

The Heavens 91

Chapter 91: What Goes Around Comes Around

Fire Globe after Fire Globe descended onto the corpses. The reek of blood still filled the air, but it was soon overpowered by the stench of scorched flesh. The disgusting odor emanated out in all directions.

Meng Hao collected the bags of holding. He sniffed the air, then with one last silent look at the North Sea, turned and left.

“I can’t stay in the State of Zhao any more... I need to leave.” Meng Hao knew that if the Winding Stream Sect had appeared, then the rest of the three great Sects must also be aware of the deaths of their Priests and Elders. Soon, the mountains would be crawling with Qi Condensation Cultivators seeking to determine how they had died.

Meng Hao frowned. Looking off into the distance, an image appeared in his mind, a map of the Southern Domain. On the other side of these mountains was a vast plain which was the border of the State of Zhao.

“It’s not far, but things will get violent here very soon. I can’t stay any longer.” Meng Hao changed his direction. These mountains belonged to the region of the Reliance Sect. He would leave the State of Zhao by a different route.

With his mind made up, Meng Hao raced forward. Unfortunately, before he could get far, his eyes narrowed, and he dropped to the ground. Frowning, he looked off into the distance with cold eyes. A few dozen kilometers ahead of him, an enormous glowing shield was descending from the sky. It transformed into countless flakes of flying snow which cut off the Reliance Sect outer reaches from the rest of the world.

Floating in the sky off in the distance was a middle-aged man wearing a long black robe. His Cultivation base was at the Foundation Establishment stage. In his hand he held a piece of frozen jade. Beams of light twirled around it slowly. This magical item was the source of the flying snow shield that surrounded everything, sealing it off.

Surrounding the man were seven or eight Qi Condensation Cultivators, with dignified looks on their faces. From their clothing, Meng Hao could tell that they were from the Cold Wind Sect.

“No wonder they’re called the three great Sects. Even with so many Foundation Establishment Elders dead, even more appear.” Meng Hao’s heart sank as he realized that this seal had completely cut off his path of escape. He had no way to leave now. Before he had time to examine the situation further, he suddenly shot backward. The flying snow shield had suddenly begun to contract rapidly.

As it did, it completely froze the land and trees it passed. It moved rapidly, heading directly toward Meng Hao’s position. Of course, it wasn’t targeting Meng Hao; this was just a normal function of the sealing spell. The contraction wouldn’t last for long; it would move inward a few hundred kilometers, then slowly come to a stop.

Meng Hao was not very far away from it. As he retreated, he had no time conceal his movements. As it approached, he hopped onto a flying sword, transforming into a beam of light, which of course attracted the attention of the Cold Wind Sect Cultivators.

“That person....”

“It’s Meng Hao! I saw his picture!”

“So, it’s Meng Hao. The Priests and the others are looking for him. Seize him! Then we can finally understand what happened here!” The eyes of the Cold Wind Sect Cultivators glowed with ill intentions.

“All of you, go capture him,” said the Foundation Establishment Cultivator. “I’m consolidating the sealing spell and still need few moments.” Having just activated the seal contraction, he wasn’t able to leave his position. However, as far as he was concerned, Meng Hao was incapable of escape.

As soon as the words left the man’s mouth, the seven or eight Cold Wind disciples shot after Meng Hao in pursuit.

Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. He shot forward, the seal contracting behind him, the Cultivators right behind it, hot in pursuit.

As he raced forward, the Cold Wind shield grew closer and closer, until it was only about thirty meters away. Finally, it slowed down and stopped contracting. It became a thick shield of ice, covering the entire Reliance Sect mountainous regions.

The seal was actually not completely solidified. If he was only at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, he would not have been able to tell. But he was of the great circle of Qi Condensation. Looking at the seal, he could tell that it would not last for very long.

“I can’t get out, and I can’t kill my way out. I need to get over the mountains as fast as possible. Looking at this seal, I can tell it will start to loosen up soon. Once it does, I can make my escape.” Meng Hao gritted his teeth. He knew that this plan was a bit of a stretch, but he didn’t have many other options. Finding a way to conceal himself for a bit of time would do, but first he had to take the initiative to get out of his current situation.

Eyes gleaming, he ceased his retreat. Instead, he stood there, watching coldly as eight Cold Wind Sect Cultivators approached.

“Eight people in all. Two of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, four of the eighth and two of the seventh. They all have magical flight items. It seems the three Sects are quite anxious. They didn’t spare any cost at all to get here as quickly as possible.” Meng Hao glanced back at the Foundation Establishment Cultivator; he was maintaining the spell and couldn’t move at the moment. However, as a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, he was extremely powerful. He floated there, looking coldly at Meng Hao.

As their gazes locked onto each other, the eight other Cultivators shot through the flying snow shield. This was one of the strange properties of this particular shield; it could be entered into, but not exited.

The eight people descended onto Meng Hao, their faces twisted with vicious grins. He sprang into action.

He clenched his right hand into a fist, stepped forward, and smashed it into the ground. The power of the great circle of Qi Condensation exploded out as a gale force wind slammed into the eight Cultivators. They stopped in their tracks, shock written on their faces.

At the same time, two wooden swords appeared in Meng Hao’s hands. They screamed through the air, and the heads of the two seventh-level Qi Condensation disciples flew into the air.

“One breath,” said Meng Hao to himself. The Foundation Establishment Cultivator had said he only needed a few moments. Meng Hao wasn’t sure if that was true or not. Either way, his own requirement was that he wipe out these eight people within the space of ten breaths.

Amidst the whistling screams of the wooden swords, the remaining six disciples scrambled to pull out magical items. Before that could happen, Meng Hao spun, dashing toward one of the eighth-level Cultivators. He didn't use a magical item, but rather his shoulder.

Boom! Meng Hao slammed into him, and blood shot out of his mouth. His body caved in, and as he flew backward, Meng Hao flicked his right hand. A massive Flame Python appeared, sixty meters long. Roaring, it shot toward another eighth-level Cultivator. A blood-curdling scream rang out as the Flame Python consuming him whole.

“Four breaths.” In four breaths, Meng Hao had killed four people. The remaining four looked on in shock. Meng Hao had attacked with a viciousness they had never before seen. Now that he had revealed the power of his Cultivation base, the remaining four Cultivators trembled, unable to comprehend what was happening.

Off in the distance, the Foundation Establishment Cultivator looked on in shock. Moments ago, he had seen that Meng Hao was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation; but in the space of a few breaths, his Cultivation base had suddenly climbed to an incredible height.

“Six breaths.” Meng Hao's hand flickered in an incantation, and the sword auras from the two wooden swords spilled out. The remaining two Cultivators of the eight level of Qi Condensation tried to defend with magical items as the swords shot forward. Horrified screams rang out as their hearts were stabbed through. Their bodies fell to the ground.

Now, only two Cultivators remained, both of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Their faces pale, they had already begun to edge backwards. When Meng Hao's cold gaze fell upon them, they scattered, each one running off in a different direction.

With a cold look on his face, Meng Hao raised his right hand, which flickered with an incantation. A massive Wind Blade appeared, fifteen or twenty meters long. It sped forth with a shrill whistling sound. At the same time, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding. The black bow appeared in his hand. He drew back on the bow, and then shot an arrow toward the other person.

“Eight breaths,” said Meng Hao softly. Two booming sounds rang out. The Wind Blade slashed through the first ninth-level Cultivator, splitting his body in two and sending blood and gore splattering everywhere.

Simultaneously, a black arrow pierced the other Cultivator's head, causing it to explode violently.

Eight breaths, eight kills!

Meng Hao, expressionless, looked out through the flying snow shield at the Foundation Establishment Cultivator for a moment. Then his body transformed into a glittering beam and he shot off into the distance.

He moved about, avoiding quite a few Cultivators. But the area covered by the sealing spell was not large. With so many Cultivators of the eighth and ninth levels of Qi Condensation, it wouldn't take them long to search everywhere. As for Foundation Establishment Cultivators, they could fly, and would be able to search even faster.

Meng Hao continued to evade detection, until finally he approached the Reliance Sect itself. It was then that ten beams of light appeared in the sky, soaring forward at top speed. In the lead of this group of people was a grim-faced old man. Unlike the others who surrounded him, he was not soaring, but actually flying.

Cultivators of the Qi Condensation stage could not do this; this man was clearly a Foundation Establishment Cultivator!

“The Upright Evening Sect....” Catching sight of them, Meng Hao sighed. He finally came to accept that he would not be able to escape this day. He could try to hide, but he would be found eventually.

“Meng Hao!” Upon catching sight of him, the faces of the Upright Evening Sect Cultivators twisted. The old man of the Foundation Establishment stage raced toward Meng Hao, his eyes shining.

Meng Hao's eyes grew dark as he watched the Foundation Establishment Cultivator approach. The massive power of the Foundation Establishment stage roiled out from the man. The immensity of this power caused the surrounding Qi Condensation Cultivators to shrink back, their Cultivation bases teetering.

This was the might of Foundation Establishment. He flew through the air with seemingly no effort, imposing to the extreme. Without even trying, he caused the Qi Condensation Cultivators to tremble.

But Meng Hao was not an ordinary Qi Condensation Cultivator. A thirteenth-level Cultivator of the great circle of Qi Condensation had not been seen since ancient times. He had Spiritual Sense.

Although it wasn't very strong, it was there. His Cultivation base was not thrown into chaos like the others.

His physical body was more powerful, his Qi vessels tougher, even his bones were stronger. Despite facing up against a powerful Foundation Establishment expert, he refused to retreat back even half a pace.

"So, the person who created all these waves in the State of Zhao is a Cultivator halfway to the Foundation Establishment stage," said the Foundation Establishment Cultivator coolly. "Today, however, if I say you shall die, then die you shall."

Just then, another beam of radiant light appeared from behind Meng Hao. It screamed toward them. This was none other than the Cold Wind Sect's Foundation Establishment expert. He radiated a killing aura.

"I tread the path of Cultivation, and am not ignorant of the rules of life and death," said Meng Hao coolly. "I can kill others, so naturally, others can kill me. But let me ask you a question. You three Sects permitted Shangguan Xiu to absorb the life force of the mortals of three counties. He even damaged their longevity. Mortals do not practice Cultivation. Harming a Cultivator is one thing, but you, for selfish personal gain, permitted such a horrific act. This is a violation of the theory of law. What goes around comes around!" He had wanted to say these words for a long time.

"Theory of law? In heaven and earth, the powerful people make the laws. And if what goes around comes around, then you've got something coming to you, wouldn't you say?"

Meng Hao said nothing. He simply looked up into the sky.

Chapter 92: Exterminate Foundation Establishment!

In front of Meng Hao was the old Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Upright Evening Sect. Behind him was the enraged Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect. As of this moment, Foundation Establishment Cultivators from two of the three great Sects of the State of Zhao had appeared.

In his heart, Meng Hao knew that he was stuck between a rock and a hard place. It would be difficult to escape. Theoretically, he could lead them into Patriarch Reliance's secluded meditation zone, but to do that would require the cooperation of Patriarch Reliance himself.

Considering everything that had happened between the two of them, and also considering the Patriarch's temperament, it was doubtful he would help out. Furthermore, Meng Hao had already used that ruse that once. The chances of tricking more people in the same way was not high. In the end, though, he had little choice but to try.

"The Priests and Elders of the three great Sects are not dead!" he said suddenly, just as the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Upright Evening Sect approached with hand raised.

As soon as the words left his mouth, the old man's eyes gleamed. The face of the man from the Cold Wind Sect also flickered.

"They're trapped inside Patriarch Reliance's Immortal's Cave. It's right over there." He lifted his hand to point at the East Mountain.

The eyes of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect flashed like lightning as he glanced up at the peak. The group of Qi Condensation Cultivators from the Upright Evening Sect also looked toward the East Mountain.

However, the Upright Evening Sect Foundation Establishment Cultivator smiled. It was a gruesome smile filled with ridicule.

"I'm interested to know how you are aware that the Priests and Elders from the three great Sects are dead." Hearing this, Meng Hao's heart flip-flopped, although his expression did not change.

"It actually doesn't matter what you say. Once I get ahold of you, you'll answer all my questions." He lifted his right hand and stretched it out towards Meng Hao. As he did, the power of his Foundation Establishment Cultivation base exploded out, and an enormous hand appeared in the air in front of him. It screamed through the air, heading directly toward Meng Hao.

Meng Hao immediately began to dodge, but even as he did so, the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect flicked his sleeve and gave out a cold laugh. A fierce wind shot toward Meng Hao.

