

The Heavens 941

Chapter 941: Ten Breaths of Time With the Sun!

That final movement took him ten meters... and now, there were only ten breaths of time until the rise of the East Ascension Sun was over.

That final movement put Meng Hao at a height of over 450,000 meters. He had now stepped... out of Planet East Victory and into... the starry sky!

In that instant, he felt an indescribable wave of light and heat bearing down on him. It seemed capable of melting him to nothing in an instant. At the same time, he also saw the yellow tree in the Tribulation Cloud suddenly begin to shoot toward him.

All of these things literally happened in the blink of an eye.

In the moment that he made that final move out into the starry sky, his Dharma Idol materialized behind him, and it wasn't 15,000 meters tall anymore, but rather 21,000 meters!

21,000 meters was comparable to a stage 7 Immortal, or an Immortal with 70 opened meridians. To most ordinary cultivators, a stage 7 Immortal would be considered the peak of the Immortal Realm.

The reason Meng Hao had a Dharma Idol 21,000 meters tall was not because he had seventy Immortal meridians. No, he still only had one. However, he was hovering on the verge of a breakthrough.

Now that he had a true Immortal fleshly body, his aura had been stimulated significantly, which caused the Immortal meridian to be further solidified.

However... even though it wasn't complete, it was enough that Meng Hao was now able to use the most powerful divine ability he had been enlightened regarding... the Paragon Bridge!!

He had begun to contemplate enlightenment of this divine ability in the Ruins of Immortality! The Paragon Bridge!

Many people had seen the manifestation of the divine ability, so if he used it now, his identity as Fang Mu would be revealed. However, he had prepared beforehand, so when he unleashed the Paragon Bridge, it did not look like a bridge, but rather, a huge tree.

The huge, ancient tree that appeared around Meng Hao was in fact the Paragon Bridge. As it materialized, it exploded with a supreme level of energy.

That burst of energy dispelled the light and the heat, and then rumbled toward the Tribulation Cloud.

When it struck the cloud, Meng Hao's entire cultivation base surged, pouring all of its power into the tree-form Paragon Bridge as it went all-out in attack!

BOOOOMMM!

A huge explosion resulted when the two massive trees collided. The Tribulation Cloud's tree trembled and then... unexpectedly collapsed, layer after layer, eventually shattering into fragments.

Simultaneously, the Paragon Bridge shook, and then faded away. The Paragon Bridge was powerful, but Meng Hao's cultivation base currently wasn't powerful enough to be able to use it to full effect. However, by going all-out with every bit of power he could, even to the point of adding in the power of his life force and soul, he destroyed the Tribulation Cloud completely.

Meng Hao trembled and coughed up a mouthful of blood. It was a completely and utterly shocking event to witness.

Never before had anyone fought back against Immortal Tribulation by destroying it completely. Furthermore, the boundless power of the Paragon Bridge was incredibly domineering.

As the Tribulation Tree shattered, and the Tribulation Cloud dispersed, bursts of Immortal qi shot toward Meng Hao. They entered his body through his pores, filling him, transforming his body so that as of this moment, he truly and utterly possessed an Immortal body. He was now a true Saint!

Immortal qi poured into him with unbridled frenzy, giving him the qualification to be in the starry sky and look at the sun. Even though it was the barest of possible qualifications, snatching himself out of the mouth of death for a few brief moments, to Meng Hao... it was still enough!

Using the nourishment of the Immortal qi, he hovered there calmly in space, ignoring the Tribulation Cloud and its tree, resisting the heat and the light. All of what he had done... was for these ten breaths' worth of time.

He stared at the huge sun, bolstered by the Immortal qi and sustained by his true Immortal fleshly body. Even still, only someone in the Dao Realm could possibly stand up to the terrifying power of the sun. Therefore, he began to melt. After only three breaths of time, his legs were completely melted. After six breaths of time, his arms and body were gone. However, his eyes remained, staring fixedly at the sun.

Enlightenment flickered in his mind. Natural law, a Daoist magic, poured into his thoughts. He quickly absorbed it, and at the same time, completely maintained his composure. This was not a disregard toward death. No, Meng Hao knew... that he wouldn't die!

After seven breaths of time, his body was a blur. By eight breaths of time, only one eye remained unmelted. By nine breaths of time, his head had collapsed.

In the moment of death, he only had one eye left, which continued to stare fixedly at the sun. He was not the least bit alarmed. Everything that had occurred since he stepped out into the starry sky was exactly as he had anticipated ahead of time. Nothing unexpected had occurred.

At last, the final breath of time... arrived!

In the moment in which Meng Hao's consciousness was about to fade away, the huge sun began to fade. At the same time, Meng Hao could see a profound natural law. A huge shadow suddenly appeared in front of the sun, completely eclipsing it.

The shadow obscured the sun, causing everything in the starry sky to go pitch black. The light and heat faded away without a trace.

The deadly, scorching heat that surrounded Meng Hao was gone. His Eternal stratum immediately began to restore him, and in the space of a few breaths, his body once again appeared in the starry sky.

He looked up, his expression the same as it had been the entire time, calm and unruffled. He looked out into the darkness of the starry sky, and, although he saw nothing, he could sense the sun's presence.

"The Ninth Mountain just eclipsed the sun...." he murmured. In his mind, he recalled the scene of the sun being covered up, and the natural law of the sun that he had been contemplating during those ten breaths of time.

Finally, he closed his eyes, gathered together the fragmented images of what had just occurred, and then settled himself cross-legged. In that same moment, numerous figures suddenly flew up from Planet East Victory. Fang Xi's father was among a group of over a hundred individuals, each and every one of whom was... a powerful expert from the direct bloodline.

Their expressions were that of excitement, and as they neared Meng Hao, they realized what he was doing, and they were shocked.

"He's contemplating enlightenment!"

"Only Dao Realm experts can face the sun in the starry sky, but this kid was able to do it, even with his cultivation base. It was only ten breaths worth of time, but to him, such good fortune is astonishing!"

"We can't let anyone disturb him." The direct bloodline Elders immediately took positions around Meng Hao to act as Dharma Protectors. Soon, other direct bloodline members approached in excitement and also took positions as Dharma Protectors.

Amidst rumbling, Planet East Victory resumed its previously-halted rotation. The light of the sun faded away, and night fell.

The rising of the East Ascension Sun was over, and the opportunity for good fortune had ended.

Fan Dong'er and the other Chosen left Planet East Victory with varied emotions. However, as they flew out toward the starry sky, each and every one took a long and hard look at Meng Hao.

Zhou Xin, Song Luodan, Wang Mu, Taiyang Zi, Sun Hai, Li Ling'er... all of them were the same.

As they passed by, they saw the direct bloodline members surrounding Meng Hao, and all of them murmured a sentence or two to themselves.

Zhou Xin looked at Meng Hao and quietly said, "I'm going to go back, head into secluded meditation, and not come out until I've reached true Immortality!"

"Unless something unexpected happens," Li Ling'er said, glaring angrily at Meng Hao, "I'll reach true Immortality within a hundred days!" With that, she turned and sped off in her flying shuttle.

"Fang Hao," Fan Dong'er said through grated teeth, "based on all of the preparations we've made, each and every one of us will directly rise to the peak of the Immortal Realm, and open 90 or more Immortal meridians..."

"I hope you keep working hard," Wang Mu said, clenching his fists at his side. "Otherwise... when you step into true Immortality, you'll leave me plenty of opportunity to exceed you!"

They left, and the focus of the Fang Clan became Fang Hao. To most people, he had now superseded Fang Wei... to become the number one Chosen of his generation.

Fang Wei remained silent as he returned to a location deep in the ancestral mansion with his father and grandfather. He refused to admit defeat, and went down to his subterranean chamber, where his eyes glinted with determination as he looked back at his father and grandfather.

"I'm going to cultivate... the One Breath Yellow Springs Incantation!" he declared.

When his father heard this, his expression flickered.

"Absolutely not!" his father replied angrily. "It's one of the four great signature magics of the Fang Clan, but it's not complete. It's far, far more dangerous than the One Thought Reincarnation Incantation. You have the mark of the Sixth Patriarch on you, and will be in charge of the Fang Clan in the future. You can't lose control of your Dao heart because of one measly defeat!"

"But it's the Fang Clan's most powerful Dao," Fang Wei replied calmly. "With it, 98 Immortal meridians can be opened, which is four more than the One Thought Reincarnation Incantation. I think that will be very pleasing to the Sixth Patriarch!"

Fang Wei's father was about to say something further when Fang Wei's grandfather stopped him. He looked deeply at Fang Wei, and then said, "Have you thought this through clearly?"

"Very clearly," Fang Wei replied softly, closing his eyes. "I shall cultivate the One Breath Yellow Springs Incantation. If I use this Dao to achieve Immortal Ascension, then within one hundred days, I'll either fail and sink into the Yellow Springs, or succeed and open 98 Immortal meridians!"

"Father, grandfather, if I fail, then return Fang Hao's items to him."

"However, if I succeed, then it means he was doomed from birth to help me achieve my goals!" His eyes sparkled with a piercing light.

Fang Wei's father did not respond. However, his eyes glittered as he nodded his head, then turned and left the hidden chamber.

Fang Wei's grandfather held his tongue. Seeing Fang Wei's determination, he sighed. At the same time, his heart surged with the desire to slay Meng Hao.

"It doesn't matter whether Wei'er succeeds or not," he thought. "Fang Hao... you won't live past a hundred days!" Face dark, he turned and left.

Time passed. After the end of the Rise of the East Ascension Sun, all of the Chosen in all of the various clans and sects of the Ninth Mountain and Sea began to go into secluded meditation.

It was time for them... to break through to the true Immortal Realm!

Chapter 942: Third Divine Ability!

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Seven days later, Planet East Victory had returned to its usual state. The rising of the East Ascension Sun was now a thing of the past. However, because of the amazing display of the acquisition of good fortune, the name Fang Hao rose to new heights.

All of the Fang Clan was talking about Fang Hao, and the name also began to spread to the rest of Planet East Victory.

He had a 30,000-meter Bloodline Gatebeam!

He dominated the Medicine Pavilion all the way to the seventh level!

He concocted... one of the three sacred pills, the Skypalace Sunspirit Pill!

He had a true Immortal fleshly body!

He stepped out into the starry sky to face the sun!

Word spread of Meng Hao's various deeds, and the Fang Clan was completely shaken. Other cultivators on Planet East Victory now viewed Meng Hao as a blazing sun of the Fang Clan.

During that entire time, Meng Hao remained cross-legged in meditation up in the starry sky. Facing the sun had been a shocking type of good fortune for him, especially when he saw the Ninth Mountain eclipse it. That image thoroughly shook him inwardly.

He contemplated enlightenment for seven days, during which time his body shone with bright light. When the light spread out, shockingly, his Dharma Idol appeared behind him.

The Dharma Idol was 21,000 meters tall, and when the direct bloodline clan members saw it, they stared.

That was because almost as soon as it appeared, the Dharma Idol started to grow!!

At the same time, Meng Hao's Immortal meridian grew even more solid. Apparently, this period of enlightenment was pushing Meng Hao even closer to true Immortality.

Time passed, three more days. Meng Hao's entire body radiated brilliant light, and his Dharma Idol was no longer 21,000 meters tall, but rather 22,500 meters.

Such height was equivalent to an Immortal Realm cultivator with 75 opened meridians, and immediately lifted the spirits of the direct bloodline clan members.

Five more days passed. Meng Hao had now been contemplating enlightenment for half a month. At that point, more light exploded out from him, and his Dharma Idol grew from 22,500 meters to 24,000 meters!

A Dharma Idol like that could shake Heaven and Earth, and caused the direct bloodline clan members to stare in excitement.

Meng Hao was now equivalent to an Immortal Realm cultivator with eighty opened meridians. That was a level of the Immortal Realm achievable only by Inner Sect disciples of certain sects.

“He still hasn’t even become a true Immortal, and he’s already comparable to those Inner Sect disciples!”

“All of you, look closely.... Hao’er’s Dharma Idol... has no Immortality Illumination Vine on it!!”

The direct bloodline clan members’ hearts trembled as they peered at Meng Hao, and then voiced expressions of disbelief.

“He’s not using an Immortality Illumination Vine. Could it be... could it be that he’s walking his own path to true Immortality!?!?”

“Walking one’s own path to Immortality is incredibly difficult! But look, his Dharma Idol is already 24,000 meters tall!!”

“The direct bloodline is destined to rise again!”

It was at this point that Meng Hao slowly regained his senses and opened his eyes. Within his mind flashed images of everything he had learned from the sun regarding natural law. In that moment, they suddenly fused together into a divine ability.

His enlightenment of the sun, and the sight of the Ninth Mountain eclipsing it, allowed him to create yet another divine ability, his third!

He slowly lifted his hand, within which appeared a spark of light. The light became a sphere, which then sucked in all the heat in the area, causing Meng Hao’s appearance to ripple and distort.

Seeing that Meng Hao was awakening initially caused the direct bloodline members to get very excited. However, their faces quickly fell and they backed away.

They had just noticed that their entire bodies had become icy cold in a very short period of time, as if all the heat was being sucked out of them.

Even more shocking was that the entirety of Planet East Victory was apparently affected. Countless streams of heat rose up from the ground, from all living beings on the planet.

The amorphous heat caused everything to distort as it shot toward Meng Hao. His expression was calm as he observed the scene; from the look in his eyes, it seemed that he was still sunk in contemplation.

The sphere of light in his hand continued to suck in the heat, faster and faster. In the end, he raised his hand, and the sphere reached a size of thirty meters. Within the sphere circulated brilliant light that emitted a shocking aura.

The aura seemed to increase in strength as it absorbed heat until it even began to absorb light.

The sphere grew larger and its aura grew more intense. All of the light and heat around Meng Hao was being absorbed, leaving everything ice cold....

Down below on Planet East Victory, the effects were even more noticeable. Gradually, the temperature on the entire planet began to drop.

Not only that, everything started to get darker. Powerful experts all over Planet East Victory noticed, and instantly sent divine sense out to investigate the cause. Soon, they saw Meng Hao, and the enormous sphere of light above him, now several hundred meters wide.

It looked like a small sun, and anyone who saw it was left feeling shocked. The aura it contained was mad and brutal, and... truly made any onlookers feel as if they were looking at the sun!!

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Planet East Victory's temperature dropped further, and it got even darker. The globe of light was now over 3,000 meters wide, and caused anyone who looked at it to feel a sense of impending crisis.

If the energy inside the globe were to explode out, it would leave even experts of the Ancient Realm astonished and pale-faced.

Most shocking of all, it appeared that if Meng Hao were given enough time, the sphere would continue to grow without limit. This caused many powerful experts on Planet East Victory to be filled with a sensation of vigilance. There were even streams of divine sense that converged on the Fang Clan ancestral mansion.

The direct bloodline clan members in Meng Hao's vicinity immediately began to urgently transmit messages with divine will.

“Meng Hao!!”

“Hao'er, wake up!!”

Meng Hao trembled as the surrounding clan members called out. His eyes gradually began to grow clear and bright as he regained his senses. At first he looked confused, but then he raised his head up to look at the 3,000-meter sphere of light up above.

“Meng Hao, cease that magical technique!” barked Fang Xi's father.

A sense of crisis gradually rose up in Meng Hao from the streams of divine sense, and also from the fact that he realized that he was about to lose full control the globe of light.

Eyes flickering with concentration, he let out a growl and lifted both hands up above his head. Using all the power he could muster, he exercised control of the last strand that connected him to the sphere to reverse its suction.

The sphere gradually stopped absorbing light and heat, and then started to shrink. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, the sphere began to fade away. Sweat poured down Meng Hao's forehead.

He utilized all of the energy in his body, and knew that even the slightest lapse in concentration would result in the sphere exploding.

After it finally disappeared, the direct bloodline descendants approached him. Smiles could be seen on their excited faces.

Meng Hao looked back at his 24,000-meter Dharma Idol, and sensed the Immortal meridian within him, and knew that it would be complete with only a tiny bit of effort.

“Soon, the day will arrive in which my cultivation base will move into the Immortal Realm!” Meng Hao’s eyes shone with determination.

“Hao’er,” said one of the direct bloodline Elders, smiling, “what magical technique was that?”

“It’s a divine ability I created after being enlightened regarding the sun...” said Meng Hao, turning to clasp hands to the Elder. He had now created three divine abilities. One was A Writ of Karma, the other was the Paragon Bridge, and the third... was this sphere of light.

“I’ll call it... Supernova Magic!” he said, his eyes shining brightly.

“Supernova Magic.... Hao’er, this divine ability of yours... is powerful! It’s able to absorb a virtually limitless amount of heat and light and create a copy of the sun, and depending on how much it absorbed, the force of its explosion would be inestimable.” The Elder gazed deeply at Meng Hao. “However, it has a fatal flaw. It would be easy to interrupt you while you use it. Furthermore, it takes too long to prepare. It only reached 3,000 meters in the time it takes an incense stick to burn. To reach 30,000... would take several hours.

“In addition, I could tell that you were not in complete control of it. If it had grown any larger, you would likely have lost control completely.

“You need to analyze this magic thoroughly before you use it again.” It only took a few sentences for the old man to analyze the magic’s strengths and weaknesses.

Meng Hao nodded, then clasped hands and bowed deeply to all of the direct bloodline clan members who had stood as Dharma Protectors for him. He felt very grateful toward them, and the sensation of being their blood relative grew even stronger.

Soon, the group of them turned into prismatic beams of light that shot back toward the surface of Planet East Victory. As they neared, Meng Hao saw numerous clan members flying out of the ancestral mansion, their faces filled with respect.

“Greetings, Prince Hao!”

This term of address caused Meng Hao to stare in shock. After blinking a few times, a warm smile appeared on his face, and he offered formal greetings to all the direct bloodline clan members. Then he made to return to his Immortal’s cave.

It was in that moment of departure that the Elder who had pointed out the flaws in his divine ability moments ago transmitted a message with divine will.

“Be careful of Fang Xiushan!”

Meng Hao’s expression was the same as ever. He knew that Fang Xiushan was Fang Wei’s father, so he nodded in response and then left.

After returning to his residence, he sat down cross-legged to meditate. After some probing, he came to the conclusion that his Immortal meridian was now more than 99% complete.

“Just a bit more,” he thought. “In less than a hundred days, it will be perfectly complete, and then....” His eyes glittered with cold light. “I will become a true Immortal!”

“As far as my Supernova Magic is concerned, it has some flaws. However, once my cultivation base gets high enough, I can fix them, and then I’ll have another trump card to use in battle!” He lifted his hand, and a sphere of light appeared in his palm. As it grew larger, the Fang Clan suddenly got colder. Meng Hao did nothing at first, allowing it to grow larger for a certain period of time. Then he cut off the absorbing power.

“I gained a lot during this rising of the East Ascension Sun. My Dharma Idol grew to 24,000 meters, and I gained enlightenment of the sun. Plus, my fleshly body... finally had a breakthrough and reached true Immortality!

“I wonder how strong I’ll be when my cultivation base has the same breakthrough!?” Meng Hao’s expression flickered with anticipation.

Chapter 943: Killing Intent Approaches!

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Several days later, Meng Hao emerged within the clan. All the clan members who he ran into looked at him with extreme respect, and the fervor with which people had previously treated Fang Wei was now shown toward Meng Hao.

As for Fang Wei, he had apparently disappeared, and was nowhere to be found.

Fang Xi made some inquiries, and finally got a smattering of information that he immediately passed on to Meng Hao. When Meng Hao heard that Fang Wei was in secluded meditation in an attempt to break through to true Immortality, his eyes flickered coldly.

“A Writ of Karma will lock down the Nirvana Fruits inside of him that belong to me. My good fortune with the sun was a huge blow to his self-confidence, and surely cracked his Dao heart. And yet, he stood up tall after all of that.” He thought about their interchange high up in the sky for a moment, and sighed.

Meng Hao was displeased with Fang Wei, but all told, he was not guilty of any terrible crimes. In fact, Meng Hao knew that if he looked at things from Fang Wei’s perspective, Fang Wei hadn’t done anything wrong.

“The ones who are wrong...are certain other people in this clan,” he mused. As he thought back to everything that had happened since he had returned to the clan, he was struck with the increasing sensation that there was some vast conspiracy afoot.

It was a mystery involving Fang Wei, and also had something to do with the Grand Elder. Perhaps... even a Patriarch.

That was why the Grand Elder had been acting so strange. That was why everyone maintained silence regarding Fang Wei. Apparently, a Patriarch had appointed Fang Wei to a position of authority years ago, although Meng Hao wasn’t completely sure of the truth behind it all.

It was as if the entire matter was taboo. No one dared to speak of it.

“Do you understand...?” That was what Pill Elder had said to him on the mountain peak.

“Was he warning me that there was something wrong with the Nirvana Fruits the Grand Elder gave me? Or was he hinting at something else...?” Meng Hao frowned. After considering that matter for a bit longer, he began to duplicate some Spirit Extract, which he placed onto the Nirvana Fruit.

Meng Hao had already decided that once he fully restored the Nirvana Fruit, he would definitely absorb it. He had the feeling that the benefits it would provide him would be immense, and would help him begin to unravel the enigma of the Fang Clan.

That feeling stemmed from his confidence in his ability to analyze and judge matters, as well as his keen intuition.

“Nobody has ever been able to absorb the first generation Patriarch’s Nirvana Fruits. I wonder what miracles will result if I succeed?” After a while, he stopped considering the matter, and calmed his mind.

Seven days later, Meng Hao looked worriedly at the copper mirror, which had rapidly consumed all of his hard-earned spirit stones in exchange for batch after batch of Spirit Extract. That Spirit Extract had then been greedily absorbed by the Nirvana Fruit.

As he nourished the Nirvana Fruit with the Spirit Extract, it seemed to be gradually awakening, as if... it were almost completely restored.

As the copper mirror consumed all of the spirit stones he had acquired from concocting the Skypalace Sunspirit Pill, as well as what he had gotten from Sun Hai, stabs of pain filled Meng Hao’s heart. It was as if he had just thrown away a vast sum of spirit stones directly into the Nirvana Fruit.

Each one of those spirit stones was enough to break Meng Hao’s heart.

“Making money is so hard, so how come spending it... is so easy?” he thought with a sigh.

Even the entire Fang Clan would be incapable of producing so much Spirit Extract. After all, the medicinal plants he had used to make it were the ones he had acquired in the Ruins of Immortality, plants which were rare and, in fact, virtually extinct in the outside world.

As such, this Spirit Extract was essentially priceless. Not even the Fang Clan as a whole would be able to afford to restore this Nirvana Fruit; only Meng Hao, with his copper mirror, could manage it.

“Dammit!” he thought, gritting his teeth and then letting out a long sigh. “I need to think of yet another plan to make some more spirit stones....” He sat there with furrowed brow for a long time before finally clenching his jaw.

“Those sacred pills are not easy to concoct. They will be my last resort. I still haven’t finished the seventh level of the Medicine Pavilion. I should take advantage of the fact that I’m so famous in the Fang Clan right now. Maybe I can strike it rich in one fell swoop!” Having made up his mind, he called Fang Xi over and the two of them spent some time discussing the matter. Finally, Fang Xi left in excitement to enact the plan.

It only took a few days for word to spread through the clan like stormwinds.

“Did you hear? Tomorrow, Prince Hao is going to the Dao of Alchemy Division to challenge the Medicine Pavilion!”

“Last time he went to the Medicine pavilion, he completed every level perfectly! It caused a huge sensation in the Dao of Alchemy Division.”

“From ancient times until now, it’s been easier to find a phoenix feather or a qilin horn than to find someone who can make it through the ninth level of the Dao of Alchemy’s Medicine Pavilion. Each and every one is a Grandmaster of the Dao of Alchemy. I heard that Prince Hao’s goal is just that: to make it through the ninth level!”

News about Meng Hao challenging the Medicine Pavilion quickly spread through the clan, and especially through the Dao of Alchemy Division. In the end, it was like great waves rolling across the entire clan.

Meng Hao was very pleased with this sort of clan environment, and had things all worked out with Fang Xi. Fang Xi would wait outside the Medicine Pavilion area to collect spirit stones. Anyