

The Heavens 811

Chapter 811: I've Been Waiting!

The sects were shaken, and even the Ji Clan simply looked on from the sidelines. Not a single group from the Eastern Lands made a move. Some of the newcomers, upon passing through the Eastern Lands, were shaken by the draconic qi of the Great Tang. A few even looked a bit greedy and headed in that direction. However, as soon as they neared, the Great Tang's ninety-five golden dragons roared, and those people exploded into hazes of blood.

That, of course, shocked all of the outsiders; even Fan Dong'er's eyes widened.

After that incident, no one dared to even get near the Great Tang, but steered clear as they headed toward the mountain range that was their destination.

During all the commotion, two figures could be seen lurking in one of the mortal cities that existed in the vast Eastern Lands. They sat there slurping noodles and looking around with shifty eyes.

The mortals could not see all the beams of light that whistled through the air up above, but these two men could. In fact, they were looking at them quite closely, studying them in detail. They noted the location of their bags of holding, as well as any pendants or jewelry they wore.

"It's too bad none of them have fur or feathers!" said one of the two, a young man. He shook his head and then slurped up a mouthful of broth. "Pay attention, Little Third. These people are definitely easy marks!

"In the days to come, we're going to eat and drink to our fill, all thanks to these fat sheep, ripe for the plucking. Come come. Let's pick one of them."

Next to the young man was a fat man who suddenly pointed up into the air. "I pick him! One look and I can tell he's a bad person. Immoral and completely shameless! He is obviously steeped in wicked deeds! Lord Third MUST convert him!"

The person he pointed at was a young man with an arrogant expression on his face. He wore silks and satins, and was surrounded by an entourage of attendants. He even wore a violet crown, making him look extremely powerful and extraordinary.

“Him? Alright. Now, use the method I taught you to turn into a hot babe.” The fat man’s young companion looked at the target with a wily glint as the two of them vanished.

Back in the deep mountains, Meng Hao sat cross-legged in the temple. His eyes suddenly snapped open, and he looked up into the sky.

“The time has come to begin the tempering that father talked about....” he murmured.

“The Immortal Ancient Daoist Rites Temple is a test. If I can pass it, and keep the bronze lamp from being extinguished, then a genuine Immortal Meridian will form in my body!

“I also want to see exactly how awesome these Chosen from outside of South Heaven actually are.” A bashful smile appeared as he thought about all the black-peeled pills he had arranged outside of the temple.

He closed his eyes and continued to wait.

Time passed. A few days later, many Chosen of the Ninth Mountain and Sea were now gathered outside the mountain range, studying the place from afar. Their expressions were somber; in their view, this place was full of mysteries. As they neared, they realized that the airspace up above was restricted, and as they proceeded onwards the restrictions on their movement grew even stronger. There were fatal dangers hidden around every corner that would lead to calamitous results at the slightest inattention.

Of course, anyone who came to this place had made some advanced preparations. The various sects and clans split up and spread out, choosing different routes as they made their way into the mountain range.

Some disciples among the crowd had grim looks on their faces. Apparently something had happened to them in the past few days that had nearly driven them mad. Whatever it was, they weren’t willing to talk to anyone about it, and could only grit their teeth and endure their frustration as they followed the other clans and sects into the mountains.

There were quite a few such disciples, several dozen in fact.

The holy Fang Clan, the Three Great Clans, the Three Great Daoist Societies, the Three Churches and Six Sects, and the Five Great Holy Lands, had all sent people here, with the exception of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite. In total, there were over a thousand people entering the mountains, clutching magical items in their hands as they attempted to be the first to make their way into the unsealed Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple.

It didn't take long for the mountains to begin to echo with the sound of magical techniques being employed. Soon, the restrictions in the air above made flight impossible for everyone. Of course, they were prepared for this. However, injuries and deaths still occurred. Nonetheless, as a whole, the group made its way ever closer to Meng Hao.

“The real contest isn't on the road, but at the actual Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple itself!”

“Whoever gets inside first will have the best chance at getting the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Medallion!”

“Other than the medallion, the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temples always have Dao Projections passing down Daos. There will definitely be chances to get divine abilities and Daoist magics!”

“I'll kill anyone who tries to compete with me!”

The Chosen of the various sects and clans proceeded forward with glittering eyes.

One of the Five Great Holy Lands was Mount Sun. According to the legends, the mountain had actually been magically transformed from a sun that had fallen out of the sky. All of the people in that area had experienced a sort of baptism, and were blessed with a special bloodline. That was how the Mount Sun Holy Land came to be.

When Lord Ji fought the Heavens, Mount Sun offered powerful support. Therefore, in later days Ji Tian conferred on Mount Sun the status of Holy Land.

There were a few dozen cultivators from Mount Sun in the group that had come to Planet South Heaven. The most impressive of all of them was a young man who was named Taiyang Zi [1. Taiyang Zi's name in Chinese is 太阳子 *tài yáng zǐ*. “Taiyang” literally means “sun.” Zi means “son” or “child.” Therefore, his name could also be translated “Sun Child” or “Sun of the Son,” or something similar. However, it's literally his name, not a title, so I'm going with Taiyang Zi]. He wore a golden robe that made him look like an actual sun, and radiated intense heat that caused the

land around him to burst into flames wherever he went. Quite a few fellow clan members accompanied him, as well as some elder Dao Protectors.

This powerful group charged forward at top speed, and were one of the first to get close to the temple itself.

Eventually, they found themselves in a valley. One of the clan members that was in the lead checked the surroundings and determined that it was free of any obstruction. However, as soon as they set foot inside, a huge explosion rippled out, and a black light shot into the air. The Mount Sun cultivator who was caught up in the blackness screamed miserably and coughed up a mouthful of blood as his body was tossed backwards. At the same time, seven or eight additional explosions could be heard echoing out through the mountains in quick succession. More bloodcurdling screams echoed out.

This gave rise to instant shock on the part of everyone.

Taiyang Zi's eyes flickered with a serious expression. Everyone exchanged glances, then proceeded forward even more cautiously than before. All of the forces that had come to South Heaven were the same.

Among the Fang Clan cultivators, Fang Donghan's face was grim, and blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. He was the one who had just been injured by stepping in the wrong place. If he hadn't leapt to the side as quickly as he had, he would barely be alive.

In another area, one of the Li Clan cultivators wasn't so lucky, and was torn to pieces, destroyed in body and spirit. This filled the other Li Clan members' hearts with horror.

The Ji Clan was moving very quickly, until one of their clan members made a misstep and was ripped to shreds....

Explosions rang out among the sects and churches, followed by bellows of rage.

All of these things were caused by the power of the restrictive spells that only grew stronger and more numerous as they neared the temple. Meng Hao himself had faced dangerous situations several times on his journey to the place, but with the help of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Medallion, had been able to avoid most of them with ease.

By now, Meng Hao could hear the explosions from his position inside the temple hall. He knew that this was a struggle over good fortune, and that hostilities were certain to occur. He took a deep breath, and the desire to do battle gleamed in his eyes. Finally, he stood up and poured some more of his blood into the oil lamp. It was something he had to do on virtually a daily basis, lest the flame flicker out.

Next, he left his second true self sitting cross-legged in the temple hall and walked out into the courtyard. When he reached the main gate and was just about to push it open, he paused, then headed back to the door that led into the temple hall. There, he dug a few holes and carefully placed some of the black-peeled medicinal pills inside. Satisfied with the results, he walked outside of the courtyard gate and sat down cross-legged.

It was time to wait for everyone to arrive!

“If there’s going to be a battle, then I’ll fight to my heart’s content!” he thought. He steadied his breathing, and as he did, the glow of a great Dao began to emanate off of him. There were no distracting thoughts in his head; only the increasingly strong desire to do battle.

His current state formed something of a resonance with his surroundings. All of a sudden, he saw images of cultivators fighting a decisive battle in the ancient Daoist rite temple.

As of this moment, Meng Hao almost didn’t seem to belong to the current world. He was back in ancient times, and was inundated by its aura. His entire person emanated an archaic air.

Coupled with his tattered gray garments, he seemed to be a part of the ancient temple which lay behind him. Anyone who looked at him would have a hard time telling whether or not he was from the modern age, or ancient times.

Several hours passed, during which time explosions rang out constantly. On a few occasions, seven or eight explosions could be heard at exactly the same time, causing the ground to tremble.

Because of all these things, the pace of the powerful clan members and Chosen of the various sects had slowed down to a crawl. Further, the closer they got to the temple, the fewer available paths existed, until there was only one left. Of the over one thousand people who had come, many were dead or severely injured. The survivors now looked at the tiny path that led up into the distance. Nobody seemed willing to go first.

“The fact that there are restrictive spells in this place isn’t surprising. However, a mere step activates the explosive devices under the ground. For some reason, they don’t seem like restrictive spells to me!”

“Is it possible that someone buried these things here on purpose?”

“From the looks of it, that’s exactly the case. That means that the person who buried these things must be up ahead!”

“Dammit! How pernicious! How many of those things did he set up...?”

“I don’t care who did it, when we get to the temple, he’s dead!”

As more people joined the crowd, more and more enraged curses could be heard.

Finally, Taiyang Zi of Mount Sun snorted coldly and stepped forward. His body shone with brilliant light, and his expression was indifferent. Quite a few people looked over.

“Of course they aren’t restrictive spells,” he said coolly. “They are black-peeled medicinal pills!” With that, he extended his hand. A bright glow appeared in his palm, within which was a black-peeled medicinal pill.

“I happened to dig this pill up from a location further back. There is a chaotic qi inside of it, very unstable. It’s obvious that someone buried them here on purpose.”

At this point, Zhao Yifan from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto coolly said, “Ladies and gentlemen, these black-peeled pills do indeed contain extremely unstable chaotic qi, and it is certain that the path up ahead is riddled with pills just like this one. Why don’t we all join forces to clear the way?”

As a representative of one of the Three Great Daoist Societies, his words carried a lot of weight.

“The chaotic qi in that medicinal pill is very dense,” said Fan Dong’er from the Nine Seas God World. Her voice was calm and pleasing to the ear, and when the Chosen of the other sects heard her words, they exchanged glances and then began to nod.

Since everyone was in agreement, people began to produce magical items. Ripples that resembled a great Dao flowed out, and a sound like the roaring of dragons and phoenixes could be heard. Beams of light intersected, and the ripples merged together to become a powerful force that surged ahead across the ground. As it passed, it seemed to scrape away the ground itself, cutting out a path about a meter deep.

Figures shot forward as the Chosen employed all the speed they could muster to follow the path toward the temple that could be seen at its end!

When they arrived, they saw a figure sitting cross-legged outside the temple wearing a tattered robe. He emanated an ancient aura, and seemed as archaic as the temple itself. Within the temple behind him could be seen the manifestation of an ancient Daoist rite temple, leaving everyone completely shocked.

The cross-legged man opened his eyes, and he almost seemed to be looking out at ancient times. When he spoke, his voice echoed out, bolstered by an archaic aura.

“I’ve been waiting for you....”

Everyone gasped and stopped in their tracks.

Chapter 812: Im the Groundskeeper

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There were already more than ten Chosen who came to a stop when they saw Meng Hao. They had come to the conclusion that someone might have come to this place before them. But when they caught sight of Meng Hao, their thought process was turned on end.

“He’s....”

“He looks young, but from the feeling he gives off, he seems have existed from ancient times all the way until now! Who is he?!”

“Look at his robes! They’ve obviously passed through countless years of time. Just look at them! He obviously didn’t just put on some random tattered robes as a disguise. Those clothes rotted away while he was wearing them!”

“Could it be... could it be that he’s the Dao Protector of this Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple!?”

“That archaic air about him is something you can’t fake. It’s definitely real!”

It really was true that the feeling Meng Hao gave off was not that of a cultivator belonging to their current age. By now, the elder members of the various sects and clans from the Ninth Mountain and Sea were arriving. When they saw Meng Hao sitting cross-legged in front of the ancient temple they couldn’t help but gasp.

“This man’s ancient aura is exactly the same as that of the ancient temple! Could it be... that he really is a Dao Protector?!”

“I once heard a story that in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, when those four other Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temples were unsealed, there were always strange aspects to them. In one, a person like a Dao Protector appeared!”

“But he... looks too young! What if he got here before us and is just trying to pull a fast one on us!?”

Various comments could be heard. Some people were shaken and some were suspicious. As for the Chosen, they were very intelligent people, adept in the arts of scheming. After all, one could not rely on latent talent alone to become an outstanding Chosen.

Although they had received a bit of a shock, they quickly began to look closely at Meng Hao, and strange gleams could be seen in their eyes.

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever, but inwardly he was shocked. When he heard their discussions, his heart began to thump with eagerness, and then a bit of a bashful expression appeared deep in his eyes. After a moment, though, it turned serious, and his dispassionate gaze swept over the crowds.

His tattered robes rippled despite the lack of a breeze, and the ancient aura grew stronger. As he intentionally caused the music of the great Dao to grow stronger, Meng Hao slowly began to speak in a very ancient-sounding voice.