Both Foundation Establishment Cultivators attacked at the same time. Gritting his teeth, Meng Hao slapped his bag of holding. A sheet of lightning appeared which coalesced into a Lightning Flag.

This flag was one of the objects he had taken from Patriarch Reliance, and it had the power to defend against attacks from Foundation Establishment Cultivators. As soon as it appeared, it grew, transforming into a sheet of mist, within which lightning roiled. The mist expanded out to cover Meng Hao.

An explosion rolled out. Inside the mist, Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and his body was shoved backward. The eyes of the old Foundation Establishment Cultivator grew wide, and he stared in shock at the mist.

The man from the Cold Wind Sect gasped loudly.

The mist surrounding Meng Hao was about fifteen or twenty meters in diameter. Meng Hao's face was pale and his mouth was smeared with blood. His internal organs ached and bled, and only by extorting a huge amount of effort was he able to keep them under control. To employ the full power of the flag would require significant refinement, and Meng Hao hadn't had very much time to practice with it. As such, he could only utilize half of its power. It rotated around him unstably.

"This is an excellent treasure," said the old man from the Upright Evening Sect. "Too bad you can't use it correctly. Let's see how much of my magic you can withstand!" He moved forward, raising his hand again. A field of black dust spread out in front of him. It glittered as it transformed into a multitude of black threads, which then flew toward the mist.

A boom rang out, and then the old man himself neared the mist. Every time he waved his hand back and forth, the black dust threads smashed into the mist, causing booms to ring out.

With a cold smile, the Cold Wind Sect Cultivator flashed an incantation sign. His hand instantly transformed into ice, which then shattered and reformed in front of him into a larger hand. The icy hand shot toward Meng Hao.

In the blink of an eye, it reached him. Thunderous roars filled the air as the black threads and the icy hand caused the mist surrounding Meng Hao to slowly contract. Inside, blood sprayed from Meng Hao's mouth, and his body felt as if it were about to be torn to pieces. His mind was in a jumble, and his face as pale as death. A feeling of life-and-death peril enveloped him; the thread connecting him to the Lightning Flag could be severed at any moment.

When that happened, it wouldn't matter that Meng Hao's Cultivation base had completed the great circle of Qi Condensation. That was still the Qi Condensation stage, and he was facing the Foundation Establishment stage. The gap between the two was too vast.

At this critical juncture, Meng Hao, his eyes bloodshot, suddenly slapped his bag of holding. In his hand appeared an oil lamp, from within which emitted an ancient Qi.

The wick of this lamp was a Nascent Soul, sitting cross-legged in meditation. It was none other than... Lord Revelation!

The Nascent Soul was the fuel, and life force was the fire. The blazing flame cast light onto Meng Hao's face. A ferocious expression filled his face, and his eyes shined with killing intent. He had thought of the only possible way to get out of this situation.

He took a deep breath, and suddenly, popping sounds rang out from his body. His Cultivation base began to rotate with the power of the great circle of Qi Condensation. His Core sea roiled and churned, and spiritual power raced through his Qi passageways. He poured the full power of his Cultivation base into a single mouthful of Qi.

He looked out past the mist.

Because the mist was covering him, no one could see the oil lamp in his hand. Furthermore, none of the Qi from the lamp emanated outwards.

Bangs rang out as the mist continued to contract. Currently, it only stretched out about three meters. More black dust appeared in the hand of the old Foundation Establishment Cultivator.

"Open up!" he roared, waving his hand toward the mist. Instantly, an explosion could be heard as the mist shattered and dispersed, reforming into the Lightning Flag, which flew back to Meng Hao.

"If I say today is the day you die, then you will die!" The old man waved his hand again, and the black dust descended toward Meng Hao.

It was then that the old man noticed the oil lamp in the hands of pale-faced Meng Hao. His expression suddenly changed.

"Is that...?"

Meng Hao's killing intent soared. Without giving his opponent even the chance to think, he opened his lips and spit out the mouthful of Qi.

The Qi passed through the flame of the oil lamp. As it did, it expanded out into a massive conflagration. The old Foundation Establishment cultivator retreated, shocked. But the expanding flames were too fast, and reached him in an instant.

Miserable screams filled the air as fire consumed him. The black dust in his hand had already been vaporized. Within seconds, his clothing, and then his flesh, and been reduced to ash.

Everything happened too quickly. The surrounding Cultivators didn't even have time to react. By the time the blood-curdling screams began to ring out, the old Cultivator had already been burned into nothingness. Nothing remained, not even his bag of holding.

Meng Hao's face was pale, and his hands trembled. The Qi he had just shot out contained all the power of his Cultivation base, as well as the fearsome might of the oil lamp's flame.

Everything was as silent as death... Wisps of twisting demonic flame still floated about in the spot where the Foundation Establishment Cultivator had been incinerated.

The sounds of his screams still echoed in the air. The nine or so remaining Cultivators from the Upright Evening Sect looked on with expressions of disbelief.

"Elder Zhang just...."

"What... what was that fire?"

"This is impossible.... Elder Zhang is a Foundation Establishment Cultivator. How could he possibly die under Meng Hao's hand...."

They didn't dare to believe. A mighty Foundation Establishment expert, unexpectedly... burned to death by a flame cast by a Qi Condensation Cultivator. In their minds, this was an impossibility. Foundation Establishment Cultivators simply could not be killed by Qi Condensation Cultivators.

Even a weak Foundation Establishment Cultivator shouldn't be able to die at the hand of a Qi Condensation Cultivator

What they had just witnessed set their minds spinning into chaos. They stared at Meng Hao in astonishment.

What they didn't know was that the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect was even more flabbergasted than they were. He stared at the place where the old Foundation Establishment Cultivator had just been, his eyes wide, his face pale, and his heart trembling. An indescribable fear gripped his heart.

As a Foundation Establishment Cultivator, he was in an elite position in the State of Zhao, and rarely had anything to fear. Yet now, he was afraid. In fact, "afraid," is probably not the appropriate word. He was petrified.

He looked at the oil lamp in Meng Hao's hand, his mind reeling. The terror in his heart grew stronger. He didn't know what fire this Qi Condensation disciple had wielded, but he had an inkling.

"That must have been Nascent Soul fire. That's a Nascent Soul. That fire was kindled with life force to form Nascent Soul fire! It can burn to death, not only Foundation Establishment Cultivators, but also Core Formation stage Cultivators!" His breathing agitated, he stared at Meng Hao. His scalp grew numb, and he subconsciously retreated a few paces. He did not dare to get any closer. At the moment, he had forgotten completely about his prestigious Foundation Establishment status.

Meng Hao stood there on his flying sword, the lamp in his hand. He made a beckoning motion with his left hand, and the Lightning Flag flew back into his bag of holding. He rotated his Cultivation base, staring coldly at the Cold Wind Sect Cultivator.

It was at this moment, however, that three blurs of light appeared in the air above the Reliance Sect, each one over thirty meters wide. Ripples spread out from them as they shot mightily toward Meng Hao and the others.

Within the three beams were three old men who looked as if they had just climbed out of the grave. Their faces were covered with wrinkles, and strong Death Qi emanated from their bodies. And yet, along with the Death Qi that circled about them was the Qi of their Condensation bases. This Qi was eminently powerful. It was not quite of the Nascent Soul stage, but they had definitely completed the great circle of Core Formation.

Meng Hao's heart sank, and he clasped his oil lamp tightly. He had just expended roughly eighty to ninety percent of his Cultivation base. It had taken that much to create the terrifying fire he had just utilized.

Their speed was incredible as they approached. A relieved expression appeared in the eye of the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect. And yet, at that very moment, a Qi appeared which surpassed that of the Pseudo Nascent Soul stage Patriarchs. In an instant, the Qi enveloped the entire State of Zhao.

An enormous bell appeared above the Reliance Sect, and a grim voice filled the air.

“Patriarch Reliance, get the hell out and face me!”

The voice crackled like lightning, its power filling the sky. Its might billowed out, shattering the flying snow shield. As for the nine or so Qi Condensation disciples from the Upright Evening Sect, blood fountained out of their mouths, and then one by one, they exploded, unable to withstand the power.

Meng Hao's body shook, and he spit out blood. He looked up into the sky, his eyes narrowing.

The face of the Cold Wind Sect's Foundation Establishment Cultivator twisted, and the approaching Patriarchs from the three great Sects looked amazed. They stopped flying and immediately clasped hands and bowed toward an old man in a black robe who stood next to the bell in the sky.

His robes whipped about in the wind. Behind him, the clouds spun violently. The pupil of his left eye looked like the sun, and shone with brilliant light. The right eye was dark, and its pupil looked like a crescent moon. On his forehead was a strange looking slit, within which appeared to be another eye. This eye itself was invisible, but emitted a bloody glow.

It was Lord Revelation!

Chapter 93: Sever the Dao, Change Heaven and Earth, Demonic Will!

The instant he saw Lord Revelation, Meng Hao's body grew stiff. In his hands, the Nascent Soul of Lord Revelation's clone burned in the demonic lamp.

Lord Revelation's shout shook the earth for millions of kilometers in all directions. Mountains trembled and the sky filled with dark, roiling clouds.

Meng Hao's heart quivered and blood seeped out of his mouth. His body was pushed backwards relentlessly. He coughed up an entire mouthful of blood.

Everyone in the region of the Reliance Sect, including the Pseudo Nascent Soul Patriarchs and the Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect, were as frightened as cicadas in cold weather. They didn't dare to make even the slightest sound. They stared up into the sky, astonished, their eyes filled with dread.

And yet, despite the quaking of the earth, the area around Patriarch Reliance's secluded meditation zone was completely quiet. Not a sound could be heard from Patriarch Reliance.

Lord Revelation hovered in the air next to his bell. His eyes shone with the splendor of the sun and moon. The darkness and light seemed to interlock and then combine with the crimson bloody glow which emanated from the slit on his forehead. He lifted his right hand up, and then waved it downward.

As he did, the dark glow, the bright light and the bloody essence combined to form the image of a hand. It began to descend toward the earth.

It takes some time to describe, but happened in an instant. A roar filled the air as the hand fell downward toward the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect. As the hand descended onto the East Mountain, it began to crumble, layer after layer crashing down and disintegrating into dust. By the time the hand had finished its descent, the East Mountain... was gone!

The earth shook, and a fierce wind kicked up. After destroying the East Mountain, the hand didn't stop. It continued to pierce down into the ground, as if Lord Revelation knew exactly where Patriarch Reliance's secluded meditation chamber was located.

A boom resonated outward, filling nearly half of the State of Zhao. The earth rippled outwards. It seemed that the hand had pierced down and actually destroyed Patriarch Reliance's secluded meditation zone!

After the hand finally disappeared, the onlookers saw a massive hole. Within it were numerous incomplete restrictive spells. The place... really was Patriarch Reliance's secluded meditation zone.

Stone steles and altars lay about in ruins. The massive image of Patriarch Reliance's face was shattered into pieces, and the secluded meditation chamber had been knocked open.

But... Patriarch Reliance was nowhere to be seen!

"Patriarch Reliance, get the hell out here!" When Lord Revelation saw that Patriarch Reliance was not in the meditation chamber, he raised his head to the sky and let out a roar.

The roar vibrated the heavens, rippling outward until it filled the entire State of Zhao.

"You get the hell out here!"

"Get the hell out here!"

"Get the hell out..."

"Get the hell..." Innumerable echoes could be heard, swirling together to form a mighty sound of incomprehensible might.

Meng Hao's body trembled as he looked out at the scene. In the place where the East Mountain had once stood, was a giant hole. Patriarch Reliance had been there just a few hours ago, but now he wasn't.

"Where is he..." thought Meng Hao, his face growing pale. At the moment, he literally couldn't move. The power of Lord Revelation's voice suppressed everything. Anyone whose Cultivation base was lower than Lord Revelations could do nothing more than struggle to stand up against it.

The power seemed to contain elements of the Heavens, as if Lord Revelation's will controlled everything.

"This is not Nascent Soul stage, this is Spirit Severing stage!!"

"It's definitely Spirit Severing, otherwise this will could not be present!" The three Pseudo Nascent Core Patriarchs of the three great Sects appeared even more shocked.

“Patriarch Reliance, you won’t show your face? I’ll destroy your only Inner Sect disciple and wipe out the bloodline of your Sect forever! I’ll level all of these mountains and melt the entire State of Zhao until you appear!” He had already swept the State of Zhao with his Spiritual Sense, but no matter how he searched, he couldn’t find Patriarch Reliance.

