriarch Reliance's eyes shined and he breathed rapidly. His body was gaunt and wizened, and he stared fixedly at seven oil lamps which were spread out in front of him. At first glance, they seemed to be scattered about randomly, but upon closer inspection it was clear that they had been organized in a mystical pattern.

Just now, two of the lamps had been extinguished. The other five flickered weakly.

"The kid was a few months late. I was starting to get more and more nervous. But in the end, he brought the people here!" Excitement filled his eyes as he looked at the oil lamps.

"Extinguish, dammit! These people are so weak. After all this time, they've only managed to extinguish two sealing lamps. I'm expending power from my own Cultivation base to weaken them so that the Core Formation level people can handle them. But they still haven't succeeded. Dammit! Without my training these State of Zhao brats don't know how to practice Cultivation. Back in the day, I would go beat them up every once in a while. Those people had much better Cultivation bases." Thinking back to the old days, Patriarch Reliance let out a sigh. His desire to break out of the secluded meditation zone was even stronger than before.

"After I absorb these peoples' Cultivation bases and scour their memories, I should be able to achieve enlightenment and succeed in my second severing. Then I can carry out my master plan! Dammit! For every severing, I need to achieve Dao enlightenment. Upon success, the severing can proceed. But afterwards, I will be incredibly weak. Without a bit of good fortune to help me recover, the severing can lead to death, and becoming one with the Dao." Patriarch Reliance ground his teeth. But as he thought of his master plan, a look of hope gleamed in his eyes. It was a look that had existed there for many, many years.

About this time, an explosion thundered out, and another of the lamps in front of him went out. The look of anticipation in his eyes grew stronger.

As for Meng Hao, he stood outside in the meditation zone, trembling with fear. He wasn't walking around any more. Instead, he had concealed himself in a distant corner, a look of vigilance on his face.

He was waiting for Patriarch Reliance to appear, put an end to these people, then dispel the poison in his body and give him his reward.

A short time later, another thunderous roar could be heard. Lord Revelation and the dignified old woman had joined the others in their struggles. The remaining shields soon broke. The third, fourth,

and fifth shields broke.... In the time it takes an incense stick to burn, thunderous explosions rang out constantly. Soon, seven pillars of light shot up into the air.

Finally, the seven Core Formation Cultivators transformed into beams of light as they converged on the final shield, which was currently surrounded by the Foundation Establishment Cultivators.

They combined their powers, and within the space of about ten breaths, a boom shook everything, and an eighth pillar of light climbed upwards. The whole Immortal's Cave seemed on the verge of collapse.

At this exact moment, amidst the roaring and shaking, massive cracks appeared in the ground. The roaring grew even more intense. The ground seemed to ripple, as if it were going to collapse into nothing.

The experts from the State of Zhao looked shocked at this sudden event. They flew up into the air and looked down at the collapsing earth. Within a moment, the shaking ceased. It was then that they noticed that all of the rubble and cracks had formed into... a massive face!

The face belonged to none other than Patriarch Reliance!

Chapter 82: The Great Art of Demonic Life

Upon the forehead of the giant face appeared seven ancient-looking oil lamps, all of them extinguished. A massive and ancient aura emanated out in all directions. The exquisite aura seemed to contain the essence of heaven and earth.

When the giant face appeared, the State of Zhao Cultivators all looked shocked, and some of them made to flee.

“Don't panic,” said Lord Revelation, his voice booming out. “I knew from the beginning that Patriarch Reliance wasn't dead. He's incredibly weak, and we are of the Core Formation stage. If we join hands, we can easily wipe him out.” Everyone from the State of Zhao stopped moving.

A laugh rang out from the giant face, hoarse and potent. Filled with crazed excitement, it pierced the ears and hearts of everyone present.

As the laughter echoed out, the faces of the floating Cultivators changed. Without saying a word, the dignified old woman turned and shot toward the exit, panting.

Even as she attempted to fly away, a massive, indistinct hand popped into being next to her and wrapped itself around her body. A boom rang out, along with a blood-curdling shriek, as the hand crushed her to death. Everything shook. Meng Hao looked on in shock.

The giant hand opened, and inside could be seen a three-colored mixed Core. The hand made a flicking motion, and the Core shot toward the first of the seven lamps below on the ground. The lamp was now alight, burning the Core as fuel and emanating flames composed of life force!

Flickering firelight emanated out, filling the darkness with light.

“We cannot flee!” barked Lord Revelation, his face growing pale. “Kill what is left of Patriarch Reliance, and our spoils of victory will be immense!” The other Cultivators had looks of astonishment on their faces after watching the miserable fate of the old woman. They clenched their jaws.

Suddenly, a booming sound could be heard. The area around the mouth of the giant face suddenly collapsed, and a black, shadowy figure emerged.

Laughter accompanied the figure, echoing out in the Immortal’s Cave.

“Patriarch Reliance!” The echo of the laughter thundered out, and the Immortal’s Cave shook. The shocked Cultivators coughed up blood.

Amidst the blackness, Patriarch Reliance could be seen. His body was gaunt, almost nothing but skin and bones, as if he had just climbed up from the grave. His eyes were dim and dark, yet seemed to be filled with ferocity and power.

Up above them, clouds roiled, and around Patriarch Reliance’s body, ripples began to emanate out. It seemed as if he were standing on top of the world. His power, arrogance, and thirst for blood struck fear into the hearts of the other Cultivators.

“Patriarch Reliance....” The red-faced old man from the Cold Wind Sect suddenly looked pale, and his body trembled. He was a Core Formation Cultivator, but facing Patriarch Reliance, he was as powerless as a cricket. The only reason he had dared to come to this place for the Sublime Spirit

Scripture was because Lord Revelation had divined that the Patriarch was weak to the point of death. At the moment, however, Patriarch Reliance seemed anything but weak.

“Revelation, things aren’t settled between us!” he said, spinning and rushing toward the exit. The others with him moved to follow, one by one. Their bodies transformed into prismatic beams as they shot away.

Meng Hao stood down below staring up at them, his fists clenched.

Patriarch Reliance laughed, and it was filled with both excitement and bloodlust. His body flickered, and suddenly he was floating in mid-air. He moved his hand in a downward motion, and a booming sound filled the air. A massive pressure pushed downwards, and the red-faced old man and his followers spat up blood. They fell down to the ground, their bodies no longer under their own control.

Patriarch Reliance’s body flickered again, and then he was standing in front of the red-faced old man. The old man’s pupils shrank in astonishment as Patriarch Reliance’s body suddenly fused with his own.

A blood-curdling scream sounded out, causing the scalps of the onlookers to go numb.

The red-faced old man’s body began to wither. His hair fell out as his flesh and blood dried up. A blackness appeared that seemed capable of consuming all blood and life. In the blink of an eye, it had completely swallowed him up.

His skin grew as thin as paper, and his bones began to crumble. Soon, his entire person had turned into a mist of blood, which then coalesced into another figure; Patriarch Reliance. Except now, he was not as gaunt as he had been moments ago. His figure was more fleshed out, and a slight death aura radiated out from him. It seemed as if some of his life force had been restored. In his hand, he held the red-faced old man’s three-colored mixed Core. He flicked his sleeve, and it shot into the second oil lamp.

“The Great Art of Demonic Life!”

“It’s the legendary Great Art of Demonic Life! Unending life! The Great Art of Demonic Life which can borrow bodies and spirits!” A buzz of voices sounded out. When the remaining Core Foundation Cultivators and the trembling Foundation Establishment Cultivators watched the scene unfold, looks of despair appeared on their faces.

“This is a Demonic magic from the Demon Sealing Sect, before the Sect’s name changed!” A strange look flashed through Lord Revelation’s eyes.

Meng Hao watched in astonishment. This was the second time he had heard of the Demon Sealing Sect. The first time had been from the lips of Shangguan Xiu. At the time, Meng Hao hadn’t paid it much heed. How could he believe what Shangguan Xiu had said? If Meng Hao truly was connected to such prestigious name, how could he have so many enemies in the State of Zhao?

At that time, Meng Hao had committed the name to memory, with the intention of getting further corroboration later.

Now, having seen the shocking events of moments ago, he’d heard the name again. Currently, the three words “Demon Sealing Sect” seemed to float in his head.

He thought back to the rumors he’d heard when in the Sect. It was said that a thousand years ago, the Reliance Sect had gone by a different name. However, no one had ever spoken the original name. Now that he thought about it, it seemed as if the name were taboo within the Sect.

He thought of the Demonic beasts in the black mountain outside of the Sect. Then he thought of the North Sea, and grew even more confused. When he had encountered the North Sea for the first time, why had it helped him?

Even though he didn’t completely understand everything, at least now he was gaining a bit more understanding.

“Demon Sealing Sect....” Meng Hao took a deep breath, thinking to the Demonic magic that Shangguan Xiu had used, and the fearsome power that had erupted out of Mount Daqing.

“If Shangguan Xiu reached Foundation Establishment, the power of his Demonic magic would have been extremely potent....” Meng Hao’s heart began to race as he realized that as a member of the Reliance Inner Sect, he was also... an Inner Sect disciple of the ancient Demon Sealing Sect!

A new question appeared in Meng Hao’s mind. “Why did Patriarch Reliance change the name of the Sect?”

As Meng Hao considered these things, the slaughter above him continued. Patriarch Reliance's body had transformed into a fiery mist that filled the air. From the cries that rang out, it was clear that the Foundation Establishment Cultivators were completely incapable of escape. One by one, their bodies spasmed and began to dry up. Their life force was sucked out of them until they turned into nothing more than bones, which in turn were crumbled into dust. Every thread of life force shot toward Patriarch Reliance.

The remaining five Core Formation Cultivators couldn't flee either. Under the command of Lord Revelation, they produced various magical items and prepared magical techniques, launching them toward Patriarch Reliance in a last ditch effort to defeat him.

The four Foundation Establishment Cultivators from the Cold Wind Sect had died miserably, their bodies reduced to little more than dust. Their counterparts from the Winding Stream Sect and the Upright Evening Sect suffered the same fate. These were people who could shake the Cultivation world of the State of Zhao by simply stamping a foot. Yet here, they were as weak as children.

A partially intact head rolled to a stop in front of Meng Hao's feet. His face grew pale. The bloody slaughter was causing his heart to tremble. Looking down at the head, he recognized the face as that of the Foundation Establishment expert who had attempted to kill him a year ago in the Reliance Sect. A white aura emanated off of the head. Within moments, the head dissolved into blood, which soaked into the ground.

Just then, a horrified scream rang out from one of the Winding Stream Sect's Core Formation Eccentrics. His body began to rot. He continued to scream as he dried up. Even before he was dead, a third three-colored mixed Core flew out to land in the third lamp, which then began to burn brightly.

As of now, Patriarch Reliance's body was no longer gaunt and shriveled. Instead, he was a middle-aged man.

His long hair swept about his tall frame. A dignified air emanated out from him, making him seem powerful to the extreme. And yet, buried deep within that power, was a Demonic aura.

However, there were still areas on his chest that were still withered, as well as some parts of his face and the rest of his body. There, the flesh seemed to twitch and writhe; clearly he was not completely recovered yet.

"I can already use the full power of my Nascent Soul," he said with a smile. Combined with his partially recovered, writhing skin, the smile was utterly gruesome. Four people were left to observe

this. With the exception of Lord Revelation, their faces drained of blood. One of them lifted up a trembling hand. In it was a jade slip, which he snapped. Instantly, his body began to grow blurry; it seemed he was attempting to teleport away.