“The Immortal Ancient has been unsealed and the great Dao has descended. In this place of legacies, you must decide which path is the correct one.... Cultivators of the junior generation, step forward.... I... have been waiting for you for quite some time....” He lifted his right arm and then flicked his sleeve. However, the flicking of his sleeve caused nothing to happen.

The crowds looked around cautiously, eyes flickering. Seeing that nothing untoward was occurring, Taiyang Zi snorted.

“You’re an impostor!” he said, striding forward. “A deceitful mischief-maker!” However, he only made it three steps before he suddenly stopped in place and stared with unprecedented shock at something up ahead of him.

When the crowds saw this happen, their eyes flickered. Fang Xiangshan took a step forward, as did Fang Yunyi and Fang Donghan. After three steps, all of them trembled and stopped in place, then began to pant as they stared at something up ahead.

A strange gleam could be seen in the eyes of Zhao Yifan from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. He, along with Wang Mu and Song Luodan from the Song Clan, all stepped forward. They also stopped after only three steps.

Li Ling’er’s eyes flickered as she stepped forward, along with Ji Yin, around whose body swirled Ji Clan Karma. They were followed by Fan Dong’er from the Ninth Sea Godworld.

Eventually, all of the Chosen stepped forward, as well as their Dao Protectors. Only Zhixiang remained behind as she stared in shock at Meng Hao sitting there cross-legged in front of the temple. She blinked a few times in disbelief and then... almost laughed. [1. By way of reminder, Meng Hao helped Zhixiang in the ancient Demon Immortal Sect. She then said that the new Demon Immortal Sect would owe him a favor]

By now, just about everyone had stepped forward. As soon as they passed into the three hundred meter area surrounding the temple, they experienced the same shocking vision Meng Hao had seen when he first visited this place.

It was a vision of a grand square made of green limestone. Countless figures practiced cultivation, and on a tall altar, an old man was giving a sermon about the Dao. His voice was impossible to hear clearly, but when he waved his sleeve, a huge “Immortal” character appeared.

A river of stars flowed through the sky, and the moon and sun rose and set. People plucked stars from the sky and stamped onto the ground to extract spirits. A rumbling battleground could be seen, and people gained Dao enlightenment. One man rose to his feet laughing, and his body grew unimaginably large until only a toe was visible. The rest of his body... couldn't be seen.

Everyone was shaken by what they saw. They almost felt as if they had been transported back into ancient times, and it left their minds spinning. What they saw in the end was a figure sitting cross-legged in front of them, a person that looked... like Meng Hao!

Before they could look closely, the vision faded away and everything returned to normal. Everyone was breathing heavily. Even Taiyang Zi trembled as he looked over at Meng Hao. Now he didn't dare to speak in the same way he had before.

Now, it seemed obvious to them that when Meng Hao had flicked his sleeve earlier, it wasn't that a divine ability hadn't manifested. Instead, it was a Daoist magic that was too profound for them to understand.

The people in the crowd exchanged glances. They didn't want to believe, but the shocking images they had just witnessed felt too real.

A random female disciple clasped hands and bowed deeply to Meng Hao. "Senior... are you... the Dao Protector of this place?"

Having heard her question, everyone looked expectantly at Meng Hao. As for Zhixiang, a strange expression appeared on her face.

The Chosen were completely focused. They might have received a shock just now, but their eyes glittered exactly as they had before. Zhao Yifan looked closely at Meng Hao, and the glow of swords could be seen in his eyes.

Fan Dong'er's expression was tranquil, but a sharp gleam could be seen in her eyes as she looked from Meng Hao to the temple behind him.

Ji Yin had an icy look. He said nothing as he stood there, and yet a strange pressure radiated off of him, and Karma swirled around him the same as ever.

The were all looking at Meng Hao. Meng Hao was now the center of attention of all the Chosen of the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain. Many of the people who looked at him did so with narrowed eyes.

“I am not the Dao Protector of this Daoist rite temple,” said Meng Hao, his voice quavering. “I am merely the groundskeeper.” A look of reminiscence appeared on his face, something he had learned from the crazy old man in the temple hall.

His words instantly caused many people to inhale sharply.

“The groundskeeper? I heard a story once that in many ancient places like this, the most powerful people aren’t the Dao Protectors, but rather, the unassuming groundskeepers!”

“I heard the same thing....” Even as people discussed the matter, an arrogant looking young man stepped out, a dark expression on his face. He wore splendidly decorated garments, and a crown. The power of the stars seemed to swirl around him as he walked out from the crowd.

“That’s the Quasi-Dao Child from the Church of the Emperor Immortal!”

“I heard that he once killed a false Immortal! Of course, he got injured in the process, but that’s something an ordinary Spirit Realm cultivator could never do!”

More discussions buzzed as the young man walked in Meng Hao’s direction. He was followed by dozens of disciples of the Church of the Emperor Immortal, as well as several old men who had sealed their cultivation bases. All of these people wore cold gazes and clearly didn’t believe anything that Meng Hao said.

“I don’t care if you’re a Dao Protector, a groundskeeper, or even if you’re just running a scam. Step aside! I’m going into that temple!”

As they neared, Meng Hao’s face darkened. He raised his hand, and even though there was no wind in the area, his clothes rippled. Shockingly, the Black White Pearls appeared in his hand, transforming into an ancient, archaic power that spread out in all directions.

Meng Hao then recalled how the old man on the boat had looked all those years ago, and mimicked the same look. His eyes filled with an archaic aura as he looked at the young man from the Church of the Emperor Immortal.

“Stop right there!” he said coolly. The Black White Pearls emanated a brilliant glow, and in the blink of an eye, Meng Hao seemed to radiate an intense archaic will.

The Quasi-Dao Child from the Church of the Emperor Immortal stopped in place, his face flickering. Then he stared dead on at Meng Hao.

The people who were following him, and in fact, everyone present, were all staring at Meng Hao. Each and every one of them weren't sure what to make of Meng Hao, and didn't want to rashly attempt to make a move against him.

“The Immortal Ancient has been unsealed, but that does not mean just anyone can enter and be enlightened regarding this Daoist rite temple. Any who are capable of achieving their Dao may approach.”

The Quasi-Dao Child from the Church of the Emperor Immortal hesitated. As he looked at Meng Hao he got the feeling that he was filled with some mysterious energy, although it was difficult to be sure about the matter. He looked back at the others in the crowd, and saw that they had similar expressions.

Nobody said a word. Currently, the sky was growing dark, and the moon had appeared. Suddenly a wind began to blow, and whimpering sounds could be heard. Darkness began to stretch out across the land. It was at this point that Fang Donghan chuckled coldly and stepped forward. His energy surged, and intense power rose up from his cultivation base.

“It doesn't matter who you are. It's time for you to give me some feedback on my combat skills!” He sped up, and was just on the verge of attacking Meng Hao, when Meng Hao muttered something to himself. The sky was getting dark, and the whimpering of the wind had given him an idea. He suddenly glared at Fang Donghan.

He rose up from his cross-legged position, instantly attracting the attention of all the onlookers. Many of them were skeptical about the whole situation, and didn't quite believe he was telling the truth.

Even Fang Donghan's eyes widened. Superficially, his actions seemed impulsive, but he was actually a very cautious person.

As everyone looked on, Meng Hao suddenly threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

“An incorrect path.... Has the legacy been cut off...? Too many years have passed since that war...” He continued to laugh, and soon the laughter was tinged with madness.

“They’re all dead! The land is shattered! The river of stars is cut off...” Suddenly, he seemed to be weeping, and began to pace back and forth.

“Cut off! I can’t suppress the living, I can only suppress the ghosts....”

“Gone, everything’s gone....”

His words seemed to provoke a reaction from his surroundings. The wind became cold and strong, and the sound of a weeping woman could be heard drifting about. The land trembled, and everyone’s faces flickered as complete darkness fell. It was at this point that....

“Save me, I want to go home.... Paragon, save me. Save me, Paragon....” Dismal voices rose up from the ground, and a shocking coldness filled the air. Black hair roiled out from the well inside the temple. The vines drooped down and began to swing back and forth. The sounds of weeping and laughing filled the air.

The only faint light that could be seen was from the bronze oil lamp’s flickering flame.

When you added in Meng Hao’s voice, it all turned into a terrifying scene that would make anyone’s hair stand on end. All of the Chosen who had doubted Meng Hao before were now completely shocked. Fang Donghan’s scalp went numb, and he immediately backed up. The Quasi-Dao Child from the Church of the Emperor Immortal gasped, and staggered backward in astonishment.

Meng Hao continued to weep and laugh in front of the temple, feeling very pleased with himself.

Chapter 813: Inky and Lily

With the exception of Zhixiang, all of the Chosen who had come to the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple were shaken. They were now... starting to feel convinced about Meng Hao.

Some had been skeptical before, but then, one bizarre thing after another appeared. The strange sights, the cold wind, the shocking aura... made it so they had no choice but to believe.

This was especially true when apparently, Meng Hao's crazed weeping and laughing resonated with his surroundings. It left the onlookers with tingling scalps. The bizarre phenomena in the place, the inky black hair, the swinging vine, the voices rising up from the ground, all of it appeared to them to have been caused by Meng Hao.

Even Zhixiang stared with eyes wide from disbelief. If she didn't already know Meng Hao, she would have been completely astonished.

If everything went as planned, it might be able to buy Meng Hao some time, but not much. The people here were all extraordinary, and the slightest misstep could arouse their suspicions. All it would take would be for one person to attack him, and the charade would be broken.

In fact, it was at this moment that an elder member of the Ji Clan suddenly moved forward, eyes glittering, clearly with the intent of testing Meng Hao out.

Meng Hao sighed as he realized that these people really weren't easy to fool. However, it was at this point that the old man from the Ji Clan suddenly stopped in place, and his face filled with astonishment. Everyone else's expressions also flickered, and not a few people actually gasped.

Meng Hao was taken aback and wondered what he had done to provoke such a reaction.

It was at this point that a cold wind gusted against his back. It almost felt like ice on the nape of his neck. Reflexively, he turned around to see....

A head floating up from the well behind him. It was a head that looked like it had been rotting away in the waters of the well for millions of years!

When Meng Hao turned around, the head floated over toward him, and just when it seemed it would touch him, he blinked. Then he turned back to the crowds and, his voice placid, said, "This is Inky. There's no need to fear her."

He cleared his throat and then pointed over to the swinging vine that dripped with black blood. "Over there is Lily. Come on, Lily, say hello to everyone."

As soon as he spoke, the vine stopped moving. Then the dripping blood began to move, as if an invisible figure were walking over to stand next to Meng Hao.

Even Meng Hao was shocked by this. He looked at the black blood dripping to the ground next to him and could just barely make out the image of a little girl standing there, but it was unclear whether she was staring at the crowds of people, or at him.

Meng Hao wasn't sure how much longer he could keep this up. Giving a firm look at the crowd of nearly a thousand people, he sat down cross-legged and closed his eyes to meditate.

He was starting to feel that he might have taken things a bit too far...

In the eyes of all the onlookers, Meng Hao, with his tattered robe, placid expression, and ancient air, seemed to be at one with the temple. As he sat there cross-legged, the pale-white head floated behind him, surrounded by drifting strands of inky blackness.

Next to Meng Hao was some invisible being that dripped black blood down onto the ground. Each drop that splashed onto the ground echoed with strange power that filled their hearts with shock.

No one dared to move a muscle, not even Zhao Yifan from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto, who stood there hesitating. Further off, Fan Dong'er was staring at Meng Hao, a brilliant light flickering in her eyes.

Ji Yin sat cross-legged some distance away, Karma swirling around him in such a way that it was impossible to even see him clearly.

The three Chosen from the Fang Clan all sat down. Occasionally, Fang Yunyi would look over at Zhixiang with a look of adoration. Fang Donghan stared at the temple, his eyes flickering with desire.

Song Luodan sat with the Song Clan, proud and aloof. Occasionally he would look at Meng Hao, and the desire to fight could be seen flickering in his eyes.

As for Li Ling'er, it was impossible to tell what she was thinking. Her head was bowed and she seemed to be studying the earth in front of her. Occasionally she would gently stroke her hand across the surface of the ground, apparently performing some type of augury.

Wang Mu sat there with flickering eyes that made it impossible to read his thoughts.

The Chosen of the other sects, churches and Holy Lands were all lost in thought in the darkness of night. Shockingly, they sat there in front of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple for an entire night.

At dawn, the oil lamp winked out. Meng Hao knew that once night ended, the lamp would stop burning. However, only when it was truly extinguished would the trial by fire actually be over.

The instant the sky became bright, Meng Hao opened his eyes. The floating head had vanished, and the dripping blood was gone. Everything returned to its normal state. Many people in the crowd opened their eyes to look at Meng Hao.

Zhao Yifan was the first person to stand up and approach Meng Hao. Fan Dong'er rose to her feet at almost the same time, and approached from a different direction. Li Ling'er looked coldly over at Meng Hao and also moved toward him.

In addition, Ji Yin stood, Karma swirling around him as he began to stride in Meng Hao's direction.

There were other Chosen who also began to approach Meng Hao, angry looks on their faces.

"Stop right there!" said Meng Hao coolly.