And yet on his way here, he had clearly divined that Patriarch Reliance... was within the State of Zhao.

A cold look glowed in Lord Revelation’s eyes. This was his true self, here to battle with Patriarch Reliance. And yet, Patriarch Reliance was hiding. Powerful killing intent emanated from Lord Revelation. There was a wealth of methods he could use to force Patriarch Reliance to show himself, including killing his Inner Sect disciple and levelling the mountains. If exterminating the State of Zhao didn’t draw him out, he could literally melt the entire nation.

Lord Revelation had long since caught sight of the oil lamp in Meng Hao’s hands. He looked down, his gaze sweeping the land once again. He lifted his hand, then waved it downward a second time.

This time light poured from his eyes, and the slit on his forehead opened up to the width of a finger. The blood red light poured out, and as his hand descended, the mountains for tens of thousands of miles in all directions began to rock and sway. In the sky above the quaking mountains, appeared... an enormous hand!

At first it didn’t seem very large, but amidst thunderous rumblings, it grew larger and larger, until it seemed as if it covered the mountains for tens of thousands of kilometres in all directions. The earth trembled, and the faces of the three Pseudo Nascent Soul Patriarchs were filled with shock. They fled at the fastest speed they could muster.

The Foundation Establishment Cultivator from the Cold Wind Sect looked pale. He bit the tip of his tongue, sacrificing some of his Cultivation base as he transforming into a prismatic beam of light and fled off into the distance.

As for Meng Hao, his Cultivation base was the weakest. He couldn’t even move. The oil lamp flew out of his hands, racing toward the giant palm. The cross-legged Nascent Soul inside opened its eyes, and then radiated a glow similar to that emitted by Lord Revelation.

Meng Hao could only watch wide-eyed as the hand in the sky grew bigger and bigger. It covered everything, until it was the only thing visible in the entire sky.

Everything for tens of thousands of kilometers grew black. The hand covered everything. And then, it began to descend. The earth began to quake. Mountains buckled and collapsed. As the hand fell toward him, Meng Hao felt as if doomsday had arrived.

A bitter look appeared on his face as he stood there silently. There was no fear or dread in his eyes. He let out a soft sigh.

“Is everything going to end? I just... I can’t accept it.” Stubbornness filled his eyes, a flicker which turned into a roaring flame.

“In the Cultivation world, the weak are the prey of the strong. The Cultivation base is everything. Only by becoming powerful can you continue on living. Only by increasing your strength can you prevent yourself from being crushed beneath the feet of others. Only then can you stand high in the sky.” Meng Hao suddenly smiled. His smile was filled with deep understanding. His will carried the deep desire to become powerful. Now, in the face of such imminent danger, he truly understood himself.

“The sages said, learning is the most important thing in the life. But in the Cultivation world, only the powerful can remain undefeated!” Meng Hao stared up at the descending hand. He would watch as it landed onto his body, crushing him into the ground. He would not close his eyes. He would watch everything. He would imprint this vision onto his spirit. When he was reincarnated, it would still be there. If there really was a next life... he would become powerful and invincible then!

As the hand continued to plummet, the mountains around him crumbled. Everything started to grow blurry, and blackness filled Meng Hao’s eyes. It was as if at this moment, heaven and earth viewed him as nothing more than a bug. He didn’t struggle in the least bit.

“If there is an afterlife, I will never allow something like this to happen again!”

Amidst the deafening roaring, Meng Hao stood there, trembling. Blood seeped out of his orifices, and his bones made cracking sounds. Within moments, he would be reduced to nothing more than a pool of blood.

It was at this moment that, all of a sudden, a dark red light appeared. Glowing brightly, it shot toward the hand at high speed, speeding out from a location far away from Meng Hao’s vision.

The blood-red glow seemed to be formed from the dregs of blood refined over innumerable years. A powerful Demonic aura poured out, filling the heavens.

The Demonic aura was so thick that it seemed to be able to change the color of heaven and earth. In the blink of an eye, everything turned the color of blood!

The bloody glow approached, speeding toward the massive hand that Lord Revelation had summoned. And then it severed it!

The severing sent a bloody glow high into the Heavens!

This severing was powerful enough to rend all creation.

This severing seemed strong enough to split heaven and earth into two. And even if it wasn't actually that powerful, it had the will to attempt to!

Sever the Dao, change heaven and earth, Demonic will!

This person... was not Patriarch Reliance!

Chapter 94: You Really Want Me To Come Out?

An incredible roaring boom sounded out from the massive hand as the glowing red beam sliced through it. Starting in the space between the middle and ring finger of the hand, a massive gash appeared, cutting it completely in half.

One slash, and the hand was severed.

"You!!!" cried Lord Revelation. His face flickered, and he lifted his head, his eyes flashing.

A thunderous boom rolled across the land. The giant hand, tens of thousands of kilometers wide, had moments ago blotted out Meng Hao's vision, covering the entire land. But in the blink of an eye, a gap appeared, and Meng Hao could suddenly see the sky.

The hand split apart into two halves, each of which slammed into the ground on either side of Meng Hao.

The ground trembled and began to sink down. The mountains were crushed. All the wild creatures in the area, unable to flee, were instantly transformed to ash.

The Cold Wind Sect Foundation Establishment Cultivator, despite having spared no effort in his attempt to flee, could not possibly escape in such a short time. He was smashed to death into the ground.

The Cultivation bases of the three Pseudo Nascent Soul Patriarchs were anything but ordinary. Furthermore, Lord Revelation was not targeting them with his attack. They also sacrificed elements of their Cultivation bases to flee. Coughing up seven or eight mouthfuls of blood each, they just managed to reach the edge of the giant hand. Behind them, the earth seemed to have turned into a violently churning sea. As the hand disappeared, they mutely looked back at the scene.

Previously, the Reliance Sect had been surrounded by endless mountain chains. As of now, the only thing that remained was a massive recess in the ground. Its shape was that of a giant hand.

However, the handprint was not complete. Splitting it down the middle was a jagged section of earth jutting up into the sky like a mountain!

On top of the mountain stood Meng Hao. Beneath him was a stretch of earth about three hundred meters wide. It created a jagged path, on either side of which was a massive hole that sunk down deep into the earth.

Originally, this mountain should not have been here, but there it was ... the only thing left.

A strange expression filled Meng Hao's eyes as he looked up into the sky. He didn't know who had saved him, and he didn't stop to think about it. Immediately, a flying sword appeared under his feet, and he sped off into the distance, his body turning into a multicolored beam of light as he shot toward the edge of the massive handprint.

"I never thought the illustrious Demon Lord of the Southern Domain would show up in the tiny State of Zhao." Lord Revelation's face was dark as he flicked his sleeve. His voice echoed out like thunder in all directions. "But you're only a clone! Your true self is suppressed and incapable of coming here to stop me from exterminating Patriarch Reliance!"

There was no response. It was almost as if the blood-red severing glow hadn't appeared at all.

“Patriarch Reliance, get the hell out here!”

“Get the hell out here!”

“Get the hell out here!!” As his voice boomed out, Lord Revelation lifted his right hand and slapped the Revelation Bell. Its booming filled the sky, echoing out across the land, sweeping Lord Revelation’s voice along with it.

Countless tall mountains throughout the State of Zhao began to crack and crumble as a voice filled with profound ancientness filled the air. It was impossible to tell where the voice came from, but it filled the entire nation.

“You... really want me to come out?” As soon as he heard the voice, Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed. It was Patriarch Reliance’s voice. And yet, something about it sounded different. It seemed less unreasonable and more dignified. More ancient.

“So, you finally speak,” said Lord Revelation, his eyes glittering. “Patriarch Reliance, quit hiding. We have a score to settle from a thousand years ago. Even if you succeeded in your Spirit Severing, you should not have dared to take my clone’s Nascent Soul! Today, we battle, and in the end, I will remain, and you will not!” He flicked the Revelation Bell, and it sounded out with a boom and began to emit a blinding light. The light enveloped Lord Revelation, and he began to glow brightly.

As for this battle, it must be won. He had already determined Patriarch Reliance’s true level. Lord Revelation had already completed the Second Spirit Severing, and with that power, he could exterminate Patriarch Reliance.

As for this battle, he had complete confidence. He had thrown caution to the wind and come here as his true self. A Demon Lord had appeared and used a bit of remarkable magic, but that didn’t scare him in the least.

As for this battle, there was not the slightest chance he could lose. He had brought the Revelation Bell, which had absorbed countless prayers and sacrifices from the State of Revelation. It was sentient already, his most valuable treasure. With this bell, even if he faced someone of the Third Severing, he would still be able to achieve victory. In addition to this, the Dawn Immortal had gifted him with a portion of his Spiritual Sense.

Everything was quiet for a long moment. Then, Patriarch Reliance’s voice could be heard again, filled with profound ancientness.

“Back then... I only cared about the Milky Way Sea.” The voice was filled with a strange tone. It echoed out, seemingly filled with the ability to last through the ages. It echoed out across the entirety of the State of Zhao. The land began to quake.

This quaking filled the entire State of Zhao. Even the mortals could feel it. Meng Hao ducked his head and shot forward even faster.

“I don’t know how many years passed, nor how many times I slumbered and awoke. Finally, a day arrived in which I woke up to find myself facing a through and through bastard who should have died a thousand, no, ten thousand deaths!” From his tone of voice, he seemed to be getting upset. The last few words were spoken as if through clenched teeth.

As he spoke, the trembling across the State of Zhao grew more intense. Mountains and boulders trembled, tall buildings rocked back and forth. Within the three Great Sects, the remaining Cultivators looked around in shock.

The situation was the same in Milky Way City.

Meng Hao’s mind spun. He was wondering which bastard Patriarch Reliance was referring to.

“That damned bastard couldn’t possibly defeat me. He brought a bunch of other bastards with him, and we fought back and forth for years. In the end, they deceived me. They made a lot of promises to me, convinced me to leave the Milky Way Sea and come to the Southern Domain....” Patriarch Reliance seemed to be growing angrier and angrier. As he spoke, the land of the State of Zhao shook even harder. In the northern part of the nation, a thunderous roar sounded up into the Heavens. A massive crack appeared in the land, millions of miles long, and growing longer!

If you could stand far up in the sky and look down, you would be able to see that this massive crack was not a straight line, but a curving arc.

“When I got to the Southern Domain, the bastards tricked me. They fed me a bunch of random things that ended up placing me underneath an invisible seal!! They promised me that a few years later, they would give me some kind of special blessing of good fortune. But later, the damned bastards all died or disappeared. Finally, there was only the original one left. When I was asleep, he sneaked off to another planet. He left me with a Demon Sealing Jade, which I was supposed to give to a successor. In reality, those bastards were just afraid of Heavenly tribulation, and wanted to use me to fight against it!” Patriarch Reliance seemed to be gnashing his teeth. The sound reverberated

across the land. A huge crack appeared in the eastern region of the State of Zhao, accompanied by a thunderous roar. The shape of the crack was a massive semi-circle.

Seeing all of this happen, Lord Revelation's face changed. He appeared to be growing a bit apprehensive.

Meng Hao took in a breath, thinking of the Demon Sealing Jade that he had.

"The bastards didn't keep their promise. They tricked me! I was enraged, and even though I slumbered, I still managed to squeeze out a bit of Spiritual will. It was weak, and constrained by the laws of the Dao of the Heavens, so it was incarnated into the body of a mortal. It started from scratch, practicing Cultivation. Because they tricked me, I decided to sever their legacy! I changed the name of the Demon Sealing Sect to the Reliance Sect. From then on, my Spiritual will called itself Patriarch Reliance!" As his voice boomed out, Meng Hao's eyes suddenly grew wide. He looked back at the land of the State of Zhao behind him. It seethed like an ocean, under the echoes of Patriarch Reliance's words.

When Lord Revelation heard the words, his expression changed to one of shock. Without even thinking about it, he began to move backwards. Another crashing boom rolled out across the State of Zhao, and a massive crack appeared in the south. At the same time, in the east, a fourth arcing crack appeared, accompanied by a thunderous bang. The four massive cracks split out to meet each other, surrounding the entire State of Zhao in a massive circle.

The entirety of the State of Zhao was contained in this enormous circle which suddenly... began to rise into the air. Black soil was revealed, and a fierce gale wind blew in all directions. Massive amounts of soil crumbled off the edges.

As it rose up, the land quaked and clouds roiled in the sky. Lord Revelation's face was pale, his eyes filled with shock.

The ground rumbled as it rose higher and higher into the air. Three thousand meters, fifteen thousand, thirty thousand. It rose so high that it was impossible to describe.