At the same time, one of the Core Formation Cultivators from the Winding Stream Sect retreated rapidly. Suddenly, a burning fire shot out from his feet, which then wrapped around his body, enveloping him. He seemed to turn into a burning pillar of light as he shot away.

The other person, a Grand Elder from the Cold Wind Sect, suddenly seemed to be growing younger. His face, originally filled with wrinkles, now suddenly appeared to be middle-aged. His aura billowing, he took three steps, during which time he transformed into a beam of light.

Chapter 83: Patriarch, What About Disciple's Poison...?

As he took the first step, blood and Qi roiled, and he was no longer middle-aged, but a teenager, and he moved three times faster than he had been before.

He took a second step, and his body quivered. His robes fell off, as he had turned into an infant. Again his speed tripled. His body was almost entirely transparent at this point, and a three-colored light began to envelop him.

By his third step, his infant's body had shrunken into a spinning Core. Again, his speed tripled as he shot toward the vortex exit.

These three people were all Core Formation Eccentrics. Obviously, they would not come to such a dangerous place without taking certain precautions. As for everyone else who had died already, things had just happened too quickly. As for these three, if even one escaped, he could spread word to the experts from the great Sects in the Southern Domain, and they would come to slay Patriarch Reliance.

All of this took some time to describe, but happened extremely quickly. As the three of them attempted to make their escape, Lord Revelation chose to stay put, his eyes flickering. His right hand flashed an incantation sign. The large eye on his robe suddenly seemed to come to life. Light sprang forth from it, shining out to target, not Patriarch Reliance, but the three fleeing Core Formation Cultivators.

"You've overstepped your bounds," said Patriarch Reliance in an awe-inspiring voice. He stamped his foot into the ground, whereupon ripples spread out to fill the air. A horrified cry filled the air as

the Cultivator from the Winding Stream Sect, who was just about to make his escape, was suddenly thrust back down and into the fourth oil lamp.

At the same time, Patriarch Reliance's right hand slammed onto the ground. It trembled as a restrictive spell appeared, out from which flew a thin band of black of light that turned into a black skull. The skull circled around Patriarch Reliance, and then shot toward the Cultivator who was attempting to escape via teleportation jade slip.

As the ripples of teleportation spread out, the black skull cackled evilly, then disappeared.

Next, Patriarch Reliance lifted his left hand toward the Core which was shooting toward the vortex. Just as it seemed it was about to enter the vortex, a bloodcurdling cry sounded out and the Core exploded. But the power of the explosion remained contained as it flew back toward Patriarch Reliance.

He snatched it out of the air, and within the white glow could be seen the shape of the Cultivator's body, struggling wildly. Patriarch Reliance squeezed the white glow and it slowly congealed into a three-colored Core. He flicked his sleeve, sending it to light the fifth oil lamp.

At the same time, he waved his left hand, slamming into the light that currently shot forth from the eye on Lord Revelation's robe.

A boom filled the air, and a large amount of cracks appeared on the restrictive spell that covered the ground. Blood dribbled from the sides of Lord Revelation's mouth, and his face grew pale, but his eyes didn't contain the least bit of panic. Instead, they shone with a strange light as he quickly retreated backward.

Massive amounts of life force streamed toward Patriarch Reliance, infusing his body. His face was almost completely recovered. He stood there looking at Lord Revelation, hands clasped behind his back.

"Whose Nascent Soul stage clone are you? You dare to mix with these Core Formation whelps who plot against me?"

"You truly live up to your reputation, Patriarch Reliance," said Lord Revelation with a smile, his voice hoarse. "You could tell with a single look that I'm a clone. However, I'm not here to plot against you. Without me, these Core Formation Cultivators wouldn't have dared to come here."

Actually, there is a matter regarding Heavenly fortune that I wish to discuss with you.” His lips quivered a bit as he finished speaking.

Patriarch Reliance frowned, a thoughtful look in his eyes.

Suddenly, something black flashed up above them. The flying skull reappeared. In its mouth was a three-colored Core. It flew to Patriarch Reliance’s side. He flicked his sleeve, and the Core flew to light the sixth oil lamp.

Having seen all this, Meng Hao’s heart trembled. He looked at Lord Revelation. It turned out, he was actually just a clone, and yet was at the Nascent Soul stage! Hearing what he said, Meng Hao realized that the goings-on here were more complicated than he had imagined.

“If his clone is at the Nascent Soul stage, then... what stage is his true self at?” Meng Hao took a deep breath, thinking of the three-colored poison pill, his face twisting.

“Patriarch Reliance,” said Lord Revelation with a smile, “the Southern Domain is doomed to fall into chaos. What are your thoughts on this matter?”

“You mean the crap about the Dawn Immortal? I couldn’t care less. But since you’re here with your Nascent Soul, I might as well take the opportunity to replenish myself a bit more.” His eyes glittered as he took a step forward and raised his hand toward Lord Revelation.

“Patriarch Reliance, you really should think things through more clearly. You’re a simple Spirit Severing Cultivator, do you really dare to defy the Dawn Immortal?” Lord Revelation’s face fell as he watched Patriarch Reliance lifting his finger. A boom resounded out as a powerful mist came into being and began to surround him. Patriarch Reliance let out a cold snort.

The mist seethed, and the roaring sound mixed together with the howls of Lord Revelation until it seemed that the Immortal’s Cave would collapse. At first, it seemed as if the restrictive spells nearby would disintegrate, but they began to repair themselves before that could happen.

Meng Hao watched on in shock as the restrictive spells fluctuated between collapse and repair. The mist lifted Lord Revelation higher into the air. He let out a blood-curdling scream as the mist squeezed, causing blood to squirt out of his body and drench his clothes. His eyes were filled with hatred.

“Demonic art, Wolf Smoke!” Patriarch Reliance’s grim voice rang out into the mist. The mist seemed to devour Lord Revelation. Deep inside, a brilliant light shone out, and the vague image of flames and smoke could be seen. Nothing could be seen clearly, though. Only blood-curdling screams could be heard.

“Patriarch Reliance, I can do without this clone, but don’t think it will be so easy to consume me!”

The images and feelings seemed to lash against Meng Hao. This battle could no longer be described in terms of magical techniques. He couldn’t even think of any words that would do. Patriarch Reliance’s powerful voice and the howls of Lord Revelation made Meng Hao realize how much beyond the Core Formation stage this battle was.

He stared blankly, his mind reeling, as if a new door along the pathway of life had been opened. This was what being a Cultivator truly was. This was the true path of defiance against the Heavens. This was the true all-powerful might of a Cultivator.

A short time passed, during which the booming continued to sound out. The mist suddenly contracted, then returned to surround Patriarch Reliance. When he looked closely, Meng Hao was shocked to see that Patriarch Reliance’s features now closely resembled Lord Revelation’s.

It was almost as if Patriarch Reliance had occupied Lord Revelation’s body. Then the features began to melt down until Lord Revelation was completely gone, fully absorbed.

An immeasurable amount of black sealing marks rotated around Patriarch Reliance. As he floated there in the air, he exuded an extremely bizarre air.

In his hand he held the small image of a person. Its face was twisted ferociously, but its eyes were shut. It looked ... like Lord Revelation!

This was his Nascent Soul!

The mist dispersed, and everything was quiet. No more breakage appeared on the restrictive spells. They seemed to be in the process of restoring themselves rapidly. From the look of it, it wouldn’t take very long for them to recover completely. Patriarch Reliance flicked his sleeve, and Lord Revelation’s Nascent Soul shot into the seventh oil lamp. The Nascent Soul acted as oil, and Lord Revelation’s life force became flames as the lamp burned.

Lamplight filled the Immortal's Cave, illuminating everything with a flickering light that felt both ghastly and horrific.

Patriarch Reliance looked around, and his gaze came to fall on Meng Hao. He gave him a slight nod, and then turned to head back into the large fissure in the ground.

Meng Hao strode forward several paces nervously. Clasp hands, he bowed, and in a loud voice said, "Patriarch, in order to bring those people here, Disciple consumed some poison pills. Patriarch, can you please dispel the poison?"

"It's just some poison, I can dispel it as easily as taking a breath. Just wait a bit. I need to absorb this Nascent Soul, as well as this guy's true self. Then I'll dispel the poison for you. Don't worry about it. Oh, you did pretty well. I have a reward for you. Take this. This is your prize." Without so much as looking back, Patriarch Reliance flicked his sleeve, sending a low-grade Spirit Stone shooting toward Meng Hao. His body had already landed on the ground, and he was beginning to step into the fissure.

Meng Hao stared blankly at the completely ordinary low-grade Spirit Stone. He clenched his jaw and then spoke again.

"The reward is a low-grade Spirit Stone?"

"Low-grade Spirit Stone?" he said coolly. "That's right. It's a low-grade Spirit Stone. But if you look closely, is it really a low-grade Spirit Stone?" He jumped toward the fissure.

Meng Hao gaped in astonishment, looking back at the Spirit Stone in his hand. As he watched Patriarch Reliance disappearing into the fissure, he spoke again. "Patriarch, you... how long before you can dispel Disciple's poison?"

"Not very long. It'll be soon. I only have three, maybe five hundred years of work to do. Okay, well I need to go into secluded meditation now." He muttered to himself about the difficulty of dispelling poison, and the fact that his Cultivation base wasn't completely recovered yet. Based on what it would cost him, it wouldn't be worth it. Furthermore, he had his master plan to think about. As for the Spirit Stone... it really was just a common low-grade Spirit Stone. He didn't have any qualms about deceiving members of the junior generation. He had done such things many times in the past. He had cheated many Cultivators back during the days of the Demon Sealing Sect. Giving another dry cough to try to gloss everything over, he lowered his head and disappeared into the fissure. As soon as he entered, it closed up behind him.

Chapter 84: Meng Hao, What Are You Doing?

“Patriarch, Disciple went through innumerable trials and tribulations to bring those people here. I don’t mind if there’s no reward, but this poison...” A look of indignation had appeared on Meng Hao’s face. But before he could even finish speaking, the fissure in the ground closed up completely. There was no trace that it had even existed. Patriarch Reliance was nowhere to be seen and didn’t speak. The only things that remained were the seven burning lamps and the flickering light they cast. The seven Cores and the one Nascent Soul let of thin streams of Qi. The streams didn’t emanate up, though. As soon as they left the lamp, they were sucked into the ground.

“Patriarch Reliance, I allowed myself to be poisoned because of you. You’re from the senior generation, and you’re a powerful expert. How could someone as powerful as you do something like this?!”

“I’m neither an expert nor powerful,” replied the Patriarch with a light cough. “I’ve been like this since I was young. And that is not an ordinary Spirit Stone, kid. Your Cultivation base just isn’t high enough to be able to tell. Wait until you’re at the Spirit Severing stage, then you will know how amazing that treasure is.”

“You... Patriarch, what’s going on? I went through a lot of trouble! Why are you doing this!?” Meng Hao was furious. But everything around him was completely silent. Patriarch Reliance didn’t say anything; in fact, he seemed to be ignoring Meng Hao.

“Patriarch, I don’t need any other rewards. I just need help dispelling this poison. You... Patriarch, Disciple was constantly trying to figure out ways to bring those people here to help you recover your Cultivation base. How can you do this to me?!?!”

Meng Hao shouted out a few more times, but could see that Patriarch Reliance wasn’t responding. Even though he was just a simple scholar, he was enraged to the extreme at the moment. He had been deceived, and couldn’t help but begin to curse.

“Patriarch Reliance, you’re a bastard!” For Meng Hao to say something like this showed that he was exceedingly incensed.

Suddenly, Patriarch Reliance’s voice could be heard. “Kid, who do you think you’re cursing? Do you really dare to cuss at me? I’ll slap you to death!”