The others said nothing in response, but rather, sped up. Zhao Yifan was the fastest, and he waved his hand as he closed in on Meng Hao, causing a stream of sword qi to appear. The dragon-like sword qi spread out, transforming into nine shocking Sword Dragons. Their roaring caused the air to vibrate as they twirled together to shoot toward Meng Hao.

"Fellow Daoist," said Zhao Yifan, "I can sense the aura of South Heaven on you! You're no groundskeeper!"

By the time he finished speaking, the Sword Dragons were almost upon Meng Hao.

“The Dao of the sword exists in the heart, and within one’s will,” continued Zhao Yifan. The nine Sword Dragons had transformed into nine swords that stabbed down toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s eyes flickered as his desire to fight exploded up. As he rose to his feet, his right hand clenched into a fist that punched out toward the nine swords.

As he punched out, a mountain appeared in front of his fist, which rumbled through the air to slam into the nine swords. A huge boom rattled out, and massive ripples spread out in every direction.

“Your Karma is not that of someone from ancient times.” The cold voice belonged to Ji Yin. As it echoed about, his body went blurry, then reappeared behind Meng Hao. His right hand flashed in an incantation gesture and then pushed out toward Meng Hao’s back with lightning speed.

The motion caused Meng Hao’s soul to tremble. All the memories in his life seemed to appear, which transformed into Karma that stirred his mind.

Meng Hao’s expression was calm, and he snorted coldly. Since his act had been seen through, there was no point in continuing with the facade. His left hand flashed in an incantation gesture and he pointed toward Ji Yin.

The Withering Character Incantation erupted out, and the air between Meng Hao and Ji Yin seemed to collapse as a huge black hole appeared. It instantly exerted an incredible gravitational force that rumbled loudly. Meng Hao leapt backward as Li Ling’er appeared in front of him, her beautiful face twisted with the desire to kill.

“The memories of this land say you only got here a month earlier than us!” she said. Her graceful hands performed an incantation, and the willow leaf mark on her forehead flickered. Suddenly, a willow leaf appeared in her hand.

As soon as the willow leaf appeared, a boundless life force exploded out of it. When it reached its pinnacle, it suddenly began to show signs of death. The willow leaf turned black, and then flitted out into the air toward Meng Hao.

“Seal!” said Li Ling’er coolly. The willow leaf emitted a rumbling sound as it exploded. It transformed into a network of black veins that almost looked like a net, which then descended toward Meng Hao.

Seeing that he was about to be sealed, Meng Hao snorted coldly and then stretched out both arms. He lifted his head up and shouted, invoking some Daoist magics he had learned that enabled him to sprout feathers and grow hide. Shockingly, he transformed into a huge black roc, cruel and savage in appearance, that escaped the enveloping black veins.

As soon as he shot into the air, he heard a melodious voice speaking in his ear.

“Daoist Brother, you’re quite exceptional. You almost had Dong’er here fooled.” As the voice was transmitted to him, Meng Hao suddenly felt his hair stand up on end as a profound sense of danger filled him. Without hesitation, he produced the Lightning Cauldron. Lightning covered his body, and he switched places with Li Ling’er.

As soon as he switched places, he looked over at Fan Dong’er and saw that she had a Blue Lotus in her hand. A moment ago, a young boy could be seen standing on the lotus, beckoning to him as if he wanted to turn him into a lotus seed to pop into his mouth.

There was also a rusted black needle that emanated an aura of rot, which had been thrown toward him by one of the old men standing next to Song Luodan of the Song Clan. If that needle had stabbed into him, he would have been transformed into a puddle of blood.

All of these things take some time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Meng Hao had just exchanged blows with Zhao Yifan of the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto, one of the Three Great Daoist Societies, Ji Yin of the Ji Clan, Li Ling’er of the Li Clan, and Fan Dong’er of the Nine Seas God World.

It seemed like a simple encounter, but in actuality, it brimmed with killing intent. The slightest misstep, and Meng Hao’s blood would have showered down like rain. Even as the desire to fight burned in his eyes, Li Ling’er’s face fell. The willow leaf mark on her forehead glittered rapidly, and Fan Dong’er made a surprised grunt and held back her attack. Because of that, Li Ling’er was able to avoid the deadly Blue Lotus Magic.

Everyone watching the encounter was completely shocked. Strange gleams appeared in some of the Chosen’s eyes as they flew into the air toward Meng Hao.

“Who is this guy? Zhao Yifan and those others all attacked at the same time, and he still didn’t seem to be in a bad position!”

“He can’t just be some random person! I wonder how long he’s been practicing cultivation. If it’s less than a thousand years, then he’s definitely extraordinary!”

“He just avoided the Blue Lotus Magic of Goddess Fan Dong’er from the Nine Seas God World! That Lightning Cauldron has the power of Form Displacement Transposition!”

“You’re missing the most important part, which is... he got here before us! He must be in possession of the good fortune of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple!”

Chapter 814: Call Me Meng Hao!

[/expand]

At the same moment in which such words were spoken, Meng Hao fell back. Simultaneously, a cold snort could be heard echoing out from some distance away.

“Last night I could see the clues,” said Song Luodan. “However, despite your fakery, the apparition behind you was real. Now... I will cut you down, and show you that nobody makes a fool of me!”

Song Luodan was the Song Clan cultivator with the scar that ran from his forehead down to his neck. Flaming magical symbols burst out around him, and the flame crow on his shoulder stared coldly at Meng Hao. When Song Luodan stepped forward, the energy of peak Dao Seeking erupted out. However, this was not the ordinary power of peak Dao Seeking, but rather, something that exceeded that.

He was even more powerful than the Imperial Bloodline Clan Chief who Meng Hao had fought. He had Immortal will swirling around him. Shockingly, despite still being in Dao Seeking, he cultivated a battle prowess comparable to a false Immortal.

Behind him was an emaciated old man who appeared to be nothing more than skin and bones. His face was expressionless, but his eyes were icy cold. He gave off a terrifying feeling that made him seem like a powerful Immortal that could suppress Meng Hao in a single move.

His body seemed to have numerous open meridians, but clearly they had been sealed and could not be used. Now, he was only able to wield the power of a false Immortal.

Actually, false Immortals were the highest level of cultivation that Meng Hao’s father had permitted into South Heaven.

In the moment that Song Luodan stepped forward, Meng Hao spun in midair and looked at him and the old man, killing intent flickering in his eyes.

The vicious needle thrown out by the Song Clan just now had been incredibly sinister.

“I’m gonna kill you!” said Meng Hao, transforming into a huge roc that sped toward Song Luodan. Shocking rumbling filled the air as the roc and Song Luodan exchanged more than a hundred moves in the blink of an eye.

Fire rippled everywhere, and a sea of flames roiled off of Song Luodan. It transformed into the shape of a flame crow that attacked Meng Hao.

Their attacks were shocking, and caused everything to tremble. Although they were fighting in midair, Meng Hao didn’t want to get too far away from the temple’s main gate. As for other locations along the wall where it seemed possible to go in, he ignored those. He remembered from his initial premonition that if someone tried to enter in that fashion, they would be struck dead.

Booms echoed out; Zhao Yifan and the others stopped in place to watch the fighting, as did everyone else.

“That guy is incredible. He was at a bit of a disadvantage earlier when he was up against Fan Dong’er and the others, but now that he’s fighting Song Luodan alone... it’s hard to say who’s going to win!”

“It’s got to be Song Luodan! He was able to fight with Zhao Yifan from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. Supposedly he lost, but he’s also very smart, which is his strong point!”

Everything shook, and brilliant lights flashed about. Within his sea of flames, Song Luodan looked like a flame Immortal, calm yet threatening. At one point, he flew into the air, lifted his right foot and violently kicked down toward Meng Hao.

“DIE!”

The kick gave rise to a flame sea, which then transformed into another flame crow that seemed capable of ripping the air apart. Flames spread out in all directions, and seemed to be on the verge of sealing Meng Hao.

At the same time, the old Dao Protector at his side laughed coldly and waved his hand. Another decaying needle appeared, which shot toward Meng Hao. Immediately, Meng Hao's eyes flickered with killing intent.

He snorted coldly, raising his right hand into the air and pointing at Song Luodan. Immediately, the Blood Demon Grand Magic appeared, and a rumbling vortex formed around Song Luodan. Like a dragon gulping down water, it sucked in the flame sea and left Song Luodan completely revealed out in the open.

Song Luodan's face flickered with astonishment. His right foot began to wither, and he let out a roar. Coughing up a mouthful of blood, he fell back at full speed. Somehow... in this moment of grave crisis, he actually managed to escape the Blood Demon Grand Magic vortex. He retreated, face pale, looking at Meng Hao with an expression of both shock and the cold desire to kill.

All of the observers were shaken. Amongst the crowd, Zhixiang's eyes were wide, and she was panting. The divine ability vortex she had just seen reminded her of a legendary Daoist magic she had read about in the ancient records of her sect, something that had long since been lost to the passage of time.

Zhao Yifan from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto was looking on with shining eyes, the flames of battle flickered in his pupils. Li Ling'er from the Li Clan of Planet North Reed was also panting. Her expression was one of extreme concentration as she stared at Meng Hao.

The four who had attacked just now did not do so with all their strength. Therefore, the fact that Meng Hao was able to evade those attacks merely left them thinking that there was more to him than met the eye. Nothing had happened that in any way left them thinking that he was worth paying attention to.

Karma swirled around Ji Yin, and although it was impossible to see his expression clearly, he was surely surprised.

As for Fan Dong'er, a strange light shone in her eyes, but her expression was placid. She radiated a sense of pureness and holiness, and at the same time, seemed cold and distant. However, her incredible beauty made it so that anyone who looked at her couldn't help but be instantly attracted to her, and would want to embrace her as a wife.

The person who Meng Hao resented was not Song Luodan, but rather, the old man next to him. Twice so far, he had used sinister needles to attack Meng Hao. Meng Hao suddenly stretched his hand out in a claw-like motion which seemed similar to that used by the people he had seen plucking stars. Immediately, his hand seemed to become enormous, and he grabbed the needle out of the air.

Meng Hao had only gained a smattering of enlightenment about the Star Plucking Magic. If he completely came to understand it, and also had a sufficient cultivation base, he would actually be able to reach up and pluck heavenly bodies out of the starry sky!

As soon as he grabbed the deadly needle, Meng Hao's body flickered, and he shot toward the old man. The old man laughed coldly. Instead of retreating, he began to move toward Meng Hao.

“Don't know the difference between life and death? Allow me to educate you!”

“Old codger!” growled Meng Hao, summoning the roc. In response, the old man waved his hand, causing a gray aura to spread out that contained Immortal qi.

“Suppress!” said the old man.

“I'll be doing the suppressing!” replied Meng Hao. His cultivation base rumbled, and his Immortal qi roared as it filled his body. Immediately, everyone in the area was completely shocked.

The Immortal qi caused a huge rumbling roar to fill the air, and the old man's face flickered with astonishment.

“What sect or clan are you from?!”

Meng Hao didn't respond. As the Immortal qi swirled, he performed an incantation gesture and then pushed his hand out in front of him. The Ninth Mountain rumbled out, crushing down toward the old man.

“Not gonna tell me?” snorted the old man. “Well, don't blame me for eradicating you!” Suddenly, a Dharma Idol appeared behind him, the image of some powerful deity, a middle-aged man with an incredible bearing. Immediately, everything around him was thrown into chaos.

As Meng Hao and the old man closed in on each other in midair, Meng Hao let out a shout, and his own Dharma Idol appeared. The power that came from being half a step into true Immortality erupted out, transforming into an incredible pressure that weighed down on the old man. His face fell, and he shot backward using a magical technique. The killing intent in Meng Hao's eyes flickered, and he waved his right hand, causing eight black-colored medicinal pills to fly out. As soon as they hit the old man, they exploded.

Blood sprayed from his mouth, and his face fell. He had been seriously injured, and was just about to flee, when Meng Hao, moving at incredible speed, descended upon him. His right hand unleashed the Star Plucking Magic, and the old man let out a furious howl. He raised his right hand, and what appeared to be the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies could be seen in the palm that he sent surging toward Meng Hao

The man let out a miserable howl; at the same time, Meng Hao coughed up blood and staggered backward. The lightning cauldron appeared in his hand, lightning danced, and he vanished as he switched places with Fan Dong'er, who had been attempting to sneak into the temple during the chaos of the fighting.

When he reappeared, Meng Hao stood tall and straight in front of the main gate of the temple, blood oozing out of his mouth. He seemed to be in command of everything, and when he stamped his foot onto the ground, everything trembled. At this point, he stretched out his right hand and made a claw-like gesture.

Three claw images appeared; it almost looked as if some ancient beast were awakening. The claws shot up into the air along with his Dharma Idol.

The huge attack surged toward Li Ling'er and Fang Donghan of the Fang Clan, who had just been preparing to charge toward him.

Amidst the rumbling booms, Song Luodan's Dao Protector up in midair suddenly let out a miserable shriek. He had just noticed that, shockingly, a needle was sticking out of his hand! It was the same needle he had just tried to use to kill Meng Hao!

The decaying power of the needle was just as effective on the old man!

“NOO!!” he shrieked, terrified. The flesh on his face was already starting to decay and fall off into bits of ash. Terror filled him. He was well aware of how quickly the vicious poison on the needle worked. In the blink of an eye, the poison contaminated all of his aura.