The land rose up, and Meng Hao was still on it. He felt as if he were approaching the Heavens.

The land contained the cities of the mortals, the three great Sects, Milky Way city, and countless lives!

The entire State of Zhao was being lifted up, rising away from the earth, away from the Southern Domain. Beneath it was a massive, enormous hole in the ground!

The hole was, of course, the same size as the entire State of Zhao!

Standing above the hole was a vicious-looking turtle, as large as the entire State of Zhao, its body covered with countless black spikes!! It looked just like the mythical Xuan Wu black turtle!!

Earth covered the turtle's massive shell, as if the shell were being held in place by the land. The earth was none other than... the State of Zhao.

A colossal head slowly emerged from the turtle's shell. The head was roughly one tenth the size of the entire State of Zhao. Its skin was black, and covered with creases. Earth crumbled off from the head as it raised up. Its massive eyes turned to look down on Lord Revelation who stood there panting, as tiny as an insect, his face pale, his body quivering, a look of disbelief on his face.

“You called me out. Shall we fight?”

Chapter 95: A Rain Shower, a Cold Spell

Meng Hao stared dumbly, his mind reeling. All the fantastic and bizarre things he had seen in his life couldn't compare to the shocking sight in front of him. His mind was blank, as if he had lost his ability to even think. He could only stand there and look numbly.

Patriarch Reliance was actually... a mind-bogglingly enormous black turtle!

And the State of Zhao existed on the earth upon his back!!

He himself had lived on Patriarch Reliance's back for these twenty years. No wonder he was called Patriarch Reliance. He was relied upon not just by a single person, but by an entire nation! Cultivators and mortals alike relied on him!

After Patriarch Reliance had been sealed, he began to slumber. Yet he still managed to force out a tiny bit of his will, which then attempted to destroy the legacy of the Demon Sealing Sect.

Now it made sense why the Reliance Sect had formerly been called the Demon Sealing Sect, although few people even knew that nowadays. And no wonder the Reliance Sect was called an evil Sect and had such brutal, internecine struggles.

The body containing the sliver of his will practiced Cultivation until reaching the Spirit Severing stage, but as for his actual body... how powerful was it, exactly?!

There were still many things Meng Hao didn't understand. For example, if Patriarch Reliance was so powerful, why hadn't he been able to save himself from the very beginning? If Meng Hao hadn't appeared, would he have died? Considering how powerful his actual body was, why did he need to absorb the power of those Cultivators?

Lifted up along with the land containing the State of Zhao, the three Pseudo Nascent Soul Cultivators stared in shock as all of this happened. Their minds spun and expressions of astonishment covered their faces. They were even incapable of feeling fear. They could only stare blankly. They could scarcely even believe what they saw.

Lord Revelation was also struck speechless as he looked up at the massive head. It was immeasurably larger than he himself; in fact, it was so large that you couldn't even see from one end of it to another. Fear began to shine out from his eyes; how could he possibly have imagined that the Patriarch Reliance he had cursed and challenged to fight... would be like this?

As Patriarch Reliance's voice echoed out, his words stabbed into Lord Revelation's ears, causing his body to tremble and his scalp to go numb. He was sapped of any and all will to fight.

Patriarch Reliance didn't need to strike out. Now that he had truly appeared, he casually exuded a bit of pressure onto Lord Revelation, causing his body to tremble. Lord Revelation's blood seemed as if it would stop flowing. The Dao enlightenment he had acquired with his Spirit Severing collapsed. He was as weak as a bug. Patriarch Reliance could crush him with a single breath.

The terrifying pressure exuded by the head caused Lord Revelation's mouth to go dry. Despite his extraordinary Cultivation base, cold sweat broke out across his body. The Revelation Bell next to him didn't give him the slightest sense of comfort. Even the Spiritual Sense imparted by the Dawn Immortal didn't give him the slightest sense of safety.

Now he understood why Patriarch Reliance hadn't paid the slightest bit attention when he mentioned the Dawn Immortal. Of course he wouldn't, considering his extraordinary actual body.

And now he knew why Patriarch Reliance didn't fear the Dawn Immortal....

Even more astonishing was that in his recollection, according to all of the ancient texts he had studied, the State of Zhao had existed for a very, very long time. This made him even more frightened. Which had existed first.... Patriarch Reliance, or the State of Zhao?!

If it were the latter, that would be easier to accept. If it were the former.... Thinking of this, Lord Revelation began to tremble so violently he felt as if his skin might explode.

"Well, shall we fight?" The words echoed out Patriarch Reliance, each one of them rumbling like thunder. The thunderous booming caused Lord Revelation to be hurled backward several thousand meters. Blood showered from his mouth. The bell seemed completely ordinary now; it was covered with vast amounts of cracks and fractures.

"No... there's no need to fight," said Lord Revelation hastily, his face pale. "Just now, I of the junior generation was simply joking. Patriarch... Sir... please don't take offense...." Patriarch Reliance's two enormous eyes stared directly at him, and he trembled.

"Without your two palm strikes, I wouldn't have been able to come out. Those damned bastards sealed me many years ago; the seal has been growing weaker recently. But to break through it, I needed to recover my Cultivation base a bit more. But then in the midst of it all, someone released the power of the Spirit Severing stage. That knocked the seal even looser, and finally I was able to break out!" His voice boomed out in all directions. When Meng Hao heard the words, his body trembled.

"Originally, I planned to use my sliver of will to break the seal. But mortal Cultivation and I don't quite agree. Even with my knowledge of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, I couldn't break through to the next level of Spirit Severing. Just when I was about to make the final breakthrough, I got cheated by a hateful little bastard. Dammit, everyone from the Demon Sealing Sect is a bastard! Stealing the spiritual energy I needed to break the seal, robbing me of my demonic lamp...." He let out a roar. Meng Hao wanted to flee; he knew exactly who Patriarch Reliance was talking about.

"You did well, very well. Luckily you attacked, helping break my seal. I need to repay you."

Hearing Patriarch Reliance's words, Lord Revelation gaped in shock. Then his expression changed to one of wild joy. How could he have imagined that he would score a lucky break? He had gotten lucky after all! Even as he clasped his hands in respect, Patriarch Reliance opened his mouth, and with blinding speed, snapped him up.

Lord Revelation and his Revelation Bell were swallowed down in an instant!

Crunching sounds emanated from Patriarch Reliance's mouth, but no blood-curdling scream. When Meng Hao saw this, he began to breathe harder. He was all too familiar with Patriarch Reliance's unreasonableness. He unconsciously retreated backward. Suddenly, Patriarch Reliance's head swung around to face Meng Hao. It came to stop several hundred meters in front of him, staring at him.

Meng Hao squeezed out a smile. He didn't necessarily believe everything that Patriarch Reliance had said to Lord Revelation, but neither did he disbelieve. From his experience, most of what the Patriarch said wasn't true.

"Congratulations on emerging from seclusion, Patriarch. Your might is all-encompassing. You..."

"Now that you know the truth, are you frightened?" Patriarch Reliance's voice rolled out like thunder, and he glared at Meng Hao. The sound of his voice was so loud it was almost deafening. He coughed up some blood.

"You Demon Sealing Sect people are all bastards," said Patriarch Reliance slowly, staring at Meng Hao. "Those old bastards were like this, and you're the same, kid. You all cheated me. Oh well, forget it. You're a member of the Reliance Sect, after all. Allow me to bless you with..." As Patriarch Reliance spoke, Meng Hao's scalp began to grow numb. He thought of what had just happened with Lord Revelation, and his mind began to race as he tried to think of what to do.

Suddenly, a spark of inspiration hit him as he remembered something.

He remembered what the young girl Guyiding Tri-rain had said to him at the North Sea.

"Big Brother, its aura ... is beneath your feet. Don't provoke it. Remember... the great path of Demon Sealing, a concept like a scripture."

At that time, Meng Hao hadn't understood her words, but all of a sudden, now he did. The "it" beneath his feet... was none other than Patriarch Reliance!

Don't provoke it. Remember... the great path of Demon Sealing, a concept like a scripture.

“The great path of Demon Sealing, a concept like a scripture. Don’t provoke it....” Meng Hao’s mind flashed like lightning. Even as this happened, Patriarch Reliance finished speaking.

“...bless you with some good fortune. I need to repay you!”

The instant he finished speaking, Meng Hao lifted his hand and slapped his bag of holding. Instantly, the Demon Sealing Jade appeared in his hand.

When it appeared, a strong wind buffeted his face. The wind faded, and when it did, Patriarch Reliance’s head was less than nine meters away from him.

The ends of the colossal head couldn’t even be seen. The only thing Meng Hao could see was black skin and a massive eye the size of a huge city.

The eye seemed to be struggling.

“Ancient Dao,” said Meng Hao hurriedly, reciting the first line from the Demon Sealing Jade. “Tenacious Desire to Seal the Heavens; Benefaction for All in the Mountains; Dao Tribulation Must Come to the Nine Mountains and Seas; My Fate is the Aeon!”

As the words left Meng Hao’s mouth, Patriarch Reliance lifted his colossal head up and let out a massive roar. As it billowed out, ripples appeared in the air to accompany it. A nine-sided mystical symbol suddenly appeared on Patriarch Reliance’s forehead. It appeared to be ancient and archaic, and deeply imbedded into his forehead. It flickered, and his body shook.

“Stop! Damned Demon Sealing Scripture and damned Demon Sealing Sect!!” A ferocious expression appeared on his face and he let out another heaven-shaking roar, then stared at Meng Hao. Meng Hao’s heart pounded as he looked back at Patriarch Reliance.

“Those bastards were too malignant,” thought Patriarch Reliance. “The seal is broken, but the sealing mark is still branded onto my spirit, forcing me to be the Dao protector of the ninth Demon Sealer. This cannot be! The Demon Sealing Sect has committed crimes against the Heavens, and was plagued by misfortune. They understood that the number nine is a preeminent, sacred number according to the Dao of the Heavens. They knew that the greatest opposition from the Heavens would come upon the ninth Demon Sealer. Therefore, they took precautions. They wanted me to be the Dao protector for the ninth Demon Sealer. But this trifling kid is of the Qi Condensation stage!

How could he possibly act as my master? Those damned bastards! I changed the name from Demon Sealing Sect to Reliance Sect and created rules to pit all the disciples against each other, all in the hopes of preventing someone like Meng Hao from appearing!”

A mist began to seep out from the North Sea, which of course was part of the lands of the State of Zhao that rested on Patriarch Reliance’s back. Within the mist, a boat magically appeared. An old man and a young girl stood at the prow of the boat, looking up at Patriarch Reliance. They clasped hands and bowed to him with utmost respect.

“Guyiding Tri-rain pays respects to Patriarch,” said the young girl. Her voice, clear and melodious, echoed out with a light and spiritual tone.

“Ah, you’re the sentient rain that fell in the third month of the Yiding year of the ancient Gu calendar. You fell onto my back... and became a lake.”

The young girl smiled and nodded. Then she looked toward Meng Hao and winked.

Meng Hao took a deep breath. Now he finally understood the meaning of the girl’s strange name.

Patriarch Reliance let out a cold snort. He looked at the little girl and then stared off into the sky. Meng Hao followed his gaze and caught sight of what appeared to be an indistinct blood-colored figure.

The figure clasped hands and bowed in respect to Patriarch Reliance, then disappeared.

Patriarch Reliance lowered his head once more and looked at Meng Hao. “Very well, Meng Hao. In the future, keep your distance from me!” He blew a breath out of his mouth, causing Meng Hao to fly up into the air. Buffeted by a glowing black wind, Meng Hao was tossed out of the State of Zhao to land on the edge of the massive hole in the earth.

“Son of a bitch! I can’t even look at him. In my life, I’ll never recognize him as my master. I’m out of here. The further away the better. He’ll never find me. As for the treasures of mine that he took, fine, consider them payment. All of our debts are settled. In this way, my heart can rest at ease and I can continue to practice Cultivation.” His eyes flickered, and then his body turned. Meng Hao watched as the colossal turtle, carrying the State of Zhao on his back, transformed into a massive beam of prismatic light... and then disappeared over the horizon.

He appeared to be heading in the direction of the Milky Way Sea. Perhaps this was why legends arose of an island of Immortals. If one searched for it, it could never be found. But when it appeared, anyone who stepped foot on it would find that it was a nation inhabited by mortals.

It was, of course, the State of Zhao.

Some time passed, and eventually the skies grew calm once again. Meng Hao stood there looking down at the deep, gaping hole. Then he looked off silently in the direction in which Patriarch Reliance had disappeared.