“I’m cursing you!” replied Meng Hao angrily. “If you’re gonna slap me, then go ahead. I’m poisoned, so I’ll die soon anyway. Get out here!”

Patriarch Reliance coughed a couple times. “Ahhhh. Never mind, never mind. I’ve always had a good temper. Hey, you’re the sole heir of the Reliance Sect. At the moment, we’re the only people in the whole Sect! I’m not going to get angry at you. Actually, a lot of people have cursed me over the years. It doesn’t really matter. Look, you can’t really blame me. I can’t even go back out! My secluded meditation zone has been sealed. I could only come out if you brought another group of people. I couldn’t help you now even if I wanted to.” His words became more and more convincing as he spoke. He really had just renewed the seals, and if he wanted to break through, would need to spend several months doing so.

“You bastard!” said Meng Hao, finally understanding the truth of the situation. He could only gnash his teeth and continue to curse. But no matter what he said, Patriarch Reliance didn’t respond. In the end, he just started humming a little tune. The happy little tune echoed out, and eventually Meng Hao realized that nothing he did would accomplish anything. Shameless Patriarch Reliance was not going to make an appearance.

His face filled with dark anger, he looked around. There were no bags of holding left behind from the Core Formation experts. Patriarch Reliance was obviously incredibly stingy and had taken them for himself. Meng Hao’s gaze fell upon the seven Demonic lamps. Gritting his teeth, he slapped his bag of holding. Ten flying swords appeared and flew straight toward the lamps.

Before they could even get close to the lamps, however, the swords began to tremble and glow brightly. Then they shattered into pieces.

Meng Hao was livid. Seeing the Qi from the oil lamps seeping into the ground, he smacked his bag of holding again and the two wooden swords flew out. They didn’t meet the slightest resistance, but when they reached the oil lamps, they passed right through them, as if they weren’t even there. There wasn’t the slightest reaction from them.

“A Nascent Soul Cultivator and six Core Formation Cultivators,” said Patriarch Reliance, his voice cheerful. “Their spiritual energy is quite abundant. As for your crappy swords, well, my seven demonic lamps are cut off from all other magical items. Non-sentient items can’t affect them. Maybe if you were a bit more skilled, you would have some more options. But sorry, you can’t steal things from me!” He continued to hum his merry little tune. At the moment, he sat cross-legged in front of a small Feng Shui compass about the size of a hand. The strands of Qi that sank down from above became bright red, and then were absorbed by the compass.

Meng Hao's face grew more and more grim as he retrieved the wooden swords. He had never imagined that Patriarch Reliance, being of the senior generation and having such an elevated Cultivation base, would treat Qi Condensation Cultivators with such shamelessness. A reward of a simple low-grade Spirit Stone? What was worse was how he claimed the Spirit Stone was an extraordinary object.

No matter from which angle Meng Hao looked at it, it appeared to be completely ordinary. It was nothing more than a low-grade Spirit Stone.

Before, Meng Hao had thought he cared a lot about Spirit Stones. But it turned out Patriarch Reliance was as stingy as an iron chicken from which feathers could not be plucked! He was a complete miser!

“One low-grade Spirit Stone. You bastard, you did this on purpose!” Meng Hao clenched his fists. He felt like he was about to go crazy. Not only were his words impolite, but in his heart, any and all good impressions he'd even had of Patriarch Reliance were wiped clean.

After a while, he turned, his jaw clenched. He wanted to throw the low-grade Spirit Stone away, but finally, he put it into his bag of holding. Then, he stalked off angrily.

“Aiya, you're leaving? Okay, okay. Don't forget to come back some time to hang out with Patriarch! You're my only heir, and the Sect only has the two of us now. This is your home; you can come back any time. I get lonely sometimes, so make sure to come back and keep me company.” He continued to hum his happy tune.

Meng Hao didn't say anything. He walked away angrily, Patriarch Reliance's little tune echoing in his ears.

“Ai, it's too bad I'm sealed in here, otherwise I would see you off personally.” Patriarch Reliance's voice was incredibly cheerful as he watched Meng Hao from within his secluded meditation chamber. “Meng Hao, you're such a good kid. You're just a bit too uptight. Hopefully in the future you can learn to be a bit more like me.”

“You're really not going to come out?” said Meng Hao wrathfully. At the moment, he was walking past an area covered with a gray-colored restrictive spell. Suddenly, he stopped walking.

“Of course. Listen, I never tell lies. If I say that I can’t go out, then I can’t. It’s not that I don’t want to help you, it’s just, hey.... Uh. What are you doing?” In the middle of his complacent little speech, he suddenly stopped talking and his eyes went wide.

Meng Hao had turned and was looking closely at a gray restrictive spell. During the battle between Lord Revelation and Patriarch Reliance, the restrictive spells in the entire area had been damaged. They were slowly recovering, but at the moment, there were still cracks visible. Some of the cracks were large enough to be holes, actually, although they were slowly sealing back up.

Within this restrictive spell was a veritable mountain of Spirit Stones. They had been collected by Patriarch Reliance over the course of his entire life. Most of them were low-grade Spirit Stones, but more than a few were mid-grade Spirit Stones, which were far more valuable.

Without a word, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding. A wooden sword appeared and stabbed directly into the hole. Immediately, the sword’s ability to absorb spiritual energy was manifested. The restrictive spell shook, trying to repair itself, but was unable to. The second wooden sword appeared, and it too was stabbed into the hole. The swords spread apart, and soon the hole was as wide as the hand of a child.

Normally, Meng Hao couldn’t do something like this. But because of the cracks and holes in the spell, he had a unique chance.

“What are you doing?” echoed Patriarch Reliance’s voice from within the ground. He stared in shock. He had a stingy personality, but enjoyed being able to put his lifetime accumulation of treasures on display. He liked to watch people’s eyes turn red when they could look at, but not touch the treasures. He was also supremely confident in his restrictive spells. They were connected to his life force, so unless he died, no one would be able to break through them.

However, because of some strange properties that existed in Lord Revelation, some problems had cropped up when Patriarch Reliance absorbed him. Because of that, the restrictive spells were a bit slow in their recovery. This was a bit of a slip-up on his part.

“Meng Hao, even with that hole there, you won’t be able to take all those Spirit Stones,” laughed Patriarch Reliance. “There are too many. You won’t be able to fit them inside. Oh well, it doesn’t matter. I’m a generous person. Go ahead and take a few, I don’t care.”

Meng Hao let out a cold harrumph. Now that the wooden swords had opened up a hole, he reached deep into his robe and pulled out the bag of the Cosmos and aimed it at the little hole.

Meng Hao's Cultivation base charged into action like a wild horse. The mountain of Spirit Stones began to shudder, and then, one by one they began flying out of the hole, sucked into the bag of the Cosmos.

Faster and faster, the Spirit Stones flew into the black-hole that was the bag of the Cosmos. Patriarch Reliance watched the dazzling display, and a horrified shriek rang out from his mouth.

"A bag of the Cosmos.... Dammit, how can you have that! It's invisible to Spiritual Sense, and can contain mountains and rivers. You, you, you.... My Spirit Stones! I went through innumerable trials and tribulations throughout my life to accumulate that many Spirit Stones. Meng Hao, leave some behind for me!" His agonized cry continued to echo out, and the ground began to quake. He was obviously releasing some of his power. And yet the seal had just been put in place....

Meng Hao laughed coldly as he listened to Patriarch Reliance's miserable cries. Soon the mountain of Spirit Stones shrank to become a small hill. Meng Hao was truly venting his spleen.

"You dare to rip me off?" thought Meng Hao, gritting his teeth. "Then I'll rip you off even more! I'm going to clear out all of your treasures!"

"Meng Hao, you traitor! This is too excessive!" Patriarch Reliance felt as if the organs in his body were going to explode. He wanted to burst out of the seal, but it had just been put in place. It would take months before he could break it.

He could never have imagined that Meng Hao would have a bag of the Cosmos, nor that he would be able to snatch away his lifetime accumulation of Spirit Stones. At the moment, Patriarch Reliance felt as if a giant invisible blade were rotating around him, slashing him for every Spirit Stone that he lost.

It was as if he were being hacked to pieces. His heart ached.

He had always had a strange personality. In comparison to other Cultivators of his generation, he was a true weirdo. His greed and stinginess grew along with his Cultivation base and his age. He didn't have even the slightest bit of an aura of a powerful expert. He didn't seem to have a bottom line in anything either.

Several hundred years ago, during his first Severing, his Dao enlightenment had been regarding greed. You could say that it had been branding onto his spirit, and was a part of his Cultivation.

Chapter 85: Ancient Demon Sealing Jade

Greedy and stingy. A miser to the core, even in terms of Cultivation. This was his Dao. In his enlightenment, treasures were the most important thing. These were the things that led to his First Spirit Severing.

This was why his meditation zone had so many areas protected by restrictive spells. It was his life savings. Accumulating all these items was not just a hobby, it was his version of the Dao.

To see it all disappearing before his eyes filled him with grief and indignation.

Within the space of ten breaths, the mountain of Spirit Stones was gone. There was even a random piece of jade underneath the mountain. It too was sucked into the bag of the Cosmos.

“That was my good luck charm. Dammit, Meng Hao, leave my good luck charm behind. You...” Before he could finish speaking, his eyes went wide again. After taking all the Spirit Stones, Meng Hao looked around, his eyes gleaming. Patriarch Reliance began to tremble.

The look in Meng Hao’s eyes was like that of a master thief.

His gaze fell onto a small courtyard. Behind the cracked restrictive spell could be seen a variety of medicinal plants of many different colors. They were clearly beyond ordinary.

Meng Hao recognized some of the plants as ones described in Shangguan Xiu’s treasured turtle shell. As he strode forward, his fingers flickered, and the two wooden swords appeared. They stabbed into a crack in the shield created by the restrictive spell. The crack slowly widened.

“Meng Hao, are you really going to steal my treasured items too? I’m your Patriarch! I paid a heavy price to steal that medicinal courtyard all those years ago...” Patriarch Reliance was growing even more anxious. The rumbling noise from under the ground grew stronger, but Meng Hao didn’t even blink. He was happy to finally be able to vent his anger.

“My divine spirit plants... you, you... you’re plucking them all out!” Patriarch Reliance’s anger soared to the heavens. “That’s my Outlander Tree. I cared for it for hundreds of years before it

sprouted, you can't take it...." Amidst Patriarch Reliance's shrill protestations, Meng Hao cleared out the courtyard as cleanly as if he'd used a razor. He sucked everything into the bag of the Cosmos. By the time he withdrew the two wooden swords, the courtyard looked as if it had been swept by a massive gale.

"Enough, enough," said Patriarch hastily, looking over the emptiness. "Listen, little Patriarch, leave some things behind for old Patriarch here. Don't take anything else.... You're not allowed to touch any more of my things. Meng Hao, you listen to Patriarch, okay? As a member of the junior generation, you should have a bit of respect. You...."

"I've been like this since I was young," said Meng Hao with a cold snort, throwing Patriarch Reliance's words back at him. Looking around, he caught sight of a lone restrictive spell shield. Beneath it were what appeared to be three withered little trees. However, on each tree was a leaf that occasionally sparkled with arcs of energy, making them appear extraordinary.

Meng Hao had never seen anything like it, but considering this was Patriarch Reliance's meditation zone, and it was protected with a restrictive spell, he figured it must be very valuable. His eyes glittering, he strode over and stabbed the wooden swords into a crack in the still-recovering restrictive spell.