As his screams echoed out, the crowds gasped. The old man’s body collapsed. All of his flesh and blood turned into nothing but drifting ash....

Instantly, complete silence fell.

This old man was no ordinary person. He was a Dao Protector of the Song Clan, a powerful expert with an Immortal Realm cultivation base. He had opened dozens of meridians, and yet now... he died in this place... at the hands of a Spirit Realm cultivator.

It was only an accident, only a chance occurrence, had only occurred because his cultivation base was sealed. But regardless of those things... he was dead!

Dead at the hands of Meng Hao!

“Song Luodan’s Dao Protector... just died!?”

“He... he actually killed a Dao Protector!”

“Who is this guy? He can’t be some random person, and he’s definitely not from the lands of South Heaven. He must be a Chosen from some outside sect!”

“But he doesn’t look familiar. I’ve never seen him before....”

Even as the buzz of conversation rose up, Zhixiang looked on with wide eyes, astonished. Her cultivation base had originally been in the Immortal Realm, but after acquiring the Demon Immortal Body, she had pushed herself down into the Spirit Realm to reestablish her cultivation and gain a chance at even more power in the future. As such, she was far more powerful than she had been last time she was in the Spirit Realm. Even still, there was no way she could attack and kill a false Immortal.

“Who are you!?” Zhao Yifan suddenly asked.

Ji Yin looked at Meng Hao, as did Li Ling'er, as well as Wang Mu, who still hadn't made a move yet. All of the Chosen from the various sects and clans, including Taiyang Zi, were all staring over at Meng Hao.

As for Song Luodan, he was panting in shock. His Dao Protector had just been shockingly killed, causing Song Luodan's killing intent to grow even stronger.

Fan Dong'er hovered in midair, now in the position that Meng Hao had occupied moments before. Fury burned in her heart, but her face was placid as she calmly said, "Daoist Brother, who exactly are you? Would you mind telling us?"

Meng Hao looked out at the Chosen. He had to admit that these people were strong. However, he still felt like fighting, and in fact, was looking forward to something in particular.

He was looking forward to when he left the lands of South Heaven and entered the world of the Chosen outside. He couldn't wait to see what kind of waves he would stir up then.

He looked calmly at the chosen of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, well aware that after this decisive battle, his name would surely spread rapidly until everyone knew who he was.

"Call me Meng Hao!"

Chapter 815: Fan Dong'er

All cultivators in the lands of South Heaven knew Meng Hao's name. If the Chosen of the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea had spent more time there, they would also know the name.

This was their first time hearing it, though, and it would remain in their memories for all eternity.

Meng Hao!

Zhixiang gazed absent-mindedly over at Meng Hao standing there by the main gate of the temple. She seemed to be recalling that young cultivator she had pushed around all those years ago, and then everything that had happened in the ancient Demon Immortal Sect.

Recalling all the memories, she couldn't help but take a deep breath. At the moment, she was the only one who knew that Meng Hao hadn't even been practicing cultivation for five hundred years.

“Not even five hundred years, and he already has Immortal qi.... Furthermore, he's... half a step into true Immortality!

“His Dharma Idol depicts himself. His Immortality... is not false. He walks the path of true Immortality!

“He has high aspirations. Like all of us, he is not willing to become a false Immortal. He wishes to transcend true Immortal tribulation and become a true Immortal!

“I wonder which sect he represents here. Immortality Illumination Vines are quite rare in the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Without one, his only option is to go all-out for Immortal destiny, and then wait for the once-in-10,000-years chance to achieve true Immortal Ascension.”

Amidst the rumbling that filled the air, Wang Mu from the Wang Clan of Planet North Reed suddenly said, “How long have you been here?”

Meng Hao looked over at him but didn't respond. He stood there in front of the temple gate, his desire to fight burning as hot as ever.

“He's obviously been here for several days,” said Song Luodan, hovering in midair, “and now he wants to prevent us from entering the Daoist rite temple!” Instantly, several Chosen flew out from the crowd, including Taiyang Zi. Multicolored lights flashed, and energy surged as they transformed into eight beams of light that shot toward Meng Hao.

“Get the hell out of the way!” The voices of these eight people were like crackling thunder.

Behind them flew Dao Protectors from their respective sects and clans, who observed the proceedings with flickering eyes. In total, a few dozen people were now closing in on Meng Hao.

Even were Meng Hao more powerful, it would be impossible to do much against so many peak experts. Even Meng Hao's father could never have imagined that going to the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple would end him up in such a trial by fire.

Meng Hao's father had assumed he would end up fighting alongside everyone. He had also assumed that arriving early would provide Meng Hao with some advantages, but he'd never imagined that the primary good fortune of the entire place could be acquired in less than a month.

And yet... Meng Hao had done exactly that.

Right now, he couldn't back down. He couldn't allow people to enter the temple itself. As the dozens of people bore down on him, Meng Hao suddenly slapped his bag of holding to produce several dozen black-peeled pills, which he immediately threw out in front of him. As they banged against each other in the air, they exploded violently.

Any one of those medicinal pills could produce an astonishing level of power, but dozens exploding together caused the ground to quake and the mountains to tremble. A deafening roar filled the air as blood sprayed out of the mouths of everyone near the explosion. There were even two people whose bodies were ripped to pieces.

Bloodcurdling screams filled the air.

"It was him! It was him!" cried Taiyang Zi, his voice shrill. "He's the one who buried all those black-peeled medicinal pills that we encountered!" Taiyang Zi's arm had been completely vaporized in the explosion.

The people who had been injured on the path to the temple looked over at Meng Hao with killing intent flickering in their eyes. They had had their suspicions when Song Luodan's Dao Protector died, but everything had happened so fast that there was no way to confirm the details.

Now, though, they immediately recognized the black-peeled medicinal pills, which were the same as those buried outside. New hatreds piled onto old ones.

Immediately, more people flew into the air to attack Meng Hao.

There were quite a few others, including Fang Yunyi, who flew toward the wall of the temple in an attempt to enter that way. Just before entering, Fang Yunyi was overwhelmed by a terrifying sensation, and stopped in place. The others, however, more than ten of them, unhesitatingly flew through the gaps in the walls.

As soon as they entered the run-down courtyard, they began to tremble, and then screamed miserably. Their bodies instantly began to decay, and in the blink of an eye, they had transformed into pools of black liquid.

Seeing this caused all the onlookers' minds to spin, and their faces to fall. Some of the people who had just died were Dao Protectors, and even they had been powerless to fight back, and been killed instantly.

“You can only get in through the main gate! No other way is permitted!”

“The main gate is the only path!”

“Meng Hao is blocking the main gate, and all the incredible stuff is obviously on the other side! Kill him so we can get in!”

Now that it was revealed that there was only one entrance, the pressure on Meng Hao was even greater. Booms rang out constantly. Even with the powerful black-peeled medicinal pills, Meng Hao would be incapable of holding out for much longer. After all, he didn't have very many pills left.

Killing intent bore down on him from all sides, but Meng Hao didn't retreat. Instead, he stayed as close to the main gate as possible. Zhao Yifan's sword qi surged mightily, and then transformed into the shape of a sword, surrounded by a lake of smaller swords. He then shot toward Meng Hao at top speed, causing everyone else to move to the side to make way for him. As for Meng Hao, he immediately felt an intense sense of deadly crisis.

“This guy is strong!” he thought. Blood oozed out of his mouth, and he was injured in several places. Seeing that this was not the time to make a final stand, Meng Hao glanced at the incoming Zhao Yifan, and then his eyes flickered as he retreated back through the gate.

As soon as Meng Hao entered the temple gate, Zhao Yifan's sword arrived like a blazing sun, sword qi glittering magnificently. Those behind him looked on with gleaming eyes as the temple gate was opened. Immediately, everyone surged forward to enter the temple.

However, in the instant that Meng Hao entered the temple, a monstrously murderous aura exploded up next to him. Killing intent and icy coldness appeared, along with a Devilish will. Writhing black smoke appeared underneath the evening sky.

A figure that looked exactly like Meng Hao suddenly walked out from behind him.

Meng Hao's second true self!

He walked out of the temple gate and waved his hand, causing the Wooden Time Sword to appear. Time power rippled out in all directions as the Time Sword met Zhao Yifan's sword.

A boom echoed out. Zhao Yifan's face flickered and he fell into retreat. The second true self gave a muffled snort as he advanced. Time power spread out, causing looks of shock to appear on all of the onlookers' faces. All of them could clearly sense their longevity withering.

“A Time cultivator!!”

“Dammit, there's two of them, not just one!”

As his second true self stood outside the temple, Meng Hao produced some medicinal pills. After consuming them, he sat cross-legged in meditation for about ten breaths' worth of time. Then he opened his eyes and walked out of the main gate to stand next to this second true self. Booms echoed out as the two of them began to fight. Astonishing power was unleashed as a massive battle unfolded.

The first person to attack his second true self was Fan Dong'er. At the same time, others attempted to charge into the main gate.

Meng Hao growled, and a blood-colored vortex appeared; the Blood Demon Grand Magic was finally completely unleashed. Instantly, everyone's faces fell, and they fell back in retreat.

Meng Hao was really an annoying headache to everyone present. His second true self had monstrous killing intent and sinister coldness. His attacks were ruthless, and he was surrounded by swirling Devilish will, as well as the power of Time. All of it was very hard to deal with.

Meng Hao fought back and forth with Fang Donghan, and explosions filled the air. In any situation where Meng Hao was on the verge of being forced away from his position in front of the gate, he would throw out black-peeled medicinal pills, which always resulted in countless angry curses.

He even used the Lightning Cauldron; whenever any Chosen were on the verge of being able to enter the temple, Meng Hao would quickly switch positions with them.

He switched places with Zhao Yifan, Fan Dong'er, Li Ling'er, Wang Mu, Taiyang Zi, Ji Yin, Fang Xiangshan... virtually all of the Chosen had opportunities to enter the temple, but Meng Hao seemed to be made of eyes, and whenever one of them got close, lighting would crackle and he would use Form Displacement Transposition.

By now, it was getting dark, and a cold wind sprang up. The vine in the courtyard once again drooped down and began to swing back and forth. Black blood dripped onto the ground, and tendrils of green smoke began to rise up from inside the well.

The oil lamp once again began to burn tenuously inside the temple hall, and countless projected images appeared. When all the newcomers saw this, they gasped. As for Meng Hao, he could feel the pulsing cold coming from behind him.

It was at this point that Fan Dong'er's eyes glittered. Suddenly, the image of a door appeared in her pupils.

"In the gap between yin and yang, Ninth Sea God!" Suddenly her entire body appeared to be sucked into her own pupils! She vanished, and when she reappeared, she was inside of the courtyard!

In that instant, Meng Hao's expression flickered. He tried to use Form Displacement Transposition, but for the first time ever, it failed!

Fan Dong'er's expression was one of indifference as she prepared to enter the temple hall. Meng Hao immediately flew toward her, extending his hand in a claw-like gesture. This left the main gate exposed, and his second true self was incapable of holding his position alone. In that short bit of time, one of the Dao Protectors managed to slip into the courtyard.

When that happened, he immediately screamed and vanished into a pool of black liquid.

This sudden turn of events caused everyone on the outside to gasp, and cease any aspirations of entering.

Meng Hao didn't have time to consider what had just happened. He transformed into a huge roc that shot aggressively toward Fan Dong'er.

“Dammit!” he thought. “I forgot whether that crazy old man said to prevent people from entering the temple as a whole, or just the temple hall!!” Furious, he called his second true self to join him in his attack.

His second true self’s eyes glittered. Everyone looked on raptly as the second true self entered the main gate without any problem.

Seeing Meng Hao’s second true self nearing, Fan Dong’er’s face flickered.

“How can he get in here too!?” she said. “Ah, he’s not a cultivator, he’s your clone!”

Rumbling filled the air. Fan Dong’er’s face was as indifferent as ever as she began to fight back and forth with Meng Hao. In the blink of an eye, there were more than a hundred exchanges. Everyone on the outside watched with glittering eyes. A random cultivator tried to use a special magical technique to enter through the main gate, but the result was that he died screaming. By now, everyone understood the situation.

“You can enter during the daytime, but not during nighttime!”

“Dammit, Fan Dong’er realized this earlier, so she didn’t use her divine ability until yin and yang transposed, and night replaced day! That’s when she entered!”

“She let Meng Hao use Form Displacement Transposition on her a few times before to get him used to thinking it would work on her!”

“Her scheming ability is so profound! I hate those people from the Nine Seas God World!”

Chapter 816: Battling the Goddess

Everyone stood outside the courtyard, looking in with glittering eyes.

Within the courtyard, Meng Hao and his second true self were locked in combat with Goddess Fan Dong’er of the Nine Seas God World. Off to the side, the vine swung back and forth, and laughter could be heard as the black blood dripped onto the ground.

At the same time, strands of black hair danced through the air. Countless Dao Projections appeared. Some sat in meditation, some concocted medicinal pills, and some employed Daoist magic. The copper lamp flickered weakly, illuminating the area. The crumbling statue of the divinity appeared to be emitting some faint, divine aura.