Time passed, and rain began to fall. It fell with urgency, slowly flowing down into the massive pit left by the State of Zhao. Many years later, this area would turn into a sea.

Standing amidst the sheets of falling rain, Meng Hao let out a long sigh. Images from the past several days flashed through his mind. It all seemed virtually inconceivable. Thinking upon it all, it seemed a dream-like fantasy.

The State of Zhao was gone.... Meng Hao looked around at the rain, then up into the hazy sky. He contemplated his life during the past four years.

“I started out as a scholar...” he murmured. “My life is like snow. I can only exist in winter. I can yearn for the summer of the mortal world, but that is not my life anymore....” After a long time passed, he turned. Surrounded by the falling rain, he once again began to trod a road which led away from his roots.

He struck a lonely figure amidst the rain. Eventually, he seemed to merge into it. Even if a hot wind blew over him, it would do nothing to disperse him. Because this was his life.

Life is comprised of one experience after another. Or, you could say that life is comprised of many experiences. Different experiences lead to different lives; if you experience a cold bitter wind, you will become snow. If you experience scorching heat, you will become rain....

Whatever you experience in life will shape the person you are. That is what makes life wonderful.

“Southern Domain, here I come! Although, before I get there, I must reach Foundation Establishment!” As he walked through the rain, he lifted up his head, and his eyes glittered brilliantly.

He would never forget the stubborn desire to achieve power that he had experienced underneath the descent of Lord Revelation's palm attack. In this world, only the powerful can be invincible.

“Wait a minute, where did that blood-colored glow come from...?”

With questions circling in his mind, Meng Hao disappeared into the distance.

Chapter 96: Demonic Jade in a Mountain Valley

There's no need to explain what Foundation Establishment means to Cultivators. It is a world-shaking transformation which includes an extension of longevity. Of course, longevity means life, and the lives of Foundation Establishment Cultivators are much more fulfilling than those of the Qi Condensation stage.

There are injuries which will kill someone of the Qi Condensation stage, but can only hurt a powerful Foundation Establishment expert.

Meng Hao walked through the verdant mountains outside the edge of what had once been the State of Zhao, leaving behind the land that had once been his home. He headed toward the Southern Domain.

Even though the State of Zhao had technically been part of the Southern Domain, it was very remote, far, far away from the Southern Domain's center. Given his current Cultivation base, if he went on foot, it could take years to get there.

However, Meng Hao wasn't in a rush. Though he headed in the direction of the Southern Domain, what he was most concerned about at the moment was how to break through to Foundation Establishment and become a powerful expert.

Thinking about how previously, there had only been a few dozen Foundation Establishment Cultivators in the entire State of Zhao, Meng Hao itched with anticipation. He longed to reach Foundation Establishment and then be able to fly through the sky.

“Who knows what dangers I will face in the Southern Domain. Plus, I still have to dispel this poison. I can only do that if I have a more powerful Cultivation base....” Meng Hao's eyes glittered. He knew that with the Qi Cultivation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, he could establish a

Flawless Foundation. That was rare enough in itself, but Meng Hao also possessed Shangguan Xiu's secret formula to create a Perfect Foundation Pill!

He already had most of the ingredients. With the items he'd obtained from Patriarch Reliance's Immortal's Cave, as well as the copper mirror, he was confident that he could gather together everything necessary to concoct the pill. If he succeeded, he would have a Perfect Foundation which currently only existed in legends in the Cultivation world.

"I wonder... how powerful is a Perfect Foundation?" His eyes shined as he sped forward.

Three months later, Meng Hao was far from where the State of Zhao had previously existed. He had passed through another nation of mortals and was now within a vast wilderness. He hadn't seen signs of life for quite some time.

Lonely mountains stretched out as far as the eye could see. They seemed endless. During the day, the sounds of various wild animals could be heard, and the deep blue sky stretched boundlessly. At night, the sky was filled with the soft light of the multitudinous stars and gentle moon, the sight of which enchanted the heart.

Meng Hao stood on a mountain peak, looking out at the world. Its beauty filled his heart, causing it to swell. He started to walk down the mountain.

"Reading ten thousand books, travelling ten thousand roads. It's hard to say how many tens of thousands of kilometers I've travelled so far. Mountains fill the horizon. Everything I've seen and heard fills my heart like an ever-growing sea." His eyes shone brightly.

"In selecting the location for Foundation Establishment, the best thing to do is pick a place with outstanding spiritual energy. That will improve my chances of success. Meng Hao knew that establishing his Foundation would be difficult. Currently, he sped about attempting to find a suitable location. Time passed, another three months.

Meng Hao had now been wandering for six months. During that period of time, he did not practice Cultivation. Having completed the great circle of Qi Condensation, he didn't need to. His heart was calm; deep inside, he knew that he could begin to establish his Foundation at any time he wished.

"For the highest probability of succeeding in establishing my Foundation, I must select a location with dense spiritual energy," muttered Meng Hao. "That will reduce the chances of making any mistakes." As he travelled, he would avoid any wild beasts he saw and didn't instigate any bloody

slaughters. The poison in his body had already flared up twice in the past half year. Each time it did, his body was wracked with intense pain, as if a myriad of ants were gnawing at his innards. The first time it had happened, he'd tumbled out of the sky, a three-colored mist seeping out of his body. He had sat with clenched teeth for three days before the pain subsided. Both times the poison had flared up, large amounts of stinking black liquid had oozed out of his body. Any vegetation it touched instantly decayed.

Upon further research he came to the determination that most of the poison had actually been expelled by his body during the flare-ups. Only the poison from the three-colored poison pill remained.

During the half-year, Meng Hao took time to practice with the treasures he had acquired from Patriarch Reliance, for example the Lightning Flag. As of now, he could use it much more effectively than the six months before. Now, he could use it to create a mist thirty meters in diameter. If any creatures approached it, it would shoot lightning bolts at it. Its power was greater than that of Foundation Establishment. He had gotten into the habit of using it to protect himself whenever he rested.

As for the good luck charm, Meng Hao couldn't find any apparent use for the item.

Another month passed. In front of Meng Hao, a series of mountainous valleys appeared. They were filled with suspension bridges. People wearing rough hemp garments and headgear walked to and fro upon the bridges carrying large wicker baskets on their backs.

Seeing this, Meng Hao's eyes narrowed. This place was a wilderness, with no signs of habitation anywhere. And yet, suddenly some mortals had appeared.

Their clothing looked different from that worn in the State of Zhao. Meng Hao looked them over, muttering to himself, and was about to leave when suddenly his eyes flickered. He turned to look at one of the seven valleys.

After a moment, the flying sword he was standing on flashed, carrying him directly toward the valley. As he approached, a thick wave of spiritual energy billowed out and hit him in the face. His eyes gleamed. This was the most dense accumulation of spiritual energy that he had seen in the past six months.

The valley was extremely deep and long. Looking down at it from mid-air, Meng Hao couldn't even see its bottom. The only thing he could see was the dense spiritual energy, which roiled out from the

deep within the valley. The spiritual energy caused all the living things nearby to grow abundantly and gave the place an otherworldly look.

“There’s even more spiritual energy here than there was on the East Mountain of the Reliance Sect.” Meng Hao looked down at the misty valley in amazement. It was at this moment that the mist in the valley suddenly roiled. Within Meng Hao’s bag of holding, the Demon Sealing Jade quivered. His eyes flickering, he took out the jade slip.

As soon as he pulled it out, a roaring sound filled his head, and a text appeared in his mind.

“An understanding from ancient times, the smelting of a demon, severed by the hand of a of a Demon Sealer. Such a pity; an inch of joss ash upon which descendants can prostrate.”

The text appeared suddenly, and then disappeared just as quickly, fading into Meng Hao’s mind. Everything returned to normal, but Meng Hao’s eyes shined brightly. He gazed down at the mist within the valley, then back at the Demon Sealing Jade.

“Severed by the hand of a Demon Sealer... The Demon Sealing Sect. The ancient jade. A demon... What secrets does this Demon Sealing Jade contain...?” Meng Hao lifted his head up and looked around. It turned out that many of the mortals on the suspension bridges had caught sight of him. Looks of terror appeared on their faces. One by one, they dropped to their knees and began to kowtow to him.

Suddenly, a piercing whistling sound emerged from one of the other valleys. Two beams of colorful light appeared. Two enormous condors flew out, upon the back of each stood a person.

Each person looked to be about forty years old. They wore robes of complexly interlaced blue and green fabric. Their faces were somewhat dark, and they were very skinny. One of the men had a dark greenish-blue snake coiled around his arm. The little snake’s eyes were ghastly, and when it flicked its forked tongue out, a thin mist blew out of his mouth.

The other man had a centipede on his shoulder, slowly rocking back and forth. It was about a foot long, and very colorful, obviously extremely poisonous.

Of the two men, one was of the ninth level of Qi Condensation, the other was at the peak of the eighth level. They did not look very friendly. They came to a stop about nine hundred meters away from Meng Hao, looking him over with cold eyes.

Meng Hao's expression was as calm as ever. He put away the Demon Sealing Jade and looked at them. He had seen more than one Cultivator in the State of Zhao with Cultivation bases similar to these people.

As they looked him over, another piercing whistle sounded out. From another of the valleys, a winged, purple toad flew out. It carried a mist along with it as it flew; it seemed this toad had a Cultivation base of the Qi Condensation stage. Sitting cross-legged on its back was an old man.

The old man wore a garment of interlaced red and yellow. His face was painted with totemic symbols that formed a sort of mask. He looked very fierce as he flew out to join the other two in measuring up Meng Hao.

The old man's Cultivation base was extraordinary. He was at the peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation. Seeing him, the expressions on the faces of the other two changed.

The old man gazed at Meng Hao, frowning as he tried to assess his Cultivation base. "I am the Chief of Spirit Toad Village," he said. "If you're just passing through, Fellow Daoist, please continue onward. Outside Cultivators are not welcome here."

Meng Hao's expression was as calm as ever. The thick spiritual energy here was what he had been searching out for the past half year. If he left, it was impossible to say how long he would have to search to find another similar location.

Normally, he would just forget it and move on, but the strange reaction of the Demon Sealing Jade had piqued his interest. He had no desire to leave.

He said nothing. His right hand flickered in an incantation gesture, and one flying sword after another flew out, instantly forming a sword rain of over one hundred flying swords. They spun around, creating a vortex that began to expand outward in all directions.

The expressions of the old man on the toad, as well as the others, instantly changed. Meng Hao pointed down toward one of the valleys, and the swords shot forth. Banging sounds rang out as they slammed into a cliff face and carved out a simple Immortal's Cave.

"Please allow me to hole up here for a few months," said Meng Hao coolly. Not giving them another look, he shot toward the Immortal's Cave.

The frightening image of the hundred or more flying swords caused the toad geezer frown. The other two Cultivators looked hesitant.

The man with the snake coiled around his arm glared at Meng Hao as he made to enter the Immortal's Cave. He lifted his arm up, and the Spirit Snake turned into a black blur as it flew toward Meng Hao.

As it approached, a dark, cold look appeared in Meng Hao's eyes.

Chapter 97: Cultivation Breakthrough in a Mountain Valley

Before Meng Hao could even make a move, the dark bluish-green Spirit Snake was already about thirty meters away from him. Suddenly, it stopped in mid-air and let out a shrill shriek, as if it could sense something terrible on Meng Hao's person. It began to tremble, then shot backward in retreat, not daring to come even a bit closer.

Suddenly, a three-colored mist emerged from the top of Meng Hao's head. It transformed into a demonic face with an enigmatic expression of both weeping and laughter. It spun around Meng Hao's head, then let out an intangible shriek which shot toward the Spirit Snake.

The Spirit Snake let out a miserable cry when the intangible shriek slammed into it. Its body instantly began to rot. It transformed into a coagulation of blood which then splashed to the ground. Upon seeing this, the old man's expression changed. The two other Cultivators gasped, looks of astonishment on their faces.

Meng Hao also looked on in astonishment, his heart thumping.

The three-colored mist was the poison in his body; it had flared up twice in the past half year, but this was the first time it had taken on a magical form and emerged from his body of its own volition. The poison was clearly incredibly mysterious; it could sense other poisons and wouldn't permit them near, as if this host belonged to it alone.

Over the past months, Meng Hao had come to be convinced that during the previous two outbreaks of poison, the other two poisons from the three great Sects had been completely expelled.

It seemed they were not as powerful as the three-colored poison, and had been forced out of his body by it. Seeing the death of the Spirit Snake enabled Meng Hao to finally understand how powerful Lord Revelation's three-colored poison really was.

Of course, the three people he faced didn't know anything about that. They looked down at Meng Hao, fear written on their faces. The Cultivator who had just lost his Spirit Snake shot backward at high speed, blood seeping out of his mouth. He looked at Meng Hao with astonished fear.

"So, the Fellow Daoist also practices Poison Cultivation...." The old man on the toad, who was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, stood and saluted Meng Hao respectfully. "Since that is the case, please feel free to stay here. But, there is something strange about this valley. It has thick spiritual energy, and every full moon, the mist erupts and fills the entire valley." His eyes flashed as he spoke.

"Thanks for the warning," said Meng Hao, his face expressionless. His body flickered, and he entered the Immortal's Cave. A large stone he had carved out fell in place to seal the cave shut.

Outside, everything was quiet. The toad geezer's eyes flashed as he looked at the other two men. They were all silent for a moment. Then, they patted their respective Spirit beasts and flew off toward another of the valleys. There, four more Cultivators were gathered.

All of them were at the eighth level of Qi Condensation and wore long gowns of interlaced green and blue. They sat on an enormous black boulder, which pulsed with a dim light. When the light appeared, the boulder seemed to become somewhat transparent. Inside could be glimpsed the skeleton of a two-headed bird.

When the toad geezer and the others arrived, the four men opened their eyes.

"That outsider is a Poison Cultivator," said the man who had lost the Spirit Snake, his voice filled with hatred. Venomous rage radiated from his eyes. "I'm not sure how much he saw, but he refused to leave."

"This complicates things..." said one of the four men sitting cross-legged, frowning. He was a pale-faced middle-aged man. "What is the level of his Cultivation base?"

"The peak of the ninth level of Qi Condensation!" said the toad geezer calmly. He wasn't mistaken: although Meng Hao could easily pass into the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation, when he did, he was cut off from heaven and earth. Therefore, he usually remained at the peak of the ninth level.

“His Cultivation base is very refined, but if we attack together, he’ll be dead for sure,” said the Cultivator who had lost his Spirit Snake. “If we let him stay here, he’ll figure out what’s going on. He might not have any suspicions now, but the next full moon is in half a month. When it comes time to pull out the red rope, he’ll definitely know what’s happening. He’s a Poison Cultivator, how could he not be interested? I say, let’s attack together and exterminate him.”

Some of the others seemed to hesitate. After all, Meng Hao was at the peak of the ninth level. At the moment, only the toad geezer was strong enough to stand up to him. None of the others were powerful enough. If they all fought together, they might be able to win, but some of them would most likely die. Hesitating, they looked at the toad geezer.

“We don’t need to do anything. I told him that strange things happen in the valley on the full moon. Most likely he will go to see for himself. We won’t need to attack. The miasma that accompanies the red rope will kill him. If he doesn’t come out... well, the miasma covers everything anyway. Either way, he’s dead! Our ancestral Spirit Mountain Three Villages cannot be looked upon by outsiders. Any who do so... must die.” His eyes gleamed as he spoke. The other six people nodded their heads.

Meanwhile, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged in the Immortal’s cave. The dense spiritual energy surrounding him caused his Cultivation base to thrum. As he began doing breathing exercises, his boundless Core sea seemed to begin to consolidate.

He breathed deeply, lifting his head and looking at the large stone which he’d used to seal the Immortal’s Cave. His eyes flashed, and the two wooden swords appeared, hovering at his side. He lifted his right hand and waved it in the air. A talisman appeared, floating in front of him. He sent it to hang on the large rock.

This talisman had been acquired from Wang Tengfei. He wasn’t sure how powerful it was, and had never used it. But considering that he’d taken it from Wang Tengfei, it couldn’t be a common item.

“It seems these people have some secrets they don’t want outsiders to know about. If they leave me alone, then I’ll leave them alone. But if they disturb my Cultivation....” Meng Hao’s eyes gleamed. His expression was calm as he pulled Shangguan Xiu’s turtle shell out of his bag of holding, the one that contained the details about the Perfect Foundation. He looked at it, frowning.

“To concoct a Perfect Foundation Pill, I need a pill furnace,” murmured Meng Hao to himself. “I got that from Shangguan Xiu. But it also requires a bit of skill in alchemy. Without such skill, the chances of a misstep are much higher. These medicinal plants are extremely valuable. If I made a

mistake, I could duplicate more plants, but the cost would be exorbitant.” He had no skill in alchemy, which was somewhat frustrating.

After some time passed, Meng Hao pulled out the various plants required to make the minor pills which were part of the ingredient list. Then he produced the copper mirror and began to duplicate some of them. A few hours later, he had spent a huge amount of Spirit Stones. Despite having a mountain of Spirit Stones, if he kept going at this pace, he would once again be destitute.

“These are just minor pills.... Concocting the Perfect Foundation Pill has two major steps. The first step is to concoct seven different minor pills, each of which has a unique function. The second step is to take those seven pills and melt them together to concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill. If I’m missing even one minor pill, I have no way to succeed! Of the seven minor pills, Shangguan Xiu had concocted two. Now five remain.... I’ve never concocted pills before, what happens if I have to try dozens of times to succeed? If that happens, then I definitely won’t have enough Spirit Stones. That could even affect my ability to reach Foundation Establishment. Alchemy... If I can develop enough skill in alchemy, then I shouldn’t have any problems.” Meng Hao frowned as he studied some basic Milky Way City alchemy techniques. Unfortunately, trying to teach yourself such techniques is not easy, and can take a very long time. Furthermore, some of the techniques were not common. Many master alchemists had secret techniques that weren’t told to outsiders. Such techniques were often closely guarded Sect secrets.

“The best method would be to concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill first, then establish the Foundation. In that way, there would be no need for haste in concocting the pill. That was the route taken by Shangguan Xiu. But...” His eyes glittered. “That method seems suitable, but if I don’t reach Foundation Establishment, I would have to face too many dangers. That is why Shangguan Xiu ended up dying. Otherwise, I would never have been able to kill him. Therefore this method... cannot be used!” He was silent for a moment, and then his eyes filled with determination.

“Regardless of anything, I must first reach Foundation Establishment. If I can concoct the Perfect Foundation Pill later, then it won’t be too late. The Perfect Foundation Pill can repair the cracks in the Dao Pillars made by the Heavens. Therefore... a Flawless Foundation is fine!” Meng Hao gritted his teeth. Despite his intense desire to concoct the Perfect Foundation pill, it was not practical to do so right now.

“I can only enter the Southern Domain if I have first reached Foundation Establishment. Then I can figure out a way to dispel this poison. As a Qi Condensation Cultivator, that is virtually impossible.” Having made up his mind, he didn’t waste any more time thinking. He put away the turtle shell and the medicinal plants, then pulled out a Foundation Establishment Pill and began to duplicate it.

He was of the great circle of Qi Condensation, and was feeling very confident in his ability to break through to Foundation Establishment. However, to play it safe, he decided to use the power of the Foundation Establishment Pill.

Looking down at the five Foundation Establishment Pills in front of him, he took a breath and slapped his bag of holding. A small flag flew out. Lightning curled around it as it flew through the air. Meng Hao flickered some incantation gestures, and the flag stabbed into the ground without any assistance from Meng Hao's Cultivation base. It sucked in some of the surrounding spiritual energy, then transformed into a fog which enveloped the Immortal's Cave. It spread out thirty meters in all directions, surrounding Meng Hao.

“After consuming a Foundation Establishment Pill, my body will turn stiff and I won't be able to move.” He eyed the mist created by the little flag. “With the Lightning Flag here, though, I will be protected. No one will be able to disturb me. Considering the current level of my Cultivation base, the paralysis will be relatively short in duration.”

Of the treasures he had acquired from Patriarch Reliance, the Demon Sealing Jade was the most mysterious. But his favorite, other than the mountain of Spirit Stones, was this little flag. As for the good luck charm, he still hadn't been able to figure out anything about it. He would study it further after he reached Foundation Establishment.

Taking a deep breath, he picked up a pill and put it into his mouth. It dissolved instantly, and boundless spiritual energy shook his body. He trembled. It was not his first time consuming a Foundation Establishment Pill. But every time he did, he felt as if he was a tiny boat floating amidst massive, crashing waves. A roaring sound filled his head. He continued to rotate his Cultivation base.

Boundless spiritual energy flowed through Meng Hao, pouring into his Core sea, causing it to roar and churn. The Demonic Core within him suddenly seemed as if it were about to turn into a Dao Pillar.

Once the Dao Pillar appeared, Meng Hao would have broken through from Qi Condensation and crossed the threshold into the true realm of Cultivation... Foundation Establishment.

Once in the Foundation Establishment stage, he would never again be mortal. He would truly be upon the path of Cultivation, and would never again be a part of the mortal world. To fall back would indicate that he didn't deserve to exist in the Cultivation world!

He would be a boat sailing against the current.

It can be summed up by the phrase, “Move forward, or you’ll fall behind.”

Chapter 98: Valley of the Red Rope

Time slowly went on. Soon half a month passed. On one particular night, the full moon was especially bright, outshining most of the stars. It hung up in the sky, filling the land with gentle silvery, light.

It seemed to shine especially brightly upon the group of valleys, especially the valley where Meng Hao was located. As it shined down onto the mist, it began to seethe, slowly spinning into what looked like a vortex.

Outside the valley, the seven Cultivators were waiting, their eyes shining. They stared at the mist within the valley, expressions of anticipation on their faces.

“The hour has arrived....” said the toad geezer, his voice low. Even as his words issued out from his mouth, a gurgling sound could be heard from within the mist.

The sound was indistinct, but when it reached the ears, it stabbed to the heart. Cracking sounds echoed out, and the mist within the valley roiled.

Time passed. The gurgling sound became clearer. Amidst further cracking sounds, the mist turned and turned until it appeared to be a giant whirlpool. The edges of the whirlpool of mist seemed to be able to pierce into the surrounding cliff walls, causing them to melt. Liquified rock poured down the cliff faces.

At the same, a red rope appeared from within the vortex. It was as thick as a person’s arm, and was as red as if it had been dyed with the blood of countless people. A droning sound filled the air as the vortex and the rope both spun. As soon as the rope appeared, the seven men seemed vitalized.

The toad geezer’s eyes gleamed. He bit down on his tongue and spit out some blood, at the same time flickering an incantation and producing a black metal fragment from within his bag of holding.

The other six men did the same thing, spitting out blood and producing fragmented pieces of black metal. They seemed familiar with the process, as if they had done this before.

The blood entered the vortex, and apparently because of this, the vortex suddenly stopped rotating. The rope, however, did not.

The black chips from the seven men spun about in the air and then formed together into a black broadsword.

The sword floated above the valley, pointing down toward the red rope, which then ceased rotating.

With a low shout, the toad geezer flew forward to grab the red rope with both hands. He gripped it without hesitation, despite the fact that it felt wet, as if it was coated with blood. The six other men appeared behind him, pooling their strength together to pull on the rope.

A thunderous roar filled the area as they did. The rope slowly emerged thirty meters from within the vortex. As it did, a black-colored Qi poured out to fill the area. Eventually it reached the point where Meng Hao's cave was located it, submerging it.

“At three hundred meters we got the Jade Spirit Stone. Six hundred meters in we got the toxic miasma. Last time we pulled out nine hundred meters and got the stone-sealed beast. Today, we will go all out and reach fifteen hundred meters!”

“Right! According to the ancient records of our Clan, if we can pull out fifteen hundred meters, it will open the first seal, and the Clan's ancestral spirit will awaken. It will form into a Poison Foundation, and our Cultivation bases can ascend another level!” The eyes of the seven men gleamed, and they heaved on the rope.

The bottom of the vortex couldn't be seen; there was nothing but blackness, making it seem as if the red rope had no end. Every tug on the rope caused the surrounding valley to quake. The ground rippled, as if the end of the rope were plugged into the very core of the earth.

Shocking booms sounded out as they continued to pull. More toxic miasma billowed out as nine hundred meters of rope appeared. Suddenly, a stench like that of rotten fish poured out from the depths of the vortex.

It seemed this stench had never appeared before; the seven men's faces changed. However, the area immediately around the rope seemed to naturally be protected from the stench and miasma. Their faces pale, the seven men gritted their teeth and heaved once again on the rope.

Thirteen hundred fifty meters. Thirteen hundred eighty meters. Fourteen hundred meters!

The men panted. They had expended seventy to eighty percent of the power of their Cultivation bases. Without hesitation, they popped medicinal pills into their mouths and tugged once again on the rope. Five of the seven men coughed up blood. Soon, only the toad geezer, and the other man who was at the ninth level of Qi Condensation, held out. They gritted their teeth, unable to stop their bodies from trembling.

“I’m at my limit....” said the toad geezer with a roar. He bit the tip of his tongue and spit out some more blood. As he did, a black beam of light shot out from the edge of the valley. It transformed into an enormous toad, which clamped its mouth down onto the red rope. As it bit down, its body began to wither, but it held fast and pulled.

Next, a centipede shot out, along with several human-sized spiders, summoned by the men to pull the rope. Even the huge boulder with the bird skeleton inside flew out. Its glow seemed to aid in pulling the red rope.

Fourteen-hundred thirty meters. Fourteen hundred sixty meters. Fourteen hundred ninety meters!

The rotten stench grew stronger, seemingly carrying the stink of a corpse as it filled the valley. It seemed the rope would soon be pulled out fifteen hundred meters. A shrill shriek came out of the whirlpool, piercing the air with wickedness.

The shriek grew more and more intense, seemingly filled with hope. Except... there were still ten meters to go before the fifteen hundred meter mark was reached. The poison beasts summoned by the seven men exploded one by one, unable to keep going. As they died, the faces of the seven men grew pale. The rope suddenly slipped out of their hands and was sucked back into the whirlpool. Had they not released it, they would have been pulled along with it into the vortex.

The men watched silently as the rope was pulled back inside.

“Forget it. We’ll try again next month.”

“Yes. The day will come when we will pull out fifteen hundred meters of rope. I will be making a breakthrough in my Cultivation base soon. Once I reach the ninth level of Qi Condensation, we will definitely be able to succeed.”

“That outsider is of the ninth level....” said one of the men suddenly.

“We don’t need to make things more complicated. That outsider is probably dead already, killed by the miasma. Even if he was at the Foundation Establishment stage, he couldn’t withstand it unless he was of our bloodline.”

The seven discussed the matter a bit further, then dispersed.

The mist continued to roil in the valley for three days before finally settling down. The spiritual energy in the area gradually grew thick again, and the miasma dissipated.

Within the Immortal’s Cave, Meng Hao watched with cold eyes. Surrounded by the arcing field of electricity, he had seen clearly everything that had happened during the three days. As for the miasma, the Lightning Flag made short work of, and Meng Hao remained safe from any harm.

“They think I’m dead. That’s good.” Meng Hao’s eyes glittered.

“I’m not sure if it’s because of the Sublime Spirit Scripture or perhaps the Demonic Core... Establishing my Foundation is turning out to be very difficult.” He lowered his head and picked up another Foundation Establishment Pill. He frowned. As of now, he was a bit suspicious. Was the Cultivation method in the Sublime Spirit Scripture the real method? Or had Patriarch Reliance changed it in according with his own Demonic Cultivation practices.... There was no way to know. Meng Hao’s eyes shone with determination as he popped the Foundation Establishment Pill into his mouth and closed his eyes to meditate.

His Core sea roared violently, seething and churning as it coagulated. It seemed to be forming a Dao Pillar. But to do so was incredibly difficult. Even with the Foundation Establishment Pill, he wasn’t able to succeed.

It can be said that Foundation Establishment is the first true hurdle that must be crossed on the path to real Cultivation. A Foundation Establishment Pill can only increase the probability of success by about ten percent.

Even though he had reached the great circle of Qi Condensation, and his latent talent had been increased, it still was not an easy matter.

Time slipped by. In the blink of an eye, another three months passed. Each full moon during that time, the seven men again made attempts at pulling out the red rope. More than a few times, they came to Meng Hao's Immortal's Cave to try to get his corpse.

But the cave was being protected by Patriarch Reliance's Lightning Flag. A few insignificant Qi Condensation Cultivators didn't have the slightest chance of getting inside. They started to wonder whether or not Meng Hao was actually dead.

Another three months passed, half a year of hard work. They hadn't even seen a trace of Meng Hao. At this point, they were mostly certain that he was dead.

As for Meng Hao, even he wasn't sure how many Foundation Establishment pills he consumed during the half year. Every time he failed, he would take another pill. Toward the end, he even tried consuming two pills at one time.

The poison flared up twice during the half year. Thankfully, Meng Hao was prepared. He dealt with it, then continued on in his attempts to break through to Foundation Establishment.

In this excruciating fashion, another month passed. One night, Meng Hao sat there, a roaring sound rising in his mind. Only Meng Hao could sense this roaring sound; it sounded like claps of thunder in his mind.

Within his body, his golden Core sea let out an unprecedented roaring sound, and a gold light filled his body. It seemed as if he himself were made of gold.

He sat there meditating, his eyes closed. As his Core sea emitted its thunderous roar, he focused everything on forming the Dao Pillar and breaking through into Foundation Establishment. Within the Core sea, the Demonic Core rotated rapidly. It looked as if it might melt.

During the past year, this had happened frequently. Meng Hao had come to understand clearly that if he didn't have this Demonic Core inside of him, it would be much easier to reach Foundation Establishment. It was the Demonic Core that was making things so difficult. Coupled with the fact that he had completed the great circle of Qi Condensation, it meant that achieving Foundation Establishment was much harder for him than anyone else in the world.

Every time the Dao Pillar was beginning to form, it would be disturbed by the Demonic Core, and wouldn't coalesce. At the moment, golden light shined out from Meng Hao's Core sea. The waters began to congeal, slowly solidifying into a massive Dao Pillar. But then, the Demonic Core began

spinning, causing the Core sea, which had just moments before been calm, to seethe. The Dao Pillar once again began to fall apart.

“Again!” Meng Hao’s eyes burned. Without hesitation, he lifted up his hand and swallowed three Foundation Establishment Pills.

Chapter 99: Foundation Establishment!

“The Demonic Core just keeps moving, and that prevents the Core sea from entering Foundation Establishment. It just can’t form the Dao Pillar.... I must form the Dao Pillar! I must reach Foundation Establishment! I must stop the Demonic Core from moving. And that requires more Spiritual Energy!”

The three Foundation Establishment Pills dissolved in his mouth, and a shocking amount of spiritual power erupted. It poured into Meng Hao’s Core sea, which moments ago had been in the midst of condensing, but was then interrupted by the Demonic Core.

The lashing power caused the Core sea to shine with blinding golden light. The Demonic Core, which seemed as if it would never stop spinning, suddenly began to slow. The spiritual energy within the Core sea seemed endless. A roaring sound could be heard which suppressed any indication that the Demonic Core would begin to spin furiously again.

It stopped, unmoving. Popping sounds rang out from within the Core sea and echoed throughout Meng Hao’s body. His entire Core sea seemed as if it were freezing over. In the space of a few breaths, it suddenly became completely solid.

At that moment, it seemed almost as if Meng Hao’s life had ended. His breathing slowed, and his body began to shake. His eyes shined, and he took a deep breath as the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture appeared in his mind. The solidified Core sea began to slowly shrink.

It grew smaller and smaller, changing into a diamond-shaped crystalline rock which contained the Demonic Core. More spiritual energy from the Foundation Establishment Pills poured down, and slowly the Core sea emerged again.

Even as it replenished itself, it began to shrink again upon itself to form an additional diamond-shaped lump of crystalline rock. Then, more spiritual energy poured in, and the process began again.

Meng Hao knew the process would take a long time, and would require a lot of spiritual energy, which was why he had selected this valley. He smacked his bag of holding and began to consume more medicinal pills.

Over and over again, his Core sea replenished itself and then solidified into the diamond-shaped crystalline rock. Meng Hao lost track of time.

One month. Two months. Three months... six months....

Spring passed and autumn arrived, then the cold of winter. A year had passed since Meng Hao entered the Immortal's Cave to practice secluded meditation. Every full moon during that year, the seven Cultivators would come to pull on the red rope.

Their best effort resulted in pulling out four-hundred ninety-nine meters. They were never able to pull out the final one meter. As time passed, the seven men noticed that the spiritual energy of heaven and earth in the area seemed to have been reduced.

Of course, it was being absorbed by Meng Hao, but they didn't know that, and couldn't figure out why it was happening. They searched the area, but came up with nothing. They didn't even think to connect the phenomenon to Meng Hao. A year had passed, which in their minds was evidence that he had died.

The man who had lost his Spirit Snake that year would often look toward Meng Hao's Immortal's Cave with a cold sneer. The death of his Spirit Snake had left him with a deep hatred of Meng Hao.

He tried several times to break into the cave to collect Meng Hao's treasures from his corpse. But he was never able to succeed.

Time passed, another half year. Meng Hao had now been in secluded meditation for a year and a half. One late night, his Core sea was again solidifying into a diamond-shaped crystalline rock. This was the one-hundredth piece.

A roaring could be heard, and the hundred diamond-shaped rocks suddenly began to fuse together. Slowly, they formed into a transparent, crystalline Dao Pillar!

Foundation Establishment Dao Pillar!

As soon as the Dao Pillar appeared, Meng Hao's agitated breathing calmed down. His eyes grew dim, and the functioning of his internal organs slowed. He was motionless; even his blood seemed to stop circulating. His entire person seemed to be in a state of suspended animation.

Everything was completely still.

Meng Hao knew that this was the second phase in the process of reaching Foundation Establishment. This was Recuperation.

He sat there cross-legged, his mind echoing with the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture. He sank into a very strange state. Even though his blood and flesh did not seem to be undergoing any change, in actuality, they were. They were changing in a way that made it much easier to absorb spiritual power.

His Qi passageways enlarged. No spiritual power circulated through them. However, they grew tougher, firmer, and smoother. His bones were different as well, even crystalline in some places. He was transforming, becoming something other than mortal. These changes shook his entire body. His hair grew much longer and he became taller than before.

There was no Core sea within him anymore, but rather, a golden Dao Pillar. It was a flat, circular platform that did not shine, but rather seemed dark and somewhat lonely. It floated in the place where the Core sea had once existed. If you looked closely, you could see Meng Hao's Demonic Core, right in the center of the Dao Pillar.

It sat there motionless, completely and perfectly fused with the Dao Pillar.

His heart did not beat, his blood did not flow. His Qi passageways were motionless, and his Qi had disappeared. Meng Hao sat there looking withered up. His Dao Pillar was in a similar state. All of his Qi had been sucked away.

He sat that way for another half of a year. Breaking through into Foundation Establishment had taken him two full years. Others would be shocked if they knew of this. Generally speaking, the longest amount of time a Cultivator needs to reach Foundation Establishment is half a year, often it will take only a few months. The amount of spiritual energy required was not immense either, nothing close to what Meng Hao had needed. The amount of time and spiritual energy wasted by Meng Hao was far and above the norm.

Toward the end of the last half-year, Meng Hao's Dao Pillar began to tremble and vibrate. This was the first thing that began to move within his body. Next, his heart began to beat. All of his systems kicked into motion. His blood began to flow, his Qi passageways began to operate, and his Qi filled with signs of life force. Slowly, he began to awaken as if from sleep.

Soon, the Dao Pillar began to shine brightly with golden light, which grew more and more intense. His heart thumped so wildly it seemed as if it might burst out of his body. Its sound filled the Immortal's Cave. Every beat of his heart sent blood flowing throughout his body. His Qi billowed out, and it seemed he would soon be filled with power and would be able to open his eyes at any moment.

This power was not to be used simply to open the eyes, but rather to awaken his body. It moved about within him, growing stronger, imbuing his body with strength!

It was at this moment that the Dao Pillar within him emitted a thunderous roar. A powerful spiritual power burst out from it, blasting out into Meng Hao's Qi passageways, flesh, blood and bones. Like the life of spring which causes a withered tree to sprout, his body awakened. His Qi grew stronger, and massive amounts of filth exuded from his pores, replaced by a fragrant aroma which arose from him. His long hair floated around him. He looked completely different than he had half a year ago.

As the spiritual power emanated out, his Qi passageways filled with power, and his blood flowed faster. His heartbeat caused the Immortal's Cave to tremble, and his eyes... it was at this moment that his eyes flashed open.

A blinding light shot out from within them. If a Qi Condensation Cultivator saw it, their mind would reel and their Cultivation base would be damaged.

The moment he opened his eyes, the spiritual energy in the valley was swept up. It was as if Meng Hao had become a black hole, swallowing up all of the spiritual energy in sight. It was absorbed through his pores and into the Dao Pillar, which grew brighter and brighter. Meng Hao's Qi grew even more powerful.

His heart thumped as the feeling of power blossomed in his mind. He knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that by simply lifting his hand, he could cause the entire Immortal's Cave to collapse. This was a confidence based on his physical body, his mind, and his Cultivation base.

The Spiritual Sense in his mind grew larger. Because of what he had experienced in completing the great circle of Qi Condensation, his Spiritual Sense leapt to up to a higher level. At the moment it was far more powerful than that of the average Foundation Establishment stage Cultivator.

In fact, his Spiritual Sense completely exceeded that which a Cultivator should have at the early Foundation Establishment stage. It was actually equal to that of the middle Foundation Establishment stage.

And to Foundation Establishment Cultivators, Spiritual Sense was everything!

Meng Hao's breathing echoed out. The spiritual energy of heaven and earth poured into him, and the Dao Pillar grew more and more bright. Soon, his entire body shined with golden light.

The power of Foundation Establishment Cultivators far exceeds that of Qi Condensation Cultivators. By moving his mind, he could see everything within five hundred meters as if it were within his own heart. This... was Spiritual Sense!

A Cultivator at the beginning Foundation Establishment stage could normally only cast Spiritual Sense two hundred meters ahead.

"The beginning Foundation Establishment stage..." said Meng Hao slowly. As his voice echoed out, his face shone with vigor. His eyes glowed, and he breathed deeply, feeling the power of the spiritual energy emitted by the Dao Pillar. His was a hundred times stronger than the power he could utilize half a year ago when at the peak of the thirteenth level of Qi Condensation.

Of course, that difference of one hundred times was not in comparison to the ninth level of Qi Condensation, but rather the thirteenth. To Meng Hao, this was a complete and utter change.

This was why Foundation Establishment Cultivators could so easily wipe the ground with Qi Condensation Cultivators. The Core sea of Qi Condensation is congealed a hundred times to form the Foundation Establishment Dao Pillar. The change that Meng Hao had experienced this night sent his power leaping upward. It was without comparison!

Chapter 100: Blade against Flawlessness

When Meng Hao sent out his Spiritual Sense, he started to get the feeling that he was cut off from heaven and earth. He was familiar with this sensation; it was the same type of feeling he got when he was in the tenth level of Qi Condensation, or the thirteenth. Although now, the feeling was even stronger, as if the Heavens did not tolerate his Cultivation at all. And yet, along with the disapproval, he felt the strength of a different state. It seemed as if despite the fact that the Heavens did not tolerate it, and this state was rejected by all creation... it fought back, and because of that, was even more powerful.

That resistance came, not from Meng Hao, but from the Dao Pillar and the spiritual energy inside of him!

After feeling the resistance of the Heavens, Meng Hao quickly determined its source.... not a bit of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth he had absorbed into his body escaped back out. Furthermore, none could be absorbed in. No cycle could be created with heaven and earth, which was not permitted!

At the same time, because the spiritual energy was not emitting from him, he was able to vaguely make out some strange, immaterial vestiges. Were he able to grab ahold of them, he would instantly become even more powerful.

These vestiges were not permitted by the Heavens, so only Cultivators who were rejected could see them and gain enlightenment regarding them.

Although Meng Hao wasn't aware of it, in the Cultivation world, these vestiges were called Dao Taboos! Every Cultivator who reached the Foundation Establishment stage could sense them.

At the same moment as Meng Hao began to sense the Dao Taboos, something shook his body. A cracking sound rang out as a fissure appeared on his Dao Pillar. When this happened, Meng Hao coughed up a mouthful of blood, and he was ripped out of that special state.

Vast amounts of spiritual energy poured out of the crack in the Dao Pillar. Meng Hao was powerless to stop it from happening; his body was once again connected to heaven and earth.

Although the spiritual energy rushing out of him could not really compare to the amount he had absorbed, he was now back in a cycle with heaven and earth. The strange vestiges he had just been able to sense were no longer there. He was no longer rejected by the heaven and earth, but had been accepted, and was now part of them.

A flash of weakness appeared in his heart. Meng Hao lifted his head, his vision piercing through to the outside of the Immortal's cave. As he looked at the sky outside, his eyes shone with an unprecedented brightness.

This was a Flawless Foundation with one crack. In this aspect, Meng Hao was actually better than most. With a Cracked Foundation, he would be much weaker, and with a Fractured Foundation, there would be even more cracks, and he would be significantly less powerful.

“As long as there is a crack,” murmured Meng Hao, “it is not perfect, and thus, the Heavens can accept it...” His eyes shined brightly.

“Because the Dao Pillars have cracks, no matter what level I reach in my Cultivation, there will always be absorption and diffusion. Do I cultivate in this way for myself... or for the Heavens?” Meng Hao was silent for a while. The question was really too profound for a Foundation Establishment Cultivator to be able to contemplate.

However, since Meng Hao had studied the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, and because he knew of the method to achieve a Perfect Foundation, he contemplated matters that normally only someone of the Spirit Severing Stage could comprehend.

The moment that Meng Hao reached the Foundation Establishment stage, it was late at night outside. The seven Cultivators outside watched the spiritual energy churning back and forth, and then looked toward where Meng Hao was within the valley.

“What happened?”

“Why is all the spiritual energy being sucked in that direction?” Muttering like this, the seven of them rushed forward. However, as they approached, they were forced to come to a halt, their bodies trembling. Their spiritual energy felt unstable, as if it might be ripped out of their body at any moment. They stood there in shock, uncertain of what exactly was happening.

To these people, Foundation Establishment was something very remote. They couldn't possibly imagine that someone had reached that stage in this very valley.

In their shock, they didn't dare to proceed further. They stood there, making various speculations, eventually coming to the conclusion that something strange was happening because of the valley itself. Because they couldn't approach, guessing was the best thing they could do. There was no way to prove or disprove anything.

“I can sense that there is some immense power in the valley,” said the toad geezer, taking in a deep breath and narrowing his eyes. “It's something that far, far exceeds us.”

“Too bad we can’t get any closer. Just what happened, exactly? I feel like if I approach any further, the spiritual energy within my body will get sucked out...”

“There have been a lot of strange things happening to the spiritual energy over the past two years. Now another thing is happening...” The seven of them exchanged glances, then grew silent, their hearts filled with various speculations.

Meanwhile, within the cave, Meng Hao lifted his head up, his eyes shining. If he hadn’t been able to glimpse the Perfect Foundation at all, then it wouldn’t have mattered. But, having felt it briefly, only to have it taken away and his power reduced, made him desire it even more intensely.

“The Perfect Foundation....” His eyes flickered and he stood up. He flicked his sleeve, and the mist in front of him rippled, then coalesced into a small flag, which came to rest in his hand. He glanced at it, the spat out some spiritual energy, which covered over it, turning it into a black beam of light which entered his mouth.

During Qi Condensation, Meng Hao could only passively use the flag. But now that he was in Foundation Establishment, he could refine and wield it in even more ways.

Looking pleased, Meng Hao took a moment to feel himself out. His eyes glittered.

“With the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture, a second Core sea can be formed. When the second Core sea moves from Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, it can improve the quality of one’s Foundation Establishment. For me, though it won’t really make much of a difference. However... I might as well do it, just in case.” His eyes shining, he sat back down cross-legged and visualized the Qi Condensation Manual of the Sublime Spirit Scripture. Several hours later, his eyes snapped open. A roaring sound filled his body. Looking inside of himself, he saw that outside of his Dao Pillar was a new area, a vast golden sea. This was Meng Hao’s second Core sea.

Having completed this task, he raised hand. The large rock which had sealed his Immortal’s Cave exploded into pieces, which then turned into ash. Meng Hao shot outside, turning into a blur of light that shot into the air. He came to a stop, floating in mid-air.

He looked back at the Immortal’s Cave, a smile on his face. Back when he was in the Qi Condensation stage, if he lifted his finger the way he had just now, it would have been incapable of shattering rock. But as of now, it was a simple matter to do so.

“The gap between Qi Condensation and Foundation Establishment is like the difference between the sky and the land,” said Meng Hao to himself. “It really is true. However, I should be even more powerful. Sadly, my Dao Pillar was cracked by an invisible blade... that is the life of a Cultivator. There is nothing to be done about it. However, if I can repair the Dao Pillar, then I can establish a Perfect Foundation. To do that, I must first concoct a Perfect Foundation Pill. My biggest question, though, is... what is this symbol...?” His gaze had fallen onto his right hand. There, on the back of his hand, was a strange, glowing magical symbol which was slowly fading. It didn’t exist on his skin, but rather, inside of him. Looking at it, Meng Hao got the feeling that it had existed in there for a very long time.

This was the first time he had seen it, and he had no idea why it had appeared along with Foundation Establishment.

The symbol faded away, and Meng Hao frowned. It didn’t give him any feeling of danger. In fact, it seemed somewhat familiar. He thought about it for a while, but couldn’t come up with any clues as to its nature. He put it aside in his mind and then looked around.

He was surrounded by mist, which completely covered his body and would completely conceal him from any onlookers. At the moment, he hovered in mid-air, but he knew that if he wished, he could fly by simply moving forward.

Having completely set aside the matter of the strange symbol, Meng Hao began to consider why flight is not possible in the Qi Condensation stage. “True flight is not possible during Qi Condensation because the body doesn’t contain enough spiritual energy. Therefore, the body cannot be supported in the air. Flight is only capable with assistance from magical items. However, the spiritual energy within the body during the Foundation Establishment stage is more than a hundred times that of the Qi Condensation stage. Because so much spiritual energy has been coalesced into a Dao Pillar, the body can be supported in the air, and can actually fly.”

“There are a total of nine Dao Pillars which appear throughout the Foundation Establishment stage. Three pillars signify the peak of the beginning level, six pillars are the peak of the middle level, and nine pillars complete the circle. Right now, I have one pillar...” Meng Hao looked at the mist filling the area, and his eyes flickered. His body turned into a prismatic beam as he shot further downward into the valley.

“This place provoked a reaction from the Demon Sealing Jade all those years ago. Back then, my Cultivation base wasn’t powerful enough to make it safe to search for some answers. But now... I need to be careful, but I think my latent talent and power are enough to go look for some clues.”

Eyes shining, he shot through the mist. The two wooden swords appeared, whistling as they circled about around him.

Now that he was at Foundation Establishment, the two swords felt somewhat different. However, he didn't take the time to examine them closely. Instead, he shot down through the mist, intent on determining what this place really was.

After Meng Hao had proceeded about three hundred meters down the valley, the Demon Sealing Jade within his bag of holding started to glow. Meng Hao took it out and held it in his hand. He slowed down a bit, but continued to move downward.

As he descended, the mist grew thicker and colder. It seemed somewhat sinister in nature, but Meng Hao was no longer of the Qi Condensation stage. If he was, his body may not have been able to withstand temperature.

After moving along for the time it takes half an incense stick to burn, it grew painfully cold, so much so that it felt like blades on his skin. Finally, he made out what appeared to be the bottom of the valley.

There was no vegetation here, only endless mist. Strewn about on the valley floor were the bones of various birds and beasts. Everything was quiet. Meng Hao looked around cautiously. He would not act rashly, but instead take the time to examine his surroundings. Finally, his eyes glittered as they fell upon the only part of the valley that didn't seem to have any mist in it.

It was... the mouth of a cave, roughly nine meters wide!

The edges of the cave mouth were formed of thick earth which seemed to be frozen over. It was impossible to tell how deep the cave was; it stretched back into inky blackness. Icy coldness poured out from the cave, which then turned into mist.

Stretching back into the cave, off to the edge, was a dark red rope. Other than this, there was nothing else.

At this point, the Demon Sealing Jade in Meng Hao's hand glowed even more brightly. It seemed as if something was calling for it to enter the mysterious, endless cave. Who knew what was hiding inside?

Meng Hao hesitated for a moment, looking at the cave. After a moment, he smacked his bag of holding. A flying sword appeared. It turned into a beam of light as it shot toward the cave and then disappeared inside. Meng Hao concentrated, listening carefully. Soon, a sound rang out like that of metal hitting stone. Meng Hao's expression changed.

“This ancient cave appears to be about twenty-five hundred meters deep.” He walked forward, stopping at the mouth of the cave. He hesitated for a moment, then looked at the brightly glowing jade slip in his hand. Determination appeared on his face. He slapped his bag of holding, causing several items to appear. The black net flew out, along with seven or eight feathers. Even with the wooden swords circulating around him, though, he felt a bit nervous. He bit his tongue, and the Lightning Flag flew out, turning into a flickering, lightning-filled mist that surrounded his body. Surrounded by his various magical items, Meng Hao entered the cave.