"Those are my Thunderclap Leaves. It's a Lightning type medicinal plant that's even rare in the Southern Domain!" Patriarch Reliance once again howled fiercely. Completely ignoring him, Meng Hao lifted the bag of the Cosmos up to the hole in the restrictive spell. The trees began to shake back and forth. Then, the three leaves ripped off of the trees, transforming into three arcs of black lightning which shot into the bag of the Cosmos.

Even more infuriating to Patriarch Reliance was that after the leaves entered his bag, Meng Hao didn't stop. The trees continued to sway back and forth until suddenly they flew up from the ground, roots and all, and were sucked into the bag of the Cosmos. Next to the trees was a little purple flag stuck into the ground, which was also sucked into the bag.

"You even... you ripped the Thunderclap Trees up by the roots and took them too! You're really pissing me off!! Meng Hao, you little bastard, you took the Lightning Flag as well? It's not very strong; it can only defend against a Foundation Establishment attack. But it can absorb lightning bolts! You need it to grow the Thunderclap Leaves!! Patriarch Reliance's heart dripped with blood as he howled and cursed in his subterranean chamber.

"I've always had a good temper," snorted Meng Hao, throwing more of Patriarch Reliance's words back in his face. "You're Patriarch of the Reliance Sect. At the moment, we're the only people in

the whole Sect! I of the junior generation am not going to get angry at you. Actually, a lot of people have cursed me over the years. It doesn't really matter." Once again, he looked around.

This caused Patriarch Reliance's heart to seize. When he saw Meng Hao's gaze slide past another area with medicinal plants, he let out a small sigh of relief. His meditation zone contained his life's accumulation of treasures, but even still, the treasures could be categorized into high and low quality items.

"Just don't touch my baby," thought Patriarch Reliance. "Everything else... they're just trifling worldly possessions. I can gather more together later if I want." Patriarch Reliance's teeth were clenched, but his heart still continued to drip blood. In actuality, the word "trifling" had been a bit forced.

Within moments, Meng Hao had cleared out a few more courtyards of medicinal plants. Then he moved on to another area. Patriarch Reliance could only clench his jaw. He could do nothing more than let loose a torrent of abuse upon Meng Hao. He cursed and cursed, never repeating himself for more than half a sentence.

As he cursed, Meng Hao started to hum a little tune. It was a happy little tune, and just so happened to be the one Patriarch Reliance had been humming earlier. When Patriarch Reliance heard it, it made him so mad that he almost coughed up blood. The feeling he experienced was impossible to describe, but suffice to say, he was now experiencing the full repercussions of incurring Meng Hao's wrath.

Patriarch Reliance watched as Meng Hao looked around. When his gaze came to fall on a stretch of short wall, Patriarch Reliance's heart began to race, and he furiously said, "You little bastard, you're too cruel! I didn't dispel your poison, that's all. I even gave you a reward. A low-grade Spirit Stone is still a Spirit Stone."

Meng Hao had inspected almost all of the restrictive spells for cracks. In this area, many of the restrictive spells were completely recovered.

He circled the area, his eyes flashing back and forth. Suddenly, he realized that Patriarch Reliance had stopped speaking. He had only taken about thirty percent of the treasures in the area, and most were medicinal plants. He still wanted to vent some anger, so he decided to make one more circle to check for damaged restrictive spells.

When he returned to the place he'd started from, he frowned. There didn't seem to be anything special in there. He looked around and noticed a stretch of short wall. When he started to walk toward it, Patriarch Reliance suddenly began talking again.

"Alright, alright. Meng Hao, you're my only heir." As Patriarch Reliance watched Meng Hao walking toward the short wall, he grew more and more anxious. But his anxiety couldn't be detected in his voice. He sounded somewhat emotional as he said, "I'll dispel your poison. Just wait three months. I'll break out and take care of it for you. Then you can give me my treasures back. What do you say? Don't worry, I always keep my word. This time, I'll swear it in the name of the Sect. I definitely won't deceive you."

Meng Hao stopped walking and looked down at the ground. His eyes flickered, and he didn't say anything. He walked around, seemingly lost in thought; eventually he drawing close to the short wall.

"I never said that I wasn't going to dispel the poison," said Patriarch Reliance. He let out a sigh. "It's just that dispelling the poison would require quite a sacrifice of my Cultivation base. I would have to spend a lot of the energy I had just absorbed." His voice seemed to be deep and profound, but in actuality, as he saw Meng Hao nearing the short wall, his heart was filled with acute nervousness.

Meng Hao was silent. After the space of several breaths, he suddenly spoke.

"Why did you start talking when I began walking toward this wall, Patriarch? And why did you suddenly mention dispelling my poison? Could it be that there is some special treasure hidden here?" As the words came out of his mouth, Patriarch Reliance's eyes went wide. He realized he had said the wrong things. He secretly cursed Meng Hao for being so crafty.

"I'm just trying to do the right thing," said Patriarch Reliance with a cold harrumph. "Look kid, you..." Before he could finish speaking, Meng Hao jumped over the wall.

This filled Patriarch Reliance with fear and trepidation. His heart began to pound and his face fell. After leaping over the wall, Meng Hao looked around. As it turned out, there was a restrictive spell here.

It didn't look very special. Sealed inside was a jade slip. As for the restrictive spell, it was not complete; it still had some cracks in it. Meng Hao had no idea what the jade slip was, but without hesitation, he flicked his sleeve, stabbing the two wooden swords into the spell. He pried open a hole, then used the bag of the Cosmos to retrieve the jade slip.

Seeing the jade slip disappear into Meng Hao's bag caused Patriarch Reliance to emit a shrill shriek. The ground shook so hard it seemed it might crack. Before, Patriarch Reliance had been upset to see Meng Hao taking his treasures, but this fury was much more intense.

“Meng Hao, you cannot take that jade slip away! Even I don't dare to go near it. It belongs to a friend who left it here for safe keeping. You do not have the latent talent or the destiny to touch it! Do not remove it!”

Paying him no heed, he leaped onto a flying sword and flashed toward the vortex exit. At the same time, he slapped the bag of the Cosmos and pulled out the jade slip. Pressing it against his forehead, he cast some spiritual power into it. His expression changed as three characters appeared in his mind, filled with a Demonic aura.

“Demon Sealing Sect....”

“Meng Hao, you little bastard, get back here! You wait until I break through this seal. Then you're finished!” Patriarch Reliance let out a furious howl.

As the howl echoed out, Meng Hao's eyes flashed. He stopped at the mouth of the vortex, and then looked back down.

His eyes began to glitter. When Patriarch Reliance saw this, his heart began to thump again, and a strange premonition filled his heart. In his heart, in his mind, Meng Hao looked like nothing more than out-and-out thief.

Chapter 86: Demonic Lamps that Separate Heaven and Earth!

“Break through the seal?” Meng Hao's eyes glittered as he glanced down at the seven oil lamps on the ground. He looked at them for a moment, then shot toward them.

He ignored the howls of Patriarch Reliance. After pillaging all the previous treasures, he was now certain that the Patriarch wouldn't be coming out.

“What are you doing!?” In his subterranean chamber, Patriarch Reliance's fury rose to new heights. However, seeing the look on Meng Hao's face, fear blossomed in his heart. He was starting to regret having let Meng Hao go. The look in his eyes was even stronger than the look which had appeared when Meng Hao began to steal his treasures.

Ignoring Patriarch Reliance, who he now knew was completely unreliable, Meng Hao stared at the seven lamps. He walked slowly around them, looking contemplative.

Every step he took seemed to land directly onto Patriarch Reliance's heart.

"It doesn't matter," Patriarch Reliance said in an attempt to comfort himself. "This little bastard is only at the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He can't take any of the spiritual energy from the demonic lamps...." His eyes went wide when he saw Meng Hao, after making a few circles around the lamps, sit down cross-legged to meditate.

Meng Hao sat there, his eyes flashing. He seemed hesitant, but before long, determination filled his eyes.

"Patriarch Reliance deceived me. Taking a few of his precious treasures isn't enough to calm me down. I'm going to take this spiritual energy as well. Then I will finally be able to relax." Meng Hao gritted his teeth when he thought about the single low-grade Spirit Stone the Patriarch had given him. And then there was the matter of the poison. As far as Meng Hao was concerned, not dispelling the poison had shoved him onto a road of hopelessness.

"Treasured items can't absorb the spiritual energy from the seven lamps, because they aren't sentient.... Fine, I'll absorb it myself!" He suddenly closed his eyes and rotated his Cultivation base, attempting to breathe in the spiritual energy pouring out of the burning oil lamps.

But no matter how he tried to absorb the spiritual energy, as soon as it left the oil lamps, it was sucked into the ground. Deep in his subterranean chamber, Patriarch Reliance let out a great sigh of relief.

"Meng Hao, you little punk, whatever you try will be useless. Do you really dare to try to steal my spiritual power?" Patriarch Reliance let out a hearty, although somewhat bitter, laugh. When it reached Meng Hao's ears, he frowned for a moment. Then his face became calm again.

"No need to get antsy, Patriarch," he said coolly. "I've only just begun."

Patriarch Reliance stared in shock.

Meng Hao's eyes, which he had just closed, moved about as he recalled the image of his battle with Shangguan Xiu, and Little Tiger's pearl which had enabled him to reach the tenth level of Qi Condensation.

This was the method he wished to employ. He would return to the tenth level of Qi Condensation. Even though the incredible power of the tenth level of Qi Condensation left him cut off from heaven and earth, Meng Hao wanted to see if it could enable him to absorb the spiritual power of the lamps.

The legendary tenth level of Qi Condensation had existed in ancient times, but was now prohibited by the Heavens, cut off. But Meng Hao... had reached the tenth level once before... he had walked the severed path.

As he gathered his thoughts and his breath, his body gradually seemed to grow withered. The slender strand of Spiritual Sense in his head seemed to fill his thoughts. He sank into a strange and unusual state as he focused his entire being on remembering what it had been like to enter the tenth level of Qi Condensation.

Time slipped by. A day, two days, then three. Patriarch Reliance was growing more nervous. He couldn't quite tell what Meng Hao was doing, but could tell that his body was changing in a very strange way.

"Just what are you doing?" he asked hesitantly, as he came to realize that he was unable to discern what Meng Hao was up to.

On the night of the third day, a tremor shook Meng Hao. His eyes opened, and his body began to tremble violently. Once again he felt power filling his body; he now could employ force strong enough to topple a mountain. At the same time, the powerful gravitational force once again appeared within him, and he was cut off from heaven and earth!

At the moment, he couldn't absorb any of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. His eyes glowing, he slowly stood up, fighting to remain in this state. He knew that without Little Tiger's pearl, he could only hold on for the space of about ten breaths, after which he would sink back down.

He took a deep breath and then took a step forward. As his foot fell, the spiritual power emanating from the lamps quivered. Then, one tiny strand, instead of being sucked into the ground, drifted toward Meng Hao and was absorbed into his body.

When he saw this, Meng Hao's eyes shone even brighter. As for Patriarch Reliance, his body trembled and a look of astonishment appeared on his face.

“Holy crap!” he cried. “This is impossible!! That's... the tenth level of Qi Condensation! Dammit. Wasn't the path to the tenth level severed by the current will of the Heavens? You, you, you.... You got to the tenth level of Qi Condensation?!?!”

Patriarch Reliance let out a miserable cry as he watched Meng Hao take three more steps forward. About ten percent of the spiritual energy from the lamps rushed toward him. As he absorbed it, Patriarch Reliance howled even louder. “How is it possible? The damned tenth level of Qi Condensation isn't that awesome, but it was prohibited because it has the power to steal good fortune from the Heavens. If it's strong enough to do that, then as for my spiritual energy... Dammit. And what about my Demon Sealing Jade? Back then, those old bastards said that it could only be taken and used by someone who had reached the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation. This, this....”