This was not the first night that these people had spent in the vicinity of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple. However, when they caught sight of the Dao Projections, many people made hoarse exclamations.

“Passing down Daos!”

“Those Dao Projections are passing down Daos! If we can just get inside, we can acquire new Daos!”

“The Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple is full of good fortune!”

“Dammit! I wonder how many days Meng Hao was here for before we arrived. From the look of it, he already got the greatest good fortune of all, the Immortal Ancient Daoist Medallion!”

Outside, conversations buzzed. Inside, Meng Hao and his second true self had already fought over a hundred rounds with Fan Dong'er. Booming echoed out, and Fan Dong'er frowned as she was constantly pushed back in retreat, unable to get close to the temple hall. Not only that, she was actually being forced to the point where she might get shoved out the main gate.

Meng Hao had originally been extremely nervous. However, after seeing that everything in the temple hall remained the same even after Fan Dong'er entered the courtyard, he was able to let out a sigh of relief.

“The crazy old man must have meant the temple hall and not the courtyard!” he thought. Eyes gleaming, he stretched out his hand toward Fan Dong'er in a claw-like gesture.

Fan Dong'er was getting angry. She snorted lightly and then lifted the Blue Lotus in her hand. Brilliant light shone out that seemed to contain blessings. It formed Immortal qi, which she sucked in through her eyes, ears, nose and mouth. Then, golden light began to shine out from her eyes. She looked at Meng Hao and said a single word.

“Suppress!”

That single word caused Meng Hao's pupils to constrict as he felt an incredible force come into existence around him. It instantly began to entangle him; even his second true self could feel its interference.

Fan Dong'er's expression was cool as she prepared to enter the temple hall.

"Emerge!" Meng Hao shouted, and rumbling could be heard as his Dharma Idol appeared, shining with boundless radiance and surrounded by a great Dao. The Dharma Idol's light shone up into the sky, and it seemed as if countless Immortal Divinities were sitting cross-legged around it, meditating. A snapping sound rang out as the invisible fetters were destroyed. Meng Hao shook himself free, then stretched his right hand out to use the Star Plucking Magic.

All it took was one snatching motion, and Fan Dong'er, who was still in mid-stride heading toward the temple hall, was dragged back to him.

Her body was completely beyond her own control as she flew through the air. Just when she seemed about to slam into Meng Hao's hand, she gave a cold snort and performed an incantation with her left hand. She pointed to the ground, and a vast sea appeared beneath her, from within which more than ten roaring sea dragons burst out.

Meng Hao's Star Plucking Magic dissipated, but by that point, his second true self had closed in. He waved his sleeve, and a boom could be heard as the air around Fan Dong'er shattered. Blood oozed from the corners of her mouth as she was sent staggering backward. In the meantime, Meng Hao performed an incantation gesture and pointed out.

The Blood Demon Grand Magic vortex instantly appeared. Both Meng Hao and his second true self were on the attack. All of the rapid changes in the battle were dazzling to the eye. There was no hesitation on anyone's part, and attacks were made with complete confidence and speed.

RUUUMMMBLE!!

Fan Dong'er's face fell. Meng Hao's Blood Demon Grand Magic filled her with dread. She performed a double-handed incantation, causing a bright light to appear that seemed to shine down from the sky above. It descended to form the image of a mermaid behind Fan Dong'er.

The mermaid had extremely long hair, and was incredibly beautiful, and actually resembled Fan Dong'er somewhat, except that she wasn't wearing any clothes whatsoever. Her bottom half was covered with scales, but as a whole, she emanated an enticing aura that would cause anyone to be attracted to her.

“So high and mighty, yet you summon something without clothes?” said Meng Hao sternly, glancing at the Dharma Idol. “How scandalous!”

“You glib lowlife!” she replied evenly. “One look and I could tell that you were a lecher!” She performed an incantation, causing her Dharma Idol's eyes to shine with golden light.

“Ninth Sea God Lightning!” The four words echoed like thunder, and immediately caused four bolts of golden lightning to crackle down toward Meng Hao.

His eyes narrowed; these Chosen from the Ninth Mountain and Sea were all incredibly powerful. He had long since ceased to look down on them. He knew that he couldn't view them as being ordinary peak Dao Seeking cultivators. These were all people who had high aspirations; they wanted to achieve true Immortal Ascension.

There were even some of them who had clearly practiced cultivation for many years, but were intentionally holding their cultivation bases back to wait for Immortal destiny.

Some of them gave Meng Hao a feeling of impending crisis. One was Zhao Yifan, and another was Fan Dong'er.

“There are many Chosen, and powerful experts are as numerous as the clouds,” he thought. “My path of cultivation has just begun; the vast world is just now opening up to me....” The desire to fight burned hot in his eyes. He truly couldn't wait to step foot out of the lands of South Heaven into the starry sky, to contend with the Chosen of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“Today is just a sneak peek,” he thought. His body flickered as he sprang into motion. His Dharma Idol roared and grew even larger than before, and then sent a right hand speeding toward Fan Dong'er.

The four bolts of golden lightning sent out shocking ripples, but they were all obstructed Meng Hao's Dharma Idol.

Echoes rattled out, and Fan Dong'er's face fell. The second true self closed in along with a river of Time power, bursting with a murderous aura. Killing intent raged as he launched a vicious attack that very nearly sliced Fan Dong'er's neck open.

"Just who is this Meng Hao...?" she thought. "There's no need to even mention this clone of his. He himself is incredibly powerful, plus he has a Dharma Idol that depicts himself. Based on his power, he must be half a step into true Immortality!"

"At the moment he still hasn't merged back with his clone. When that happens...." Fan Dong'er's eyes flickered.

"He seems to be concerned with people entering the temple hall. Could it be that there is some legacy process underway inside, and he doesn't want anyone to interfere? I must disrupt that legacy!"

"I can't let a fifth Conclave disciple appear in this Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple!" Her eyes flickered with coldness.

"Ninth Sea God Will!" she said, retrieving a conch shell from her bag of holding. The conch shell immediately began to blaze with intense light that caused everything to tremble. The music of a great Dao began to spread out in all directions.

Everyone on the outside had long since been shaken by the intensity of the fighting inside. In addition, dread of Meng Hao had taken root in their hearts.

"To be able to fight with Fan Dong'er of the Nine Seas God World means that this Meng Hao... is definitely a Chosen too!"

"That's... a precious treasure of the Nine Seas God World, the Nine Gods Conch!"

"According to legend, that conch once slew an almighty Dao Realm expert..."

"That's not the real thing, it's only a copy. However, it's still shockingly powerful!"

As the buzz of conversation filled the air outside, Meng Hao's face flickered. He could sense that this conch was intensely dangerous. His eyes flickered and he performed another incantation gesture, causing the sixth level of the Blood Demon Grand Magic to appear.

At the same time, Fan Dong'er's eyes became ice cold as she raised the conch up and blew into it. As soon as her breath entered the conch, it began to emanate a golden light, within which was a strand of Dao music.

As the music drifted through the air, it sounded like a woman singing. It expanded out amorphously, transforming into three colorful bubbles, within each of which appeared to be a magical symbol. The sky grew dark, and wind screamed as one of the bubbles floated gently toward Meng Hao. He began to tremble, and his second true self seemed to lose control of his body and stopped in mid motion. It was at this point that bubble popped.

Blood sprayed from the mouth of the second true self as a roaring sound filled his ears. As he fell back, the second bubble floated forward and then popped. Meng Hao coughed up blood, and suddenly found that he was covered with countless strips of seaweed which were growing out from his skin to cover his whole body. At the same time, the seaweed bursting from his skin caused him to bleed profusely.

His second true self trembled as he too was covered with seaweed. The flourishing seaweed sucked away at Meng Hao's life force, causing it to grow longer, and even take root in the ground. As a result, Meng Hao and his second true self were rapidly being rooted in place.

People outside of the courtyard gasped.

"The Curse of the Ninth Sea!!"

"This Meng Hao... is going to perish!"

Fan Dong'er coughed up a mouthful of blood and staggered backward a few steps, her face pale; she had payed an incredible price in order to blow on the conch shell.

She took a deep breath as she looked over at Meng Hao and his second true self entangled in the seaweed. Her expression calm, she turned and hurried toward the temple hall.

Just when she was on the verge of stepping into the temple hall, a tremor ran through Fan Dong'er. The mud beneath her feet suddenly began to emanate a black mist. At the same time, a huge rumbling sound filled the entire area.

The courtyard trembled from the force of the explosion, and Fan Dong'er coughed up a mouthful of blood. Her body was completely beyond her control as she was sent flying into the air, more blood spurting out from her mouth.

"Meng Hao!" she cried, her heart filled with rage. She had been incredibly cautious in everything, but could never have imagined that Meng Hao would have buried black-peeled medicinal pills in front of the temple hall's door.

Those pills had been secretly placed there by Meng Hao as a failsafe against the people from the outside.

At the same time that Fan Dong'er was sent flying backward, the third bubble neared Meng Hao. He trembled, and his eyes filled with a cold gleam. His second true self shuddered; he slowly began to fade away and turn into Meng Hao's shadow, merging together with him.

"Fuse!" As he merged with his second true self, Meng Hao's left eye was icy cold, whereas his right eye burned with murderous desire. The Dharma Idol behind him then changed; shockingly, half of it became completely black!

To everyone looking at it, it no longer looked holy, but rather, like a mixture between an Immortal and a Devil!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the third bubble popped. However, at the same time, Meng Hao freed himself from the seaweed and launched a counterattack in the form of a punch.

A huge explosion filled the air and Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood. Nonetheless, a bright gleam could be seen in his eyes as his hand snaked out toward the beautiful Fan Dong'er.

Fan Dong'er's face flickered. She had been seriously injured, and now that Meng Hao had freed himself, she had no choice but to retreat from of the courtyard.

It was then that Meng Hao's hand latched onto her.

“Trying to get away?”

Chapter 817: Here You Go, Inky!

The Star Plucking Magic suddenly sprang to life, and Fan Dong'er was snatched up and dragged back by Meng Hao before she could escape from the courtyard. A look of vicious hatred could be seen on her face, and she quickly performed a double-handed incantation, causing the conch shell to appear again!

Just when she was about to blow it, Meng Hao flung her forcefully toward the well in the courtyard.

“Why don't you get in that well and blow your shell for my Inky!” he said.

Fan Dong'er's face filled with shock as, before she could blow the conch, she descended into the well, her body completely out of her control.

At the same time, Meng Hao performed an incantation, summoning the Ninth Mountain and sending it rumbling down toward the well.

A miserable shriek rang out from inside the well as the Ninth Mountain slammed down and sealed the mouth of the well, followed by rumbling booms. Meng Hao flitted up to the peak of the mountain, where he sat down cross-legged, his face somewhat pale. The murderous gleam in his right eye vanished, and boundless black mist surged out from within him, which then transformed once again into his second true self.

Blood oozed out from the sides of Meng Hao's mouth, and his second true self's eyes were somewhat dimmer than usual.

This was a result of the backlash from forcing a separation before fully fusing.

Everyone outside the courtyard was thoroughly shocked, and stared at Meng Hao in amazement.

“He... he actually sealed the Goddess of the Nine Seas God World inside a well?”

“If I remember correctly... that head which looks like it’s been soaking in water for millions of years... came out from that well!”

“Dammit, I should kill him for treating the Goddess like that!”

As the buzz of conversation filled the air, Zhao Yifan’s eyes flickered. He stared at Meng Hao, his desire for combat growing ever stronger. After all, he lived to fight!

“If you’re good enough to suppress Fan Dong’er,” he thought, “then... I can’t wait for day to break so that we can fight!”

Song Luodan couldn’t help but gasp in response to what had happened, as did Wang Mu, Li Ling’er, Fang Donghan and many others. When they saw Meng Hao fight Fan Dong’er and then seal her up, it instantly left an indelible impression in their minds.

Taiyang Zi’s face flickered, but, not willing to be outshone, he snorted coldly and said, “You finagled your way to victory. If you step foot outside, I’ll fuse your bones and blood, burn your soul, and then kill you!”

The Chosen from the other Holy Lands and sects now had a much clearer understanding of who Meng Hao was, as did the Dao Protectors, whose eyes glittered brightly.

The night grew deeper. Meng Hao sat on top of the mountain, listening to Fan Dong’er’s shrieks echoing out from down below.

She was inside the well, half submerged in water. Her scalp was numb with terror as inky black hair swirled around her. Although her surroundings were pitch black, because of her incredible cultivation base, she could just barely see the water-soaked head gazing steadily in her direction.

If you think about it, anyone in this situation would feel their blood run cold and their hair stand on end. Fan Dong’er couldn’t hold back from screaming.

The tendrils of black hair began to wrap around her, and the soaking head got closer and closer....

“Meng Hao, I won’t let you get away with this!” she screamed. However, it didn’t matter what divine abilities or magical techniques she used, there was nothing that could get her out of the well.

In fact, the more magic she used, the more the black hair wrapped around her, and at one point, the floating head even touched her own head.

An icy sensation spread out across her skin, and Fan Dong'er's scream was even shriller than before.

As Meng Hao sat on top of the mountain, he snorted and said, "Inky, if you take care of this wench for me, then you can have her!"

By now, he had recovered most of his wounds, and he glanced over to look into the temple hall, at the bronze lamp which, thanks to Fan Dong'er's failure to enter the temple hall, had not been extinguished.

A strange light shone in his eyes, and suddenly a bashful gleam could be seen within.

"These Chosen all have lovely treasures on them, don't they...." He licked his lips and smiled, which the crowds on the outside found very surprising.

"What is Meng Hao smiling like that for?"

"Hmm. That smile looks... bashful! Is something fishy going on...?"

Meng Hao flew down off of the mountain and, as everyone watched, dug a hole and carefully put some black-peeled medicinal pills in it. Then, he cautiously stood on top of it, looked up, and extended his hand. The Lightning Cauldron appeared.

Electric light glittered, spreading out across his body, and the bashfulness in his smile grew even more apparent as he looked out at the crowd with anticipation.

"Dammit, Meng Hao's about to pull a con!"

"He has that Form Displacement Transposition cauldron, and black-peeled medicinal pills under his feet. If you step on that pill lightly, nothing happens. But when he switches positions with someone, the slightest force will cause it to explode!!"

“Fudge! How could someone be so evil!?”

“Shameless! I’ve never seen a bastard as shameless as him!”

Everyone in the crowd began to back up, their faces flickering with various expressions. Meng Hao’s eyes finally came to rest on Taiyang Zi, whose face instantly went white, and his eyes wide. Before he could say anything, lighting from Meng Hao’s cauldron flashed, and he switched places with Taiyang Zi.

The instant the change occurred, Taiyang Zi appeared in the middle of the courtyard, screaming. Apparently, this method of entering the courtyard did not violate the restrictive spells, so he was not instantly transformed into a pool of blood. However, as soon as his foot made contact with the medicinal pills, four or five of them instantly exploded, and he was engulfed in black mist.

Taiyang Zi let out a bloodcurdling shriek, along with a spray of blood. Meng Hao’s second true self instantly closed in on him.

As for Meng Hao, as soon as he appeared outside the courtyard, he instantly produced his war chariot. Rumbling filled the air as he shot back into the courtyard.

Only an afterimage remained in the spot he had just occupied, which was then instantly inundated by various divine abilities and magical techniques.

“Don’t be so polite, Fellow Daoists!” he called out, looking back at the crowd and waving. “I don’t need your gifts, really!” The ripples from the explosions couldn’t catch up with him, leaving the onlookers so frustrated that their gums itched.

“Shameless!!”

“How could he have such a high cultivation base but be so despicable!?” Numerous such curses filled the air.

Meng Hao just smiled nonchalantly and hummed a little tune as he watched his second true self grab hold of Taiyang Zi and restrain him.

When Taiyang Zi saw Meng Hao approaching, he began to tremble, and his eyes shone with a brilliant light.

“I’m from the Holy Land of Mount Sun! Our founder was Patriarch Sun—”

SMACK!

Meng Hao walloped Taiyang Zi directly across the side of the face, causing blood to spray from his mouth, along with a couple teeth. He turned back to look at Meng Hao, a vicious expression of madness on his face.

“From the moment I started practicing cultivation,” said Meng Hao, “I’ve heard Chosen like you say things like that when they’re about to die. Do you know how annoying it is!?” Thinking about how often he had heard words similar to those uttered by Taiyang Zi, he kicked Taiyang Zi sharply with his right foot.

“Didn’t you just say you were going to burn my bones and blood, then roast my soul?” Meng Hao kicked down again.

The shocked crowd looked on, trembling, as Taiyang Zi’s howls entered their ears. The Dao Protectors and other cultivators from Mount Sun were enraged, and several of them flew forward.

“Stay your hand!!”

“Dammit, if you harm him, you’ll call a great disaster down on yourself that will affect your entire clan!”

“Once the sun comes up, you’re dead! No one will be able to save you!”

The two Mount Sun Dao Protectors stood outside the courtyard, glaring at Meng Hao and threatening him with gruesome words. In response, Meng Hao kicked Taiyang Zi again, provoking another miserable shriek, then turned and stared at the two Dao Protectors.

“I’m from the archaic Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite! My dad is—” Meng Hao suddenly stopped talking and cleared his throat. Quite a few hateful looks appeared among the crowd, especially from

the people from Mount Sun. It was quite obvious that Meng Hao had just been mocking Taiyang Zi's words from moments ago.

Meng Hao grabbed Taiyang Zi and dragged him over to the well. He lifted the mountain and then said, "Why don't you and the wench fool around together down there!"

Taiyang Zi's eyes went wide, and he let out a panic-stricken yelp as he struggled against Meng Hao.

Meng Hao cleared his throat and then said, "Alright, I'll give you one last chance. You probably have a lot of magical items on you, right?"

"Let me go, and you can have them all!" Taiyang Zi blurted. He was truly frightened; down below, he could see Fan Dong'er and the soaking head, which was obviously a mysterious evil spirit connected to the Daoist rite temple.

"Hey, I'm a gentleman and a man of my word!" replied Meng Hao sternly. "What makes you think that I would contaminate my Karma by stealing your magical items!?" His expression became colder so quickly that Taiyang Zi gaped in shock. However, it only took a moment for his mind to flash with understanding, and he quickly unfastened his bag of holding and held it aloft.

"Here, I'm giving it to you as a gift!"

Meng Hao took it, opened it up, and looked through its contents. His eyes lit up, after which he turned to look at the command medallion hanging at Taiyang Zi's waist.

"Actually, that looks pretty nice...." he said.

"You can have it!"

"Eee? This thing is pretty nice too."

"You... you can have it!"

"I've never seen one of these before...."

“You can have it....” Taiyang Zi was on the verge of tears as he handed his belongings over to Meng Hao one by one.

Meng Hao’s hand closed around a fist-sized chunk of golden-colored stone which emanated an intense heat and blinding light. From the feeling it gave off, it almost seemed like something was sleeping inside. When Meng Hao swept it with his divine sense, the music of a great Dao filled his mind, and he sensed a pulsating aura of danger.

It almost seemed like this rock... was a sun!

Meng Hao’s eyes widened as he looked it over. He had never seen anything quite like this particular item.

He slowly pulled the rock out of Taiyang Zi’s bag of holding.

Immediately, people on the outside began to comment in astonishment.

“A treasured magical item! It’s a treasured magical item from Mount Sun!!”

“Mount Sun is really getting the short end of the stick today....”

Taiyang Zi’s face was pale white as he looked bitterly at the rock in Meng Hao’s hand. He had never even had a chance to take it out and use it before Meng Hao took it away from him.

Meng Hao closed his eyes as he examined the rock with his senses. After a moment, the heat emanating off of the rock seemed to decrease, and Meng Hao put it away. Then he opened his eyes and looked at Taiyang Zi. Eyes narrowing, he pulled out a piece of paper and a pen from within his robe, then handed them over to Taiyang Zi, whose eyes went wide with shock.

Chapter 818: Changing Fate!

“What are you staring at? Write out a promissory note! However much you think your life’s worth, write down that many spirit stones. Although, if the amount you write down is too small, don’t forget that I have a lot of spirit stones in my bag of holding, and I might just fork them over to buy you.”

“You!!” cried Taiyang Zi, almost coughing up a mouthful of blood as he glared at Meng Hao. After a long moment, he sighed and then wrote down a huge sum onto the promissory note. Meng Hao carefully placed it with his collection of other promissory notes.

When the people in the crowd, and Taiyang Zi, saw how many promissory notes Meng Hao had in his bag of holding, they gasped.

“How many people has he conned in the past...? I can’t believe he has so many promissory notes!”

“Just where exactly is he from? He couldn’t be a cultivator from the lands of South Heaven, could he?”

“There’s no way. South Heaven is a strange place, but how could it produce a shameless bastard like that!?!?”

Taiyang Zi looked at all the promissory notes and suddenly felt a bit better about his situation. With a forced smile, he looked at Meng Hao.

“Elder Brother Meng...”

“Don’t worry,” Meng Hao said earnestly. “Meng Hao is honest with all customers, and open and aboveboard in all matters. I would definitely never use the promissory note to coerce you.” Suddenly, he lowered his voice to a whisper. “Alright, you’ve been very cooperative. Come come, tell me who among all those bastards out there you have a beef with. I’ll grab that person next.

“Choose carefully.” With that, Meng Hao stepped to the side, dug another hole, and then put some medicinal pills in it.

Taiyang Zi stared at Meng Hao with wide eyes. The crowds outside gasped, and quite a few of their number began to back away. There were even a few who directly flew away.

Taiyang Zi was in a daze for a moment, until finally his eyes flickered and he turned to look out at the crowds. Then, his gaze locked with that of Wang Mu from the Wang Clan.

“Wang Mu!” cried Taiyang Zi, his face twisting with hatred. “He’s the one! He stole my good fortune that year. Him!”

When Wang Mu, who stood off in the distance, heard what Taiying Zi said, his eyes flickered. The Dao Protectors near him stepped forward, their eyes radiating coldness.

“Got it,” said Meng Hao. He quickly reached out and tied Taiyang Zi up, then tossed him over to the grapevine trellis. Then he produced the Lightning Cauldron, which glittered with electricity as he looked over at Wang Mu. Wang Mu instantly rotated his cultivation base with all his power.

However, in the next instant, Meng Hao shifted his gaze to Song Luodan. Instantly, the two of them vanished. Then, Song Luodan reappeared in the courtyard. However, he remained hovering in the air, and didn’t touch the ground.

“Do you really think it’s worth it to play such ridiculous games?” Song Luodan chuckled coldly. Most of the people in the crowd outside were now prepared for Meng Hao to use the Lightning Cauldron. However, it was at this moment that Meng Hao’s second true self violently stamped his foot onto the ground. Immediately, a boom could be heard as the medicinal pills beneath Song Luodan’s feet exploded.

Song Luodan coughed up blood as the explosion rippled out. He had no time to evade. His hair was thrown into disarray, and he let out a miserable shriek. At the same time, Meng Hao’s second true self closed in.

As soon as Meng Hao appeared outside, booms filled the air as Li Ling’er, Fang Yunyi, Fang Xiangshan, as well as the Ji Clan members, and even Chosen from other sects, along with their Dao protectors, all attacked.

The gleam of spell formations appeared on the ground, which had been set up in secret earlier in order to cause problems for Meng Hao.

Some people even used magical items. Massive roaring filled the area in the blink of an eye. Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and then sped backward in the war chariot. Lightning flickered as he switched positions several times in a row before he was finally able to extricate himself. Just when he was almost back into the courtyard, a sword shot through the air toward him. The sword filled the darkness with brilliant light, and left a bright streak in the air as it bore down on Meng Hao.

The shocking sword caused Meng Hao’s face to flicker. He quickly performed an incantation gesture, causing divine abilities to explode out. At the same time, his Dharma Idol appeared and

blocked the sword. Rumbling shook everything as the sword unexpectedly sliced through the Dharma Idol and then slashed down onto the war chariot.

A huge boom filled the air, and blood sprayed out of Meng Hao's mouth. However, he borrowed the momentum from the blast to shoot back into the courtyard. Once inside, he coughed up another mouthful of blood and then suddenly looked up. At some point, Ji Yin had appeared right in front of the temple gate. His right hand stretched out, surrounded by swirling Karma power, clearly on the verge of passing into the courtyard.

Then, it did pass into the courtyard itself, apparently completely unaffected by the restrictive spells. Rumbling like thunder rippled out as he stretched his hand out about three inches into the courtyard. However, at that point, he could proceed no further and he slowly retracted his hand.

Many gasps could be heard from the crowd as they looked at Ji Yin, whose back was to them all, making it impossible for them to see his facial expression.

Meng Hao's pupils constricted, and his heart trembled. As of this point, he was now aware of how incredibly powerful Ji Yin was.

"Let me in, and I'll spare your life," said Ji Yin. It was hard to tell whether his voice was that of a man or a woman. However, it was completely cold-blooded, and filled with a lust for battle.

Meng Hao smiled and wiped the blood off of his mouth. He then turned and walked over to the seriously wounded Song Luodan, who had already been restrained and tied up by his second true self.

Song Luo glared hatefully at Meng Hao, killing intent flickering in his eyes.

Meng Hao wasn't in the mood for chattering, so he simply slapped Song Luodan in the face a few times, which of course cause his rage to surge even higher. Without another word, he took Song Luodan's bag of holdings, rifled through them, and then finally then pulled out a piece of paper and a pen.

"I won't sign that thing even if you kill me!" raged Song Luodan, looking especially ferocious because of the scar running down his face.

“Won’t sign it?” Meng Hao responded coolly. He turned to look over at the swinging vine, from which the sounds of faint laughter and the drip of black blood could be heard. “Lily, weren’t you looking for a friend to swing with you?”

From what Meng Hao could tell, Inky and Lily had changed quite a bit ever since the crazy old man gave Meng Hao his approval.

As soon as Meng Hao spoke, the swing stopped moving. Then, the astonished Song Luodan flew up into the air, his body clearly completely out of his own control. Next, his body began to shrink; in the blink of an eye, he looked like he was seven or eight years old. Finally, he floated down to land on the vine, where he began to swing back and forth.

His expression was numb, but intense terror could be seen in his eyes.

At this point, the faint glow of dawn was just becoming visible. Soon, the strange phenomena inside the courtyard would disappear.

Killing intent flickered in the eyes of the crowd outside. This was especially true of the cultivators from Mount Sun and the Song Clan, and the various Chosen who were smitten with Fan Dong’er from the Nine Seas God World.

Meng Hao frowned. After looking up at the sky, he walked back into the temple hall, where he looked around at the Dao Projections and the ancient bronze lamp. Finally, he sighed.

“49 days total, but only half of them have gone by. Obviously... there’s no way I can keep people out of this place for that long.

“There are simply too many of them outside. So far, I’ve only been able to stretch things out for two days...” He stood in front of the bronze lamp and looked at the flickering flame. During the day, the flame would go out, but after having observed the item for so long, Meng Hao knew that the flame itself wasn’t truly extinguished. The heart of the flame still existed.

The lamp itself only burned brightly at night.

Muttering, Meng Hao once again poured some blood into the flames, which hissed and then emitted a delicate fragrance that left him feeling enlivened after smelling it.

“I’m not supposed to let anyone come inside to touch the lamp and contaminate it with their aura. It’s... fundamentally impossible to meet that requirement.” Meng Hao sighed. The more he thought about it, the more it seemed completely unfeasible. Furthermore, the sky was almost bright...

Meng Hao could sense the killing intent coming from the groups outside the courtyard. He was like a thorn in their sides, someone blocking their path to good fortune. Furthermore, some of that killing intent resulted directly from him offending people.

“Well, if I have to ask for help from dad and mom because of something as trivial as this, then I’m not Meng Hao!” His eyes began to shine with a cold gleam. Before reaching Dao Seeking, he had not relied on any assistance from his father and mother. He had stepped halfway into true Immortality all by himself.

He had experienced multiple deadly situations, had battled the 10th Wang Clan Patriarch in the Milky Way Sea, had tread the narrow gap between life and death, had fought in the great war of the Southern Domain, and had risen to the pinnacle of prominence.

Those were all things that made Meng Hao feel quite proud of himself.

“Besides, my road leads beyond South Heaven, whereas dad and mom... must stay here for 100,000 years. I have to walk my path alone. If I want good fortune... I’ll take the risks myself and earn it myself!

“If I did it any differently, I’d be the same as all of those people out there.” The desire to fight gleamed in his eyes. He took a deep breath, when suddenly, a new idea appeared in his mind. He stopped in place, and a strange expression filled his face.

“Wait a second....

“That crazy old man said that I couldn’t let the flame be extinguished for 49 nights. He also said that I couldn’t let anyone come in here to touch the lamp.

“In other words, actually stepping foot into this place isn’t the problem. As long as no one touches the lamp, then the requirement will be met, right?” Meng Hao’s eyes sparkled.

“If that’s true, then it also goes to say that... it doesn’t matter what I do; I could even take the bronze lamp away from here. As long as nobody else touches it, and it remains unextinguished, then everything will be fine.”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he began to pant. A gleam of determination appeared in his eyes, and he decided that since he couldn’t prevent everyone from entering this place, he might as well... try out his new idea!

He immediately stretched his hand out and grabbed the lamp. The instant he tried to actually pick it up, he realized that the lamp was completely immovable; there was no way for him to put it in his bag of holding. A strange light flickered in his eyes as he rotated his cultivation base at full power. His Dharma Idol appeared behind him, and Meng Hao used all the power he could muster to try to pull up the bronze lamp.

Shocking rumbles could be heard coming from within the temple hall. The ground trembled and the entire temple shook. A deep, subterranean rumble could be heard, as well as the sound of laughing and crying from the courtyard. The mountain range, and in fact, the entire land, was shaking violently.

The crowds outside the courtyard stared at the temple hall in shock.

In that instant, all of the lands of South Heaven were shaken, to the extent that the entire planet temporarily ceased to rotate!

The Milky Way Sea roared, and all the continents trembled. All the powerful experts in South Heaven were shaking in astonishment!

In the Tower of Tang, Meng Hao’s father and mother were in the middle of playing a game of Go when suddenly his father’s face flickered. Even as he looked up, Meng Hao’s mother’s face also flickered.

“That’s....”

“The Immortal Ancient is in motion. Not good! There must have been some kind of accident!” Meng Hao’s father rose to his feet and was just about to fly up into the air, when both he and Meng Hao’s mother stopped in place. Their expressions flickered as they saw a figure approaching from off in the distance.

He had long gray hair, an ordinary-looking robe, and looked completely archaic. His eyes were filled with the glow of heavenly bodies. Not only did he look like a person who existed inside a painting, he looked like the type of person who could paint a multitude of universes with a wave of his hand.

Meng Hao's parents were immediately shaken. They clasped hands and bowed.

"Xiufeng offers greetings, senior!"

"Meng Li offers respectful greetings, senior!"

This was the same man who had appeared to them on Planet East Victory, and had indicated that they should come to Planet South Heaven. He was the one who had directed them to guard the planet for 100,000 years. He was... an Outsider!

If Meng Hao were here, he would immediately recognize that this person was... Shui Dongliu!

"The chance for the Immortal was consumed by the Dao of Heaven," he murmured. "The Dao path has overlapped with the ancient. I saw nine fluttering butterflies once again flying in approach

I saw the one who has vanished; and the look in his eyes as he turned his head to look back.... It can't be predicted anymore, and I can't see through it anymore.... He... actually managed to change his fate!" A strange gleam appeared in his eyes as he gazed toward the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple in the distant mountains.

Chapter 819: A Flickering Vision of Ancient Times

At the same time, within the Inner Ring of the Milky Way Sea, the water was boiling. A gray fog suddenly rose up, which spread out in all directions, filled with an aura of death.

An ancient ship slowly pierced through the fog, and as it did it seemed to cause flickering images of countless worlds to appear within the fog.

It almost seemed like the ship had just come from ancient times, and was now making an appearance in this day and age.

At the prow of the ship was an old man wearing a dilapidated suit of armor. His long hair was the color of silver, and it was impossible to see his facial features. It was only possible to see a pair of blank eyes that seemed to be staring off into eternity, looking for the answer to some unanswerable question.

Suddenly, the old man raised his head up and looked in the direction of the ancient Daoist rite temple off in the Eastern Lands.

“Who... has shaken the world?”

All of the ripples which were spreading out throughout Planet South Heaven suddenly vanished.

Outside the Tower of Tang, Meng Hao’s parents listened to Shui Dongliu’s words, and were shaken.

“Impossible to predict. He has changed his destiny.

“You two must not interfere; too many Karmic connections would be detrimental to him.... He... is connected to South Heaven by destiny.”

“Senior....” said Meng Hao’s father, his voice anxious as he looked at Shui Dongliu.

“The tribulation.... is coming,” murmured Shui Dongliu. “I have seen countless corpses, and endless rivers of blood. I have seen the calamity which will leave only nine mountains in the starry sky. That calamity... is not very far off.

“The existences that were once subdued cannot cross over from ancient times, but the ones who escaped subdual will return full of vengeance....

“When was the enmity created? What was its root cause? Forgotten.... They’ve all forgotten everything.... Nobody remembers anymore....

“They... enslaved the Dao of Heaven. And they are on their way.” He shook his head slowly.

Meanwhile, in the depths of the mountains, in the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple, the ground was quaking outside of the temple. Everyone was astonished as they listened to the shrill sound of weeping mixed with laughter, and the incredible roaring coming from deep beneath the ground. Then they saw the temple itself shaking. Cracks spread out, and suddenly, an illusory Daoist rite temple appeared once again.

Inside the temple hall, Meng Hao's face was pale. All he had wanted to do was to pick up the bronze lamp, so the intense rumbling, and the quaking of the land, caused his eyes to go wide.

Furthermore, he now could not separate his hand from the bronze lamp; intense pain stabbed into his hand, causing the skin to be slit open and blood to spray out, which was then absorbed by the bronze lamp.

After absorbing the blood, the lantern's flame burned even more radiantly. It emanated a red glow which seemed capable of piercing the air and tearing open the barrier to ancient times. Meng Hao was suddenly able to sense that everything was in motion.

The images around him began to rotate, spinning faster and faster, until they were roaring violently in the form of a vortex.

It was hard to say how long it lasted, but at a certain point the vortex suddenly ceased moving. Shaking, Meng Hao looked around to see... the exact same ancient Daoist rite temple that he had seen before. He could hear the sound of a sermon being given about the Dao, and everyone sat cross-legged beneath a river of stars.

On the altar was an old man who waved his hand, causing everything in Heaven and Earth to suddenly reverse; an enormous “Immortal 仙” character appeared....

Shockingly, the “Immortal” superimposed over Meng Hao. It was as if the oil lamp in his hand had turned into the mountain, while he was the person! Together, they transformed into the character... “Immortal!” [1. You may remember that Er Gen once broke down the character “Immortal 仙” as being made up of a person 人 and a mountain 山]

Countless eyes fell upon him, and Meng Hao's mind spun. Everything that was happening was far too incredible, and he could barely believe it.

Next, the lamp began to absorb more and more of his blood. His face went pale as the world around him spun. Rumbling filled the air as everything once again ceased moving. Shockingly, Meng Hao found himself looking at yet another world.

An enormous hand could be seen in the sky, which smashed directly into the ground. There were countless cultivators locked in deadly combat; they attacked by hauling stars out of the sky and transforming them into divine abilities.

To defend, enormous swaths of earth were ripped up and hurled into the sky.

There was an enormous, amorphous figure who had stars shining in its forehead. Next to it were innumerable furred creatures with long tentacles, as large as planets, wreaking death in all directions.

It was impossible for Meng Hao to tell who was friend or foe. There were multiple powers all fighting each other. Far off in the distance, he saw an enormous rift tearing open to reveal... nine suns!

They were nine suns that caused the starry sky to tremble, caused the void to shatter into fragments, and caused all life to be extinguished!

Unexpectedly, the nine suns were hauling an enormous stone statue through the rift. The statue depicted a man who had ordinary features and yet emanated an unforgettable aura!

An indescribably large shadow began to spread out, seemingly intent on covering up the entire starry sky. From the look of it, it was possible to see that it was something completely unique and bizarre.

People began to cry out in alarm, to shout about the Dao of Heaven....

Even more shocking, from a different direction, nine butterflies could be seen flying in approach. They were indescribably gargantuan, larger than anything else. In the moment they appeared, what seemed like portals that led to other worlds opened up on their bodies, from within which emerged clouds of figures. Even more shocking was that behind the butterflies, Meng Hao could see what seemed like a huge land mass which was threatening to fill the entire sky as it approached.

“The world of Immortals is the source of all chaos! Immortals are the pinnacle of evil!” It was impossible to tell who this voice that rang out in Meng Hao’s vision belonged to. The only thing that he could see were the nine suns, the nine butterflies, and below them, nine shocking mountains.

Massive rumbling filled everything, and then the vision faded away. Meng Hao’s mind was reeling, and everything around him was shattered to pieces. Once again, a vortex formed, with Meng Hao in the middle of it. He reappeared from ancient times, and stepped out into the temple hall.

Almost all of his blood had been sucked out of his body into the bronze lamp. As for the lamp.... It had of its own volition floated up into the air above Meng Hao’s head, where it was now flickering dimly.

It was at this point that the sky outside... grew bright!

In the moment in which dawn broke, the bronze lamp above Meng Hao’s head flickered and transformed into an ember. It was not extinguished, but rather, turned into a weak, green smoke that bored into Meng Hao’s mouth, nose, ears, and eyes. All of a sudden, he experienced an unprecedented clarity.

Meng Hao’s mind trembled, and his eyes glittered brightly. He knew that now was not the time to hesitate. Followed by the shadow that was his second true self, Meng Hao emerged from the temple hall, flicking his sleeve to collect up Taiyang Zi and Song Luodan, who he then tossed into his bag of holding. He glanced at the well, which was still sealed by the Ninth Mountain, and then unhesitatingly left the courtyard.

When he emerged from the main gate, he saw that everyone outside had blank expressions on their faces. Apparently, they were still caught up in the vision of ancient times. Even the sons of Ji were trembling.

Meng Hao immediately started flying. However, a beam of sword light screamed through the air toward him before he could get very far. It was none other than Zhao Yifan!

As it turned out, he was the first to awaken!

More people began to wake up, and when they saw Meng Hao, they instantly unleashed magical techniques as they chased after him.

“Hey, the Daoist rite temple is all yours!” he called. The war chariot appeared, and instantly shot forward at incredible speed. The incoming magic from his pursuers very nearly overwhelmed him.

Thankfully, he hadn't paused for even the slightest moment; furthermore, his mind was incredibly clear because of the bronze lamp. Everyone else, even Zhao Yifan, had just come to their senses, and as such, found it difficult to employ the full power of their cultivation bases.

Rumbling filled the air, and Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood. However, he was being doggedly pursued, so he shot forward at top speed toward that narrow path surrounded on either sides by high cliffs.

Unfortunately, the airspace was restricted, and it quickly became apparent that the war chariot was having difficulty staying aloft. It began to slow down rapidly as soon as he entered the narrow path, until Meng Hao was finally forced to put it away. As soon as he touched down onto the ground, he shot away like an arrow from a bow. A whizzing sound could be heard as he shot off into the distance.

There were hundreds of people pursuing him, although none of them were Chosen. Instead, they were the Dao Protectors from the various sects and clans. Only Mount Sun and the Song Clan sent all of their forces after him.

The other Chosen, after awakening, looked at the empty temple and then charged in.

As soon as they entered the place, the mountain above the well collapsed into pieces, and the desolate wail of a woman could be heard.

“Meng Hao! Things are NOT finished between us!” Fan Dong'er flowed up from within the well, her face pale and her hair disheveled. All of the other Chosen who were so smitten with her were just about to rush forward to her when suddenly, they gasped. They looked at Fan Dong'er with astonishment, and slowly began to back up.

Fan Dong'er gaped, and her face fell. It was then that she raised her right hand; a bright light flashed, and a mirror appeared. When she looked into the mirror she could see that her face, although somewhat pale, was still as beautiful as ever.

She breathed a sigh of relief. Except then....

“Dong’er, b-behind you....”

“There’s someone behind you!!”

“Why... why did you carry a corpse up here on your back...?”

It was at this point that Fan Dong’er caught sight of something else in the mirror’s reflection. Behind her... floated the corpse of a woman, the exact same corpse which had tormented her inside the well.

Fan Dong’er felt like her head was going to explode. She immediately flew up into the air, only to find that the corpse did exactly the same thing. It was almost as if their souls were connected; apparently, it would follow her no matter where she went.

Fan Dong’er could only imagine what it would be like if, no matter where she went, she was followed by a corpse that had been fermenting in water for millions of years.... Such a matter would completely shock the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea once word got out.

Fan Dong’er screamed....

“Meng Hao, I’m going to kill you. KILL you!!”

By this point, the other Chosen had already entered the temple hall. They looked around in shock for a moment, then immediately fled out of the temple complex. Cracks spread out rapidly, and the ground shattered into a chasm, into which the entire temple immediately fell!

Thankfully, everyone moved with enough speed that no one was caught up in the destruction. However, they all looked back in shock as the remains of the temple were sucked down into the ground. After that, the ground returned to its normal state, as if nothing had ever been there....

“Dammit! That bronze lamp that Meng Hao took was obviously a precious treasure from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple!”

“He definitely has the Immortal Ancient Dao Medallion!”

“Get him! The airspace here is restricted, so he can’t have gotten far. Seal the entire mountain range! Lock down the air! Dig up the earth until we find him!”

Chapter 820: Who’s Trying to Steal My Business?

It took only a moment for everyone from all of the various sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea to be sent into a blur of motion. They used a variety of techniques to lock down the mountain range. They used shocking divine will, secret magics, and various divine abilities as they spread out in all directions to search for Meng Hao.

This was especially true of Fan Dong’er, who cried out shrilly as she sped through the air. Normally she was surrounded with a calm, holy air. That was gone now; any beautiful woman would be incapable of doing so when being constantly followed around by a corpse.

She could imagine how soon, news of the matter would spread throughout the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea, which made her hatred for Meng Hao rise to new heights.

As for the Chosen from the rest of the sects and clans, they were proud people, and were the type who didn’t like to show inferiority to anyone. Although they were used to the constant competition and fighting with other Chosen and the dangers that came along with that, they were not used to coming up empty-handed in their endeavors. Instead, they usually compared amongst themselves to see who ended up with more good fortune than the others.

But this time... in the lands of South Heaven, when meeting Meng Hao for the first time, they also encountered another first. They came face to face with incredible good fortune, but were unable to get even a scrap of it.

And when they thought of how Meng Hao had hoodwinked them all, had run a deadly con on them, it caused them to hate him so much that their gums itched.

“Too shameless! That guy is evil to the marrow!”

“For someone as extreme as that to NOT be famous in the outside world is simply impossible! He’s most likely a cultivator from Planet South Heaven!”

“It doesn’t matter who he is! We’ll make him cough up the good fortune he stole from us!”

Whooshing sounds filled the air as hundreds of cultivators employed their top speed to spread out through the boundless mountains. They formed something like a huge web as they searched for Meng Hao.

Meng Hao proceeded along cautiously. Despite employing a variety of methods, he was unable to get the bronze lamp into his bag of holding. He was forced to just deal with it floating there, flickering above his head.

The land around him trembled, and divine sense swept about. Meng Hao increased his speed. These mountains were huge, and were also dotted with restrictive spells that, if accidentally triggered, would very likely kill him. Because of that, he wasn't able to maintain top speed.

As he proceeded along cautiously, his eyes gleamed brightly. Before, he had moved around in the area in front of the temple, but now the whole sprawling mountain range was open to him.

“Now that they'll be forced to come at me one by one, I'm curious to see which of these Chosen from the outside is actually the most powerful!”

Time passed by. Soon, it was midday. Meng Hao happened to be in a forested area, when suddenly his expression flickered, and he shot backward. A black arrow slammed into the ground where he had just been standing. The ground exploded, sending dirt and vegetation showering into the air. Then a cold snort could be heard.

“So, this is where you've been hiding!” someone said. A young man appeared, wearing a magnificent violet robe embroidered with dragons. He wore a crown on his head, and his cultivation base was incredible, beyond the peak of Dao Seeking. As soon as he appeared, his gaze locked onto the bronze lamp above Meng Hao's head.

“If I can subdue you, then I, Sun Hai, will achieve even more fame than before! The good fortune of the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite Temple will belong to me!”

Next to Sun Hai was an old man who radiated an archaic aura. He seemed extremely ancient, and although he was initially unprepossessing in appearance, his eyes suddenly began to shine brightly like two suns.

Sun Hai turned to the old man and said, “Subdue him!”

The old man looked at Meng Hao and smiled. His body then surged with energy, almost as if an Immortal were inside him, sitting in meditation. As he stepped forward, ripples spread out, distorting the air around him.

Meng Hao silently turned to face the two people, and his eyes narrowed. He remembered these two; the young man was one of the Chosen he had seen back at the temple, one of the group of seven or eight who had attacked him.

“Let’s see if you’ve got the skill to suppress Meng Hao,” he said with a slight smile.

As the old man stepped forward, the world in front of Meng Hao seemed to stretch out, and then suddenly shrink back to normal. When the interchange was completed, the old man was standing directly in front of Meng Hao.

“Die!” he said coolly, extending his right hand. Something like a sun appeared in his hand, which began to emanate brilliant light. As the light enveloped Meng Hao, Meng Hao snorted coldly. Not only did he not retreat, he actually advanced, and as he stepped forward, a shadow appeared behind him that turned into his second true self. It radiated a murderous aura as it headed toward the violet-robed Sun Hai.

“Kill the old one first, then cut down the young one!” said Meng Hao coolly. His Dharma Idol appeared, bursting with the energy of a cultivation base half a step into true Immortality. The Dharma Idol’s hands lifted up and pushed out to fight back against the old man.

Rumbling filled the air, and the old man’s arms trembled. A cold light appeared in his eye that was filled with a murderous aura. His body suddenly seemed to turn weak and skinny, but an incredible energy surged out from within him. He clenched his palm into a fist and then punched out toward Meng Hao.

Off to the side, Meng Hao’s second true self was already fighting with the violet-robed Sun Hai. Booms echoed and ripples spread out in all directions.

In ten short breaths of time, Meng Hao and the old man exchanged over a hundred moves. Suddenly, a blood-colored vortex appeared beneath Meng Hao, and the old man’s face flickered in response. Meng Hao then shot backward, and the vortex began to speed toward the old man, apparently capable of sucking in any physical object in the area.

The old man's eyes flashed and he performed an incantation gesture. Shockingly, the illusory image of an emperor appeared behind the old man, who then waved his hand toward Meng Hao.

A look of scorn appeared on Meng Hao's face, and in the blink of an eye, he shapeshifted into a huge roc. With shocking speed, he flew past the old man toward his second true self and the violet-robed Sun Hai.

The old man's face fell, and he immediately shot after him in pursuit.

Sun Hai's face flickered, and he roared, "Wherever the Emperor stands is sovereign territory!" He performed a double-handed incantation and spit out a mouthful of blood. An emperor identical to the one behind the old man appeared behind him and took a step forward, causing the entire area to be locked down.

Meng Hao didn't say anything. He slapped his bag of holding with his right hand, causing a beast claw to appear. Using his superficial knowledge of its workings, he sent it slashing forward.

Sky and land darkened, and the screech of a cat filled the air. A black illusory cat appeared, which then clawed at the sealing power that had locked down the area. A boom filled the air as the sealing power was shattered.

In that instant, roc-form Meng Hao moved like lightning to appear directly in front of Sun Hai, whose eyes narrowed. Even as he backed up, Meng Hao closed in and slashed a claw-like hand at him, and they began to fight.

The Ninth Mountain appeared next to Meng Hao, blocking an attack from the old man. At the same time, Meng Hao unleashed the Star Plucking Magic. An enormous hand appeared which grabbed Sun Hai. Blood sprayed from his mouth, and he struggled mightily, but Meng Hao closed in on him and pushed down onto his chest. The Blood Demon Grand Magic surged, and Sun Hai screamed as his body withered up. Then Meng Hao quickly sealed him and tossed him into his bag of holding.

As he turned, the old man let out a roar of rage. His eyes were completely bloodshot as he watched Meng Hao capture the Young Lord Sun Hai. He was instantly sent into a violent rage.

"Shouting isn't going to do you any good," said Meng Hao with a cold laugh. "You're not strong enough to suppress me, and yet you provoke me anyway? You've brought your death upon yourself." As Meng Hao sped backward, the old man shot toward him, howling furiously. The

emperor image behind him let off a shocking pressure, causing Meng Hao's face to flicker. This old man was a Dao Protector and, despite his sealed cultivation base, was still incredibly powerful.

Meng Hao snorted coldly, and his eyes flickered. It was at this point that, all of a sudden, Wang Mu burst out from the forest behind Meng Hao. He had already been in the area when he sensed the ripples emanating out from the fighting. As soon as he appeared, his vision suddenly rippled, and electricity flashed all around him. In the next breath, he and Meng Hao had switched positions.

"Many thanks, little brother Wang," Meng Hao laughed. He instantly disappeared into the forest. His second true self transformed into a shadow and then vanished.

Wang Mu and the enraged old man slammed into each other, causing a huge boom to rattle out. Then they turned their heads in the direction Meng Hao had disappeared, and killing intent surged. Without another word, they shot after him in pursuit.

Meng Hao grumbled to himself in irritation, then gritted his teeth and sped onward.

Two hours passed in a flash. In addition to his incredible speed, Meng Hao also had the Lightning Cauldron. As he flitted through the forest, he sent his divine sense out. The forested area was not small, and although he was being pursued, it was relatively easy for him to make his way freely through the trees.

After a while, he slapped his bag of holding with his right hand, causing the crown-wearing Sun Hai to appear.

"I'm from the Church of the Emperor Imm—"

POW!

Meng Hao slapped him across the side of the face.

Sun Hai's eyes turned red and he glared at Meng Hao, panting. However, he didn't say anything further. Meng Hao completely ignored him, and instead looked through Sun Hai's bag of holding, and then patted Sun Hai down. In the end, his eyes went wide.

“You have nothing at all?” he said angrily. “What happened on your way here, did you get robbed or something?” He felt as if he had been fooled into snatching someone who was actually poorer than himself.

Sun Hai’s bag of holding had absolutely nothing in it....

Sun Hai wanted to howl with rage. As a Chosen from the Church of the Emperor Immortal, he had come to South Heaven with vast quantities of magical items, and even some very rare items. In fact, some of the magical weapons were specifically useful because of his type of cultivation base, and could push his divine abilities to the peak of their power. However... before meeting Meng Hao, he actually had been robbed in a very humiliating fashion.

That was one reason why it had been so easy for Meng Hao to capture him.

“Are all of you people from Planet South Heaven bandits!?” said Sun Hai through gritted teeth, his heart dripping with blood.

Meng Hao stared in shock. All it took was one question, and Sun Hai revealed the truth. Meng Hao thought about it, and couldn’t recall anyone in the lands of South Heaven who had tried to steal business from him. However, now that a competitor had appeared, he realized he needed to be on guard.

“Well, whatever,” Meng Hao said with a slight sigh. “I guess it’s just my bad luck. Now, write up a promissory note!”

“Y-you.... Forget about it! I’m not writing any promissory note!”

“You don’t give me any magical items, and you won’t write a promissory note?! You useless piece of crap! If it weren’t for the fact that I don’t want to cause any unnecessary problems for my dad and mom, I would just cut you down!” Glaring, Meng Hao reached out and grabbed him by the hair, then sealed his mouth and cultivation base, and finally, cast a minor magical spell on him that he had learned in the Ancient Demon Immortal Sect. Then, he sped off, dragging Sun Hai by the hair behind him on the ground....

Sun Hai was trembling. His cultivation base was sealed, as was his mouth. Whatever magical technique it was that Meng Hao had just used on him caused his sensitivity to pain to increase severalfold, making it so that being dragged across the ground felt like death by a thousand cuts....