After three steps, Meng Hao's body began to tremble, and he couldn't go any further. Boundless spiritual energy from the lamps rushed into him. Panting, he sat down and began to meditate, absorbing tremendous amount of spiritual energy. Patriarch Reliance could only howl angrily.

The gravitational force inside him was astonishing, like a starving wolf who hadn't eaten for years. Vast quantities of spiritual energy were sucked into him, and as it was, his body began to tremble more and more violently. He felt his physical body growing tougher and more powerful. It seemed as if even his bones were absorbing spiritual energy and becoming stronger.

The ancient tenth level of Qi Condensation was a stage of refinement for the physical body. Now here, in Patriarch Reliance's Immortal's Cave, he was seizing fortune for himself and entering this ancient state.

This level required lots of spiritual energy. Heaven and earth would not give it, but Patriarch Reliance had prepared a Nascent Soul and six Cores as fuel, and life force as flame. The spiritual energy pouring out of the demonic lamps was the nutrition that Meng Hao needed.

“Meng Hao!!! Stop! Stop! Let's discuss things a bit. I need that spiritual energy. I really, really need it. DO NOT absorb it! Dammit, cut it out, Meng Hao. That's my spiritual energy. I went to a lot of trouble killing all those people to get it. My seal! Meng Hao, if you don't stop, then I will expel you from the Sect!!” Flustered and exasperated, Patriarch Reliance had already forgotten about the treasures Meng Hao had taken, as well as the Demon Sealing Jade. You could say that all the things taken by Meng Hao before couldn't compare at all with this.

Meng Hao ignored him, continuing to absorb the spiritual energy like mad. His body continued to grow stronger. Soon, cracking sounds could be heard as his skin began to split and new flesh and blood grew.

More and more cracks spread out, and then the old flesh began to fall off. Meng Hao's hair grew longer, and his eyes brighter. The tenth level of Qi Condensation was now completely solidified within his body!

He would never lose the tenth level again, it was there permanently. In addition to the power of the tenth level of Qi Condensation, Meng Hao realized he had a new ability; if he wished, he could at will return to the ninth level of Qi Condensation to absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth, and then return back to the tenth level.

Some time passed, and Meng Hao's mind began to reel. The remnants of dried up flesh which remained on his body turned into ash and drifted away. His eyes glowed even brighter, and an incredible feeling of power filled Meng Hao. He was completely confident that with the power of the tenth level of Qi Condensation, he could use a single fist... to crush anyone of the ninth level of Qi Condensation.

This power was even stronger than what he had experienced when using Little Tiger's pearl.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. He stood up, not to leave, but to take another step forward. He was now only five paces away from the seven oil lamps.

Panting furiously, Patriarch Reliance let loose a torrent of intense curses as he watched Meng Hao absorbing an even greater amount of spiritual energy. He had solidified his tenth level of Qi Condensation, but instead of leaving, he moved on. Patriarch Reliance's heart pounded.

Now, thirteen percent of the spiritual energy emitted by the lamps was rushing toward Meng Hao. As the boundless amount of energy entered his body, a roaring sound filled him. His eyes were filled with determination. He took another step forward. He was now only four paces from the oil lamps.

The flames flickered as even more spiritual energy flew toward Meng Hao. As of now, he was taking sixteen percent!

“The gravitational force within me is not dispersing, it’s actually growing stronger. Is it possible that... after the tenth level of Qi Condensation, there’s an eleventh level?” Gritting his teeth, he called upon the power of the tenth level of Qi Condensation to take another step forward. He was now only three paces from the seven lamps. The flames within the lamps danced wildly as twenty percent of the spiritual energy they produced was sucked up by Meng Hao.

He took a deep breath, then sat down cross-legged to meditate.

Chapter 87: I Shall Reach the Peak of the Thirteenth Level of Qi Condensation!

“Meng Hao....” Patriarch Reliance ground his teeth. He felt quite grieved, and was even more regretful. If he had known things would turn out this way, he would have said some nicer things to Meng Hao.

How could he have imagined that Meng Hao would be so cruel? Forget his cruelty, he had a bag of the Cosmos! Forget his bag of the Cosmos, he had entered into the tenth level of Qi Condensation!

The scene unfolding before him made him want to weep, except he had no tears to do so. He gnashed his teeth as an even further sense of trepidation filled his heart. He remembered the requirements of the Demon Sealing Jade; it could only be taken away and used by someone who had reached the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation. When those old bastards had said that back in the day, his heart had filled with contempt. He’d believed that he could prevent the legacy of the Demon Sealing Sect from continuing on to future generations. But, now that he saw Meng Hao passing into the eleventh level, his trembling heart filled with anxiety.

Unfortunately for him, there was nothing he could do other than grit his teeth and continue to absorb as much spiritual energy as possible. He needed to get more than Meng Hao did, and be faster at doing so. He needed the Feng Shui compass in front of him to be completely repaired, and prevent Meng Hao from advancing any further.

The spiritual energy being sucked into the ground and absorbed into the Feng Shui compass was bright red in color. It seemed as if it were sucking something out of the very earth it passed through.

“Dammit, Meng Hao. All I did was give you a low-grade Spirit Stone and not dispel your poison. Haven’t you gone far enough? Haven’t you? I’m still your Patriarch after all.” Patriarch Reliance felt profoundly wronged.

As for Meng Hao, a roaring sound filled his entire body. With twenty percent of the lamps’ spiritual energy being absorbed into him, his body was trembling, and he felt himself changing. The change

was occurring to his Core sea. It grew larger, and as it did, his Qi passageways grew thicker. A bang rang out in his head, and he felt the sensation of breaking through to another level.

The eleventh level of Qi Condensation!

His Core sea spread out to fill his entire body. This type of Core sea really was impossible for someone of the Qi Condensation stage. Its majesty would ensure unending future growth and fighting power.

It would be more difficult for Meng Hao to reach Foundation Establishment with such a Core sea but... if he succeeded, then he would be twice as powerful as someone of the same stage!

The eleventh level of Qi Condensation does not refine the body, but the Core sea!

The extent of his Core sea caused Meng Hao's body to be filled with a thunderous sound. Spiritual energy as boundless as a sea filled him. The waves of the Core sea crashed and churned limitlessly.

Meng Hao opened his eyes and took a deep breath. The sound of the intake of his breath was like a clap of thunder. He stood up, his eyes gleaming with persistence. He took another step forward. Then two. Then three!

He now stood directly next to the seven oil lamps, close enough to touch them. He was absorbing thirty percent of their spiritual energy.

Thirty percent might not sound like a lot, but it would be impossible for Meng Hao were it not for the abilities of the tenth level of Qi Condensation. That was the stage of Qi Condensation that could steal good fortune from the Heavens, after all.

"Meng Hao, aren't you finished yet...." Patriarch Reliance watched Meng Hao take his three steps forward, his anxiety increased even more. If Meng Hao reached the twelfth level, he would be only one step away from being able to use the Demon Sealing Jade.

"Many thanks for your help, Patriarch," said Meng Hao calmly. "I'll be finished soon." He closed his eyes and began to absorb more spiritual energy into his body. His body shook as he stepped into the twelfth level of Qi Condensation.

Since ancient times, no one had ever entered... the twelfth level of Qi Condensation.

The instant he did so, Meng Hao felt a severe pain in his mind. His Spiritual Sense didn't go anywhere. But he felt as if his mind were being split in two. Now he felt... something like a stream within his mind.

This was... the Sea of Perception!

In modern times, Cultivators who broke through from the Qi Condensation into Foundation Establishment would form a Sea of Perception from nothing. Usually, this type of Sea of Perception would not be very large. It had nothing to do with latent talent, but rather with the method used. Obviously, the larger the Sea of Perception, the more power it could wield, and the more boundless the Cultivator's Spiritual Sense would be.

In ancient times, Cultivators preferred to break through to Foundation Establishment in the twelfth level of Qi Condensation. This is because the twelfth level is when the Sea of Perception opens up. By practicing Cultivation in this fashion, the Sea of Perception would be far more powerful than others of the Foundation Establishment stage.

In the modern Cultivation world, Meng Hao was the first Cultivator to ever enter the twelfth level of Qi Condensation. If news of this spread, it would shake the entire Cultivation world.

At the moment, Patriarch Reliance was shaken. He stared dumbly at Meng Hao, able to watch unimpeded as Meng Hao's previous ninth level of Qi Condensation now rose to the twelfth. He didn't know what to say.

"....In ancient times," he muttered, "the legends said that the great circle of Qi Condensation could be completed at the thirteenth level. But even in ancient times, such a thing was rarely seen. It was said that the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation was related to the good fortune of Heaven, and.... could change the latent talent of a Cultivator! It wouldn't change much. But latent talent is birthed from the Heavens, so even the slightest change would definitely be a defiance of the Heavens.

"I don't remember how many years ago it was that the old bastards from the Demon Sealing Sect boasted that I was incredibly lucky... but compared to me, this kid is the lucky one. Dammit, he's too lucky! How could I have possibly provoked this reaction!"

As Patriarch Reliance spoke, Meng Hao opened his eyes. They shined with a profound light. He felt splitting pain within his head, but within that pain, he also could sense an unprecedented clearness.

The world seemed different when he looked at it, although he couldn't quite tell which particular things weren't the same. It was as if everything now shone with radiances that he had never noticed before.

At this time, the massive gravitational power seemed on the verge of dissipating, as if his body knew that he was reaching his absorption limit.

Soon, the amount of spiritual energy he was absorbing from the oil lamps dropped from thirty percent to twenty, and then to ten.

This caused Meng Hao to frown. He could tell that his Cultivation base had not reached its peak... he could sense that there was another layer beyond his current layer. He could feel the great circle of Qi Condensation.

It was a powerful feeling, but as the gravitational power grew weaker and weaker, it seemed as though that next level would be forever closed off to him.

"Haha, it's like I said," laughed Patriarch Reliance, his eyes glittering. "The thirteenth level of Qi Condensation was even rare in ancient times. It was such a thing of legends that you could basically say it didn't exist. The twelfth level is the limit. Meng Hao, there's no need to try any further. Quickly, back away. Don't get in the way of my master plan. If you do, then just wait till I get out of here and see how I mop the floor with you! You need a spanking, you little bastard!" Even though Meng Hao had sucked away some of the spiritual energy, it actually wasn't very much. There was still enough left to accomplish his master plan. And if Meng Hao didn't reach the thirteenth level, then there was no way for him to have the required latent talent to use the Demon Sealing Jade.

"Seems this kid's good fortune isn't that amazing after all," said Patriarch Reliance complacently. But then, Meng Hao's eyes flickered. He had a stubborn personality. Now that he had reached the twelfth level of Qi Condensation and caught a glimpse of the next level, he would do everything possible to break through.

"The gravitational power is weakening.... How can I continue to add spiritual energy..." Meng Hao's mind spun with thousands of possibilities until finally his eyes began to glitter and he smacked his bag of holding. The two wooden swords whistled out.

He looked at them, then gritted his teeth and caused one of them to fly straight toward himself. Patriarch Reliance watched on in astonishment as the sword slashed Meng Hao. Soon, over ten gaping wounds covered his body.

Meng Hao clenched his jaw as the sword slashed the bloody marks across him. His eye shone with determination. As the blood splashed from the wounds, Meng Hao felt the spiritual power in his body seeping out as well.

This was exactly what he wanted!

As the spiritual power leaked out of his body, the gravitational power within him suddenly trembled, then gradually grew stronger. When this happened, Meng Hao's mind was set. Taking control of the second sword, he sent both of them flying around him, slashing his body with wound after wound. In the blink of an eye, nearly one hundred cuts covered his flesh.

The wounds sent the physical power of his body into action, and at the same time caused the gravitational power within him to grow more and more powerful.

Patriarch Reliance was simply dumbstruck. He could never in his wildest dreams imagine that Meng Hao would use such a method. When he saw the multitude of bloody wounds, and the determination in Meng Hao's eyes, it gave him a deep sense of how ruthless Meng Hao could be. If he could treat himself with such cruelty, how ruthlessly could he treat others?!

The more wounds that covered him, the stronger the gravitational force became. The amount of spiritual energy he siphoned from the lamps jumped from ten percent to forty. And yet, even though the spiritual energy poured into his body, he couldn't break through to that next level.

After some time passed, Meng Hao laughed. With a cold smile, he raised his right hand, causing one of the wooden swords to whistle around and fly toward his chest. It stabbed through him, sending out fountains of blood. Blood also sprayed out of his mouth. Instantly, the spiritual power in his body dropped by a huge percentage. This, in turn, caused the gravitational power to climb higher by several percentages.

By now, he was absorbing fifty percent of the spiritual energy coming from the seven oil lamps.

A booming sound rang out. Filled with boundless spiritual energy, Meng Hao launched everything at the barrier between the levels. Blood sprayed from his mouth, and the wooden swords once again

slashed through his body. The spiritual energy from the seven lamps surged; as of now, Meng Hao was sucking away seventy percent of it!

It was in this way that Meng Hao launched his attack from the twelfth level of Qi Condensation into the thirteenth.

Time slipped by. More wounds appeared on his body, a product of Meng Hao's ruthlessness. Soon, his body began to tremble and his vision grew blurry. He was now absorbing ninety percent of the spiritual energy from the seven oil lamps. It was as if he were bathing in thick, pure spiritual energy.

"You're going to kill yourself..." Patriarch Reliance watched the scene, his breathing agitated. Meng Hao's stubbornness left him reeling.

"I will become powerful! There's no reason. I must become powerful!" Meng Hao began to lose consciousness, but his stubbornness wouldn't allow him. Despite his current condition, he wouldn't even think of giving up. He continued to murmur to himself, that he, must, become, powerful!

Meng Hao MUST break through to the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation.

"This is his Dao..." Patriarch Reliance took a deep breath, finally understanding.

Chapter 88: Lord Revelation's True Self

Boom!

The two wooden swords stabbed simultaneously through Meng Hao's body, sending showers of blood flying out. The flame of Meng Hao's life force was growing dimmer. However, the gravitational force within him had grown to an unprecedented height. It was so strong that it seemed as if it might be able to suck in everything around him. It was as if regardless of whatever obstacle faced him, regardless of whatever danger he was in, nothing could block his path to becoming a powerful expert.

The gravitational force seemed to be affecting Meng Hao's stupor. His mind expanded into boundlessness.

Patriarch Reliance looked at him and murmured, "This is... stealing good fortune from the Heavens!"

At the moment, Meng Hao's desire to be powerful had fused with his Cultivation base, a stubbornness which belonged to the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation; he would steal from the Heavens; he would defy the Heavens to change his life force.

A thunderous boom sounded out as the full and complete spectrum of spiritual energy from the seven oil lamps poured into Meng Hao. As it entered his body, it became his blade with which to attack and break through the level gap.

It was the combined power of six Core Formation Cultivators and one Nascent Soul Cultivator. But that was only part of it. The most important part of his attack, the truest part, was his stubborn desire to become powerful. This desire was completely in line with the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation, which had been rejected by the Heavens. This was what forged his thirteenth level of Qi Condensation!

Amidst the roaring, the level gap disintegrated. The instant it did, Meng Hao, bathed as he was in inexhaustible spiritual energy, felt his Cultivation base soaring up from the twelfth level to the thirteenth level. He had now become the first Cultivator since ancient times to complete the great circle of Qi Condensation.

In that instant, the latent talent in Meng Hao which enabled him to practice Cultivation, suddenly changed. There was no sound or any other indication that it had happened. Even Meng Hao was only vaguely aware of the change. However, if an outsider were to examine his current latent talent, they would see that it was no longer average, as it had been in the past. Although he couldn't be considered Chosen, his latent talent was now much higher.

From time immemorial, no one had ever been able to change their own latent talent. No heavenly material or earthly treasure had the power to change the destiny appointed by the Heavens. And yet today, Meng Hao had done just that!

He was the first person since ancient times to complete the great circle of Qi Condensation, as well as the first person to change his latent talent. This was a new beginning, a fresh start on the path to becoming a powerful expert.

The instant he completed the great circle of Qi Condensation, all of the wounds in his body healed instantly. Immersed in spiritual energy, his body had experienced another rebirth.

You could even say that Meng Hao himself had been reborn anew.

After the time it takes for an incense stick to burn, Meng Hao's eyes flashed open. The surrounding spiritual energy once again began to surge down into the earth. Now that he had completed the great circle of Qi Condensation, the gravitational force within him was completely gone.

Having witnessed Meng Hao's transformation with his own eyes, Patriarch Reliance was left speechless.

Even more astonishing was that after Meng Hao opened his eyes, he reached out with his right hand and picked up one of the seven oil lamps. This was the lamp which contained Lord Revelation's Nascent Soul. After picking it up, he turned, and his body turned into a beam of light as he shot toward the vortex exit.

"You, you, you... aren't you afraid of getting burned to death!?" Patriarch Reliance sat in a daze for a moment, and then started cursing again as he watched Meng Hao disappear through the vortex.

"You little bastard! You're shameless!! You people from the Demon Sealing Sect are all bastards! Shameless to the extreme!!" He paced back and forth furiously, letting out a torrent of howls.

As soon as Meng Hao left through the vortex, the Immortal's Cave began to seal up behind him. Only a rapidly closing fissure remained, from which emanated the stench of death.

Within the Southern Domain, outside of the State of Zhao, was a bordering nation called the State of Revelation. The land itself wasn't much different from that of the State of Zhao, but its people were somewhat bizarre.

Whereas the State of Zhao revered the Eastern Lands, the State of Revelation did not. They did not pay obeisance to the Great Tang, but rather, the mysteries of the Heavens. Therefore, all the Sects within the State of Revelation were branches of the Revelation Sect.

In the mysterious eastern regions of the State of Revelation were three mountain ranges which wound back and forth like twisting dragons. One particular mountain peak had the appearance of two dragon heads locked in combat. This was the pinnacle of the State of Revelation. Mist curled around the peak, on top of which was a bell. Once per year, the bell would toll, and the echoes would reverberate out for three days.

Beneath the bell was a forest of ornate buildings. This was none other than... the most powerful Sect in the nation, the Revelation Sect!

Atop the main gate of the Revelation Sect sat a Cultivator who wore black robes. He was very old, and had the demeanor of a transcendent being. In the memories of the disciples of the Revelation Sect, it had been a very, very long time since he had sat down there in meditation. No matter how the wind and rain buffeted him, no matter how many years passed by, he sat there like a rock, eternally still.

Many disciples didn't even know who he was. Considering how he sat cross-legged in meditation underneath the Revelation Bell, he was clearly an Elder of the Sect. However, whenever the powerful experts of the Sect looked at him, their eyes would fill with intense looks of veneration.

At the moment, the Revelation Sect was filled with the uninterrupted sound of disciples chanting scriptures. The sound formed an invisible force which drifted about, then slowly congealed at the top of the mountain, where there seemed to be some type of vortex. The vortex would slowly suck in the power of the chanting.

This was something that only Cultivators could see. The chanting of the Revelation Sect disciples rose up and then merged into the Revelation Bell. In fact, the bell seemed to be sucking in, not just the chanting of the Cultivators, but the prayers of everyone in the entire nation.

At this moment, the old man who had been sitting under the Revelation Bell for seemingly an eternity, began to tremble, and then coughed up a mouthful of blood. Suddenly, the bell tolled, its sound echoing into the sky and sounding out through the entire State of Revelation.

The disciples within the Revelation Sect were shocked. The Sect Elders and powerful experts instantly opened their eyes from meditation. One by one, they turned into prismatic beams which shot toward the Revelation Bell.

When they arrived, they saw the black-robed old man sitting there, his eyes wide open.

“Greetings, Patriarch!”

“Patriarch, are you in good health?” Dozens of Cultivators surrounded him, bowing respectfully with clasped hands.

The black-robed old man's eyes flashed as if with lightning. His left pupil blazed with an intense brightness and looked like the sun, whereas his right pupil exuded darkness and had the appearance of a crescent moon. The two pupils were completely different. One look at this man, and you would never be able to forget him.

When he opened his eyes, it seemed as if his forehead had split, and another eye appeared. However, this was an eye invisible to others. The only thing an observer would see was a blood-red glow. Above him, storm clouds began to gather, and a fierce wind whipped about.

“Patriarch Reliance! You destroyed my clone and refused my good intentions. You're... You're finished! I'm not the only one with a few tricks up my sleeve. What do you have to fall back on, your trifling Spirit Severing? You truly dare to arouse the wrath of the Dawn Immortal?!” The old man's face was grim. He slapped his hand onto the ground, and the mountain peak trembled. Ripples shook the ground, sending the surrounding Cultivators retreating in shock.

At the same time as the mountain began to shake, the Revelation Bell sounded out, then rose up into the air. Surrounding the bell were countless magical symbols which flew and twisted about, glowing brightly. The glow was nearly blinding, and spread out throughout the entire State of Revelation.

“The Demonic forces are descending! It is exactly as our ancestors divined! This shall prove to be a calamity for Heaven and Earth, but also a chance for Revelation to rise! I shall take back my clone's Nascent Soul, and then we will see if Patriarch Reliance still dares to be arrogant!”

Of course, this black-robed man was none other than Lord Revelation. His clone had been consumed by Patriarch Reliance, and this was his true self. As he spoke, he stood and flew up into the sky. He snatched up the enormous Revelation Bell and then transformed into a multicolored rainbow and shot toward the State of Zhao, radiating killing intent.

Meanwhile, within the state of Zhao, a buzzing sound could be heard within the ancestral hall of the Cold Wind Sect. With a strange look on his face, the disciple on duty pushed open the door. When he looked inside, his entire body began to shake, and a look of astonishment and intense dread appeared on his face.

Within the ancestral hall, the life slips of various Sect Cultivators were neatly lined up on display. Suddenly, the life slips belonging to the Sect's Core Formation Priest as well as Elder Taishang began to crack and crumble!

This meant that the Core Formation Priest and Elder Taishang had died!

Furthermore, the slips belonging to the Foundation Establishment Elders fell apart. When this happened, the disciple on ancestral hall guard duty shook. A look of disbelief filled his face.

When the Core Formation Priest had departed with the others, he'd left behind a Foundation Establishment Elder to guard the Sect. When that man learned of the news, his face went pale, and he immediately ordered that no one be told. He knew that if something like this happened to a Sect, if its Core Formation experts were killed, it was nothing other than a catastrophe. It would likely lead to the downfall of the entire Sect. For almost all of the Foundation Establishment Cultivators to be wiped out would only hasten the fall.

“What happened in Patriarch Reliance’s meditation zone?!” The Foundation Establishment Elder immediately gathered a group of Qi Condensation disciples and sent them in the direction of the Reliance Sect.

Next, trying to calm his mind, he took hold of a special horn that hadn’t been sounded out for hundreds of years.

This horn had a name: Horn of the Dao.

Sounding the Horn of the Dao would awaken the Sect’s Dao Reserves!

Every Clan and Sect had Dao Reserves, which would be passed down from generation to generation. For the three great Sects, their Dao Reserves would generally consist of a Sect Patriarch who had failed in reaching the Nascent Soul stage, but postponed death by resting in suspended animation in a Pseudo Nascent Soul condition. Only they would be able to suppress the panic that would arise because of the impending catastrophe.

When the horn call sounded out in the Cold Wind Sect, it reached the ears of an old withered man sitting cross-legged in a top-secret Immortal’s Cave. He looked dead; his body was so emaciated it was little more than skin and bones. But when he heard the call of the horn, his eyes opened.

His Spiritual Sense instantly roared out, enveloping the entire Cold Wind Sect. When it entered the body of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator, the man began to tremble, and a look of pain appeared on his face. He was filled with a powerful feeling that seemed as if it could obliterate him. This was Spiritual Sense, which was being used to rifle through his memories.

After a while, the Spiritual Sense departed, and the Foundation Establishment Cultivator fell to the ground panting, his body limp and his face pale. He knew that if he wasn't of the Foundation Establishment stage, the memory search that had just been performed on him would have killed him.

A profound voice echoed out throughout the Cold Wind Sect. "Take my Freezing Jade and seal off all the mountains around the Reliance Sect. Do not let anyone out of the region. I will be awake in a few hours. In the meantime, you go search the area for any clues." The Foundation Establishment Cultivator immediately struggled to his feet, then clasped his fists and bowed deeply.

An ice-cold piece of blue jade flew into his hand.

Similar scenes played out in the Winding Stream Sect and the Upright Evening Sect. When the life slips belonging to their Priests and Elders crumbled, they all used their Sects' Dao Reserves.

As of this moment, the Cultivation world of the State of Zhao had been thrown into an uproar.

Chapter 89: Guyiding Tri-Rain

Patriarch Reliance sat in his sealed meditation zone, the flames of his fury rising to the heavens. He cursed continuously in anger and pain. Regarding Meng Hao, the Patriarch had a somewhat helpless feeling. After all, he was the Reliance Sect's only heir...

"That little bastard is just too ruthless. I'm his Patriarch! First he steals half my treasures, then takes away my Demon Sealing Jade. After that, he robs me of my spiritual energy, and then shamelessly pillages one of my demonic lamps!!" He was nearly out of breath from cursing. When he thought of the ancient demonic lamp, he suddenly looked worried.

"Okay, so I didn't dispel the poison, that's true, but that doesn't mean you can act like this! An upright person should be reasonable. When I stole treasures from people, I discussed things with them reasonably first.

"He really reached the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation. All those years ago those bastards said that the Demon Sealing Jade couldn't be taken away by someone who hadn't reached the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation.... Originally I thought they were just trying to make it sound mysterious, and was really happy. Obviously, those old bastards tricked me. If the Demon Sealing Jade couldn't be taken away, then even if my plan worked, I wouldn't be able to break the seal. But... wow! He actually reached the thirteenth level!! And the little bastard took it away! I can feel that... the seal is weakening!

“I might be missing one of the demonic lamps, which reduces the chances of opening the Demonic Seal, but still, it’s been unstable for years now. And now, it’s showing even more signs of weakness... Holy crap, how come the Cultivators of the Demon Sealing Sect always deceive me!? Those bastards were like this years ago, and now the little bastard is the same...” Patriarch Reliance ground his teeth, but as he thought about all this, he remembered Meng Hao throwing his words back at him. Then he thought of his stubbornness in reaching the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation, and couldn’t help but sigh.

“This kid really does things in line with my style. I didn’t want to put myself in a bad position that time; you deceived me, I deceived you. The old bastards from the Demon Sealing Sect didn’t tell the truth. They thought that if they ran away, I couldn’t get at them. Well, maybe that was true, but at least I could change the name from Demon Sealing Sect to Reliance Sect. I couldn’t deceive them, but I could deceive their descendants.... Dammit, if I’d known Meng Hao would reach the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation and then get the required latent talent to take away the Demon Sealing Jade, I would have just dispelled his poison and sent him on his way as fast as possible. Then he would never have had the chance to reach the thirteenth level. But if that happened, then I probably would never have the chance to open the seal, right?” Patriarch Reliance was somewhat at a loss. Even though he was upset, he could only sigh and feel torn.

Patriarch Reliance had a very eccentric personality and was not easy to get along with. Meng Hao didn’t know that, of course. In fact, before the Sect had been disbanded, no one else had known either. Only the people who were of the same generation as Patriarch Reliance could know of such matters. To them, the mere mention of Patriarch Reliance would arouse feelings of hatred.

But you cannot use normal methods to analyze people with eccentric personalities. For example, even though Meng Hao robbed his treasures, stole his spiritual energy, took away one of his demonic lamps and angered him to the point of driving him crazy, he actually felt admiration for him. This type of thing is not something that ordinary people can understand.

Actually, if Meng Hao had just silently left, then Patriarch Reliance would have forgotten about him completely within a couple years. But acting as he did had left a deep impression on Patriarch Reliance. He would never be able to forget the complicated, torn feelings he was experiencing.

Outside of the Reliance Sect, in the State of Zhao, it was a warm and sunny day. However, storm clouds were brewing on the horizon. Meng Hao’s face was calm as he sat cross-legged on his treasured fan. He soared forward at high speed.

He had lowered his Cultivation base back to the ninth level of Qi Condensation. He wouldn’t reveal the great circle of Qi Condensation unless he needed to. Even though his achievements were

significant, the poisons in his body had not been dispelled. It was like a fishbone stuck in his throat. He sat in silent contemplation, trying to figure how to get rid of the poison.

“Of the four poisons, I was able to get rid of one. Excepting the poison from the three-colored poison pill, the other poisons will be easy to dispel.... I need to figure out the fastest way to find the poison dispelling pills.” Regarding everything that had happened with Patriarch Reliance, Meng Hao’s hatred and anger had already subsided.

He glided along, and before long thunder and lightning filled the sky; big raindrops the size of beans fell down. The land was covered with sheets of rain, making everything look dim and hazy.

It was raining now, but the general temperature was as hot as ever. The heat was stifling enough to make it difficult to breathe. Only within the rain could a bit of coolness be felt.

Amidst the heavy rain, Meng Hao stopped gliding and stood atop a mountain top. Looking off into the distance, he pushed the rain away so that it wouldn’t fall onto him. It was like he was standing in his own land, separate from the rest of the murky world.

He looked out at the earth surrounding him and thought of all his experiences over the past years. He had completed the great circle of Qi Condensation, which seemed like something from a dream. After thinking about everything for a long time, he sighed.

“I wonder... I wonder how Elder Sister Xu is doing now,” he said softly as her face appeared in his mind. He looked off in the direction he supposed was the center of the Southern Domain.

He lifted up his right hand, and a jade slip appeared. The jade slip was carved with mountains and rivers, and was covered with cracks. It looked as if it might crumble at any moment.

This was what Patriarch Reliance had called a good luck charm, which he had found at the bottom of the mountain of Spirit Stones. He looked at it closely, then sent a bit of his spiritual energy into it. There was no reaction.

Muttering to himself, he put the good luck charm back and then pulled out the palm-sized black flag. There appeared to be a spark of energy moving about inside it. Muttering to himself again, he opened his mouth and blew out some Qi from his Cultivation base, sending it into the flag.

“This item isn’t sealed to Patriarch Reliance, so I can use it. I’ll need to refine it a bit before I can use its full power, though....” He infused it with some more Qi before putting it back.

Next, he carefully brought out the burning oil lamp, within which was a tiny figure sitting cross-legged. When Meng Hao pulled out the burning Nascent Soul, streams of spiritual energy once again roiled out.

Flames appeared in front of his eyes, but he didn’t feel any heat. However, he knew that it was powerful. After all, the flame was life force and the Nascent Soul was the fuel.

“This item will be extremely useful. I can use it as a life-saving treasure!” Eager to the extreme, Meng Hao tucked it back into the bag of the Cosmos.

At last, he pulled out the ancient jade piece. It carried a sense of profound ancientness, as if it had existed for countless ages.

Meng Hao looked at it, heart thumping. He sent some spiritual energy into it, upon which three characters appeared in his head. “Demon Sealing Sect....”

Some mnemonics also appeared, which he couldn’t quite see clearly. Only the first three characters were legible.

He poured a greater amount of spiritual energy into it, whereupon a roaring sound filled his head. He involuntarily took a few steps back and immediately stopped forcing spiritual energy into it. He could tell that someone who hadn’t completed the great circle of Qi Condensation would only be able to see the three characters and a bit beyond that. As of now, he was only able to read the first line.

“Ancient Dao; Tenacious Desire to Seal the Heavens; Benefaction for All in the Mountains; Dao Tribulation Must Come to the Nine Mountains and Seas; My Fate is the Aeon.” Meng Hao’s body trembled and suddenly his vision cleared. The rain was currently falling on him, soaking him.

A strange light filled his eyes. He looked back down silently at the jade slip. In his head, images appeared of the Demonic technique used by Patriarch Reliance, and the Demonic magic Shangguan Xiu had used to control the aura of Mount Daqing.

After contemplating for a long time, he still didn't understand. He sat down cross-legged, again pouring some spiritual energy into the jade slip. Once more, he contemplated the words' deep meaning.

Enough time passed for an incense stick to burn. The rain had come quickly, and it passed quickly. Meng Hao suddenly opened his eyes. Even as a child, he had been very smart. Even though he hadn't succeeded in his life as a scholar, once he entered the Reliance Sect, he had been very quick to grasp magical techniques. He didn't need to spend a lot of time practicing. In fact, this was the first time he had ever had trouble utilizing a mnemonic.

It was as if the mnemonic was something which required enlightenment to understand. Without enlightenment, it could only be observed from the outside, never entered.

"The words seem extremely complicated, their true meaning obscure. It's like trying to look at flowers in the midst of fog, or the moon on rippling seawater..." He pondered silently for a while, until a bright look appeared in his eyes. He lifted his head and gazed up at the sky, looking a bit hesitant.

More time passed. Finally, determination rose in his eyes. He leaped up, and a flying sword appeared beneath his feet as he shot off into the distance.

"If I can reach Foundation Establishment, then I can fly for long periods. That will be much better than this." The wind buffeted his face as he soared forward. After a while, the flying sword's momentum began to fade. Meng Hao dropped to the ground and continued to run.

Time passed slowly. The first time he had left these mountains, he had been at the sixth level of Qi Condensation, and it had taken him two days. Now, he was of the great circle of Qi Condensation, and it only took about an hour. Soon, he was out of the mountains, and had reached the North Sea.

He stood once again on the shore, looking out at the lake. He took a deep breath, and then, face filled with sincerity, clasped his hands and bowed deeply two times.

The first bow was for the North Sea's kindness in demonstrating the Dao and helping him break through his bottleneck.

The second bow was for when the North Sea had helped him during his battle with Ding Xin, when it had saved his life and caused him to be reborn.

“I’ve already made my promise two times, so I won’t say it again. It has been imprinted onto my heart.” He lifted his head, looking out toward the center of the lake. After some time, he closed his eyes and sat down cross-legged to meditate. In his mind, the mnemonic from the jade slip appeared.

“Ancient Dao; Tenacious Desire to Seal the Heavens; Benefaction for All in the Mountains; Dao Tribulation Must Come to the Nine Mountains and Seas; My Fate is the Aeon.” A long time passed, and the words continued to reverberate in his mind. And yet, he still did not understand what they meant.

More time passed as Meng Hao continued to try to decipher the meaning of the words. Suddenly, a hearty laugh echoed out from across the lake.

“Young sir, do you want to cross the sea?”

Meng Hao lifted his head and saw a boat approaching. On the boat was an old man wearing a woven rush raincoat. Inside was a young girl, eight or nine years old, with big eyes. When she looked at Meng Hao, an innocent smile appeared on her face.

Meng Hao laughed, clapping hands and bowing to the old man and the girl. Then he leaped up onto a flying sword and shot toward them. He dropped down into the boat.

Just like before, there was a bottle of alcohol being warmed. The young girl took it out and poured a cup for Meng Hao, but didn’t hand it to him. She put her chin onto her hands and looked at him.

“Why did you come back, Big Brother?” she said, her voice pure and clear. “Did you come to see Guyiding Tri-Rain?”

Meng Hao stared at her blankly.

“Guyiding Tri-Rain is my name. But, you can’t tell anybody, okay Big Brother?” She laughed and winked at Meng Hao, looking very charming.

Meng Hao smiled and cupped his hands again in a bow, then accepted the cup of alcohol.

The old man laughed as the boat continued on toward the center of the lake. He looked back at Meng Hao. “We haven’t seen each other for many days. Young sir, your demeanor is much more refined than in the past. Are you heading for the other shore this time?”

“I of the junior generation am not here to cross the lake,” Meng Hao said lightly, taking a sip of alcohol. “I’m here to clear up some confusion.”

Chapter 90: The Great Path of Demon Sealing, a Concept Like a Scripture

The old man put down the oar and looked back at Meng Hao. Laughing, he walked over, poured himself some alcohol, and then took a drink.

“Clear up what confusion?”

Meng Hao held his cup of alcohol and then softly said, “I’m confused about something I read. It said, ‘Ancient Dao; Tenacious Desire to Seal the Heavens....’” Shock suddenly covered the face of the old man. The blood drained from the face of the young girl. Waves suddenly surged across the North Sea, causing the boat to rock back and forth violently.

“Stop!” cried the old man. The cup of alcohol in his hand suddenly disappeared into a dark mist and he stared at Meng Hao.

Meng Hao gaped.

“Don’t say that again. I can’t explain those words to you. Neither can anyone else in heaven or earth. If you truly seek enlightenment, then enter the heart of the sea.” He closed his mouth and looked at the young girl. Some time passed, and finally her countenance returned to normal. She gave a slight nod.

Meng Hao was silent for a while, before asking, “What do you mean by the heart of the sea?”

In a tone of voice which carried deep profundity, the old man said, “There are things which have been concealed at the bottom of the sea for a thousand years. That is the heart of the sea. If you seek an answer to your questions, perhaps you should also examine your own heart.”

Meng Hao found himself lost in thought for a long time. When he finally looked up, his eyes widened in shock. There was no trace of the old man or the young girl. He was alone on the lake. In fact, the boat had disappeared too.

He stared blankly for a while, until his vision came to focus on a spot some distance away. There, on the far bank, a group of people was lowering a brand new boat into the water. It slowly entered the lake, and then laughter rang out. The sounds of the peoples' celebratory cheers surrounded the boat.

The boat slowly approached the center of the lake. Rowing it was a middle-aged man, accompanied by a woman and a child. Meng Hao watched as, day after day, year after year, he rowed back and forth across the lake. Many years passed, and the man grew old. The man's son grew up, and took over rowing the boat. Years and years passed. Generations and generations.

The boat, once brand new, slowly began to crack and grow old. It began to age.

Eventually it grew so dilapidated that it couldn't be repaired. Like a life that has reached its limit, it couldn't be forced to go on any further. It slowly sank to the bottom of the lake.

It had lived its life on the surface, and died at the bottom. Its existence had been on the waters of the lake, accompanying generation after generation of mortals who had created it. Other than them, the lake was its entire life.

In its life, the lake was its companion. No one could hear the voice of the lake, but it could. When it sank to the bottom, it died, but was also reborn.

At that moment, it awoke.

The moment it awoke, it saw a young girl standing at the bottom of the lake, smiling at him.

"Will you... accompany me forever?"

"I don't know how long forever is, but in my past life, I could hear your voice. Now that I've died... I want to accompany you. I want you to be part of my next life." At this moment it came to understand that... it was the spirit of the boat. Listening to the voice of the lake over the countless years had caused the boat's spirit to come into being.

Before dying, its life had been the waters of the lake. After death, its spirit would protect the lake forever, into eternity.

It was then that a boat once again appeared on the surface of the lake. Inside the boat was a young girl warming a bottle of alcohol. Together, they floated to and fro across the lake.

Meng Hao's mind shook as he saw all of this transpire in front of him. Everything grew blurry for a moment, and then came back into focus. He was once again in the boat. The old man was there in front of him, grinning at him and holding his cup of alcohol. The girl looked up at him, smiling, her chin resting in her hands.

The old man took a drink. "This is my heart. Do you understand... successor of the Demon Sealing Sect?"

Meng Hao was silent for a moment. Frustration shined in his eyes. He... did not understand.

"Don't search too hard for an answer. If you do, the answer you find might be false. At some point in your life, perhaps you will be able to find the answer. Don't give up." The old man looked at Meng Hao solemnly.

"Big Brother," said the young girl, "its aura ... is beneath your feet. Don't provoke it. Remember... the great path of Demon Sealing..." Waves once again surged across the lake in all directions, great, tall waves that seemed to touch the sky. Everything turned dark amidst the thunderous roar. The boat sank into the water.

Meng Hao didn't leap out of the boat. Instead, he closed his eyes. After some time passed, he opened them, and found himself sitting cross-legged on the lakeshore. The lake was still. There were no waves and no boat. What that had just happened had been an illusion.

The girl had not appeared, nor had the old man. Everything had occurred in a dream.

"Its aura is beneath my feet..." Meng Hao's eyes shone with confusion. He looked down at his feet. He saw nothing but his shoes.

“The great path of Demon Sealing, a concept like a scripture.” Meng Hao frowned, still unable to comprehend the meaning of the words. He slowly got to his feet, then clasped his hands and bowed a third time to the lake.

He looked out at the waters. “I don’t understand today,” he said softly, “but I will achieve enlightenment one day.”

Waves suddenly rippled out upon the lake, seemingly in response to Meng Hao. Meng Hao was just about to leave, when suddenly his eyes flickered. Turning his head, he saw that off in the distance, several beams of light were flying toward him.

“Meng Hao!”

“So here you are. The Priest sent us searching for you!”

“Grab him, and then everything will be made clear!”

There were three flashing beams, and three Cultivators. One of them was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, the others were at the eighth. All three of them rode massive jade flutes. The two eighth-level Cultivators were known to Meng Hao. They were Zhou and Tu of the Winding Stream Sect, who had attempted to chase and kill Meng Hao before.

The person of the ninth level of Qi Condensation was a young man of about thirty years of age. A cold, indifferent look covered his face as he stared at Meng Hao.

They were being followed by five more people who sped along on foot.

Meng Hao’s expression was calm. He gave the people a glance, then ignored them, bowing once again to the North Sea. As he did, the eyes of Zhou and Tu flashed. Their hands flickered with incantation signs, and dark clouds began to accumulate in the sky, accompanied by the rumble of thunder.

The young man of the ninth level slapped his bag of holding, and an enormous drum appeared. He beat the drum once. It emitted a thunderous boom which caused surrounding rocks and dirt to leap up into the air and fly toward Meng Hao.

At the same time, a lightning bolt shot toward Meng Hao. As it approached, he calmly made a fist and punched the lightning.

A boom echoed out as the it shattered, transforming into a multitude of sparks which then dissipated into the air. Meng Hao's eyes flashed.

“Are you looking to die?!” he shouted. He leaped forward, and a whistling flying sword appeared beneath his feet. He transformed into a multicolored beam of light as he shot toward the three people flying above him. At this moment, the mass of flying dirt and rocks was almost upon him. He punched a fist toward it.

The power of the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation, the great circle of Qi Condensation, erupted within Meng Hao's body. He was now cut off from the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. However, the approaching cloud of sand and stones was smashed into nothing by the power of his fist. A massive wind rose up. His three opponent's faces filled with shock as they felt a force like that of a mountain pushing against them.

They spat up blood, especially Zhou and Tu. Their jade flutes shattered, and they retreated, their faces filled with astonishment. Even as they moved backwards, two sword auras shot past them. Their heads flew into the sky, showering blood everywhere. Two Cultivators of the eighth level of Qi Condensation, dead in an instant.

Meng Hao turned and looked at the ninth-level Winding Stream Sect disciple. His face was pale and his body trembled as he retreated. The people on the ground had stopped moving, astonished expressions on their faces.

“What... what is the level of your Cultivation base!?” said the ninth-level Winding Stream Sect disciple, his heart trembling, disbelief covering his face. In his mind, someone of the ninth level of Qi Condensation couldn't simply kill two eighth-level Cultivators in one instant. Perhaps he was... Foundation Establishment?

However, although Meng Hao emanated an enigmatic air, it was not the power of Foundation Establishment. Therefore, the Winding Stream Sect disciple was incredibly surprised and bewildered.

Even as the words came out of the man's mouth, Meng Hao moved forward, his face tranquil. Seeing this, the Winding Stream Sect disciple's heart began to race. He turned and fled.

Unfortunately for him, he was only of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Even if he could go a bit faster, his speed could never come close to matching Meng Hao, who was of the great circle of Qi Condensation. He had barely begun to flee before Meng Hao was next to him. Meng Hao's fist descended.

The ninth-level disciple's pupils constricted, and a profound sense of life-and-death danger encompassed him. With a low shout, he slapped his bag of holding. Several flying swords appeared, as well as a drum and a jade slip covered with mystical carvings.

Meng Hao's expression did not change in the least bit. His fist continued to descend. The flying swords shattered into pieces. The drum made a crashing sound as it exploded. Next was... the jade slip.

This jade slip could withstand an attack from someone of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. But Meng Hao was of the great circle of Qi Condensation. The jade slip was incapable of blocking him. It was shattered into tiny pieces.

None of these things were even slightly capable of providing a defense. The Winding Stream Sect disciple was now out of magical items. He watched wide-eyed as Meng Hao's fist came closer and closer, until it landed onto his chest.

A bang rang out. This Winding Stream Sect disciple was famous in his Sect, and was even known throughout the State of Zhao. But now, his chest sank in, and a fountain of blood shot out of his mouth. Like a kite whose string has been severed, he tumbled backwards twenty or thirty meters, dead.

From beginning to end, it took the space of a few breaths for Meng Hao to kill three people!

The rest of the Winding Stream Sect disciples on the ground had looks of profound fear written on their pale faces. It was hard to tell who fled first, because they scattered almost immediately. The only thought in their minds was: run!

Meng Hao's expression was the same as ever, but inside he sighed. Because of the incident with Yan Zigu, Meng Hao had learned the importance of leaving behind no witnesses. He knew that killing must be done resolutely. Even though he didn't want to, attacking... was a necessity.

The old Meng Hao would never have made a move against the fleeing people. But today was different. Meng Hao's eyes flashed. Ten flying swords flew out, infused with the power of the great

circle of Qi Condensation. The quality of the swords was poor, and incapable of containing such power, so they exploded, transforming into countless fragments, which continued to fly forward.

Blood-curdling screams rang out one after another. Each and every one of the fleeing Winding Stream Sect disciples dropped dead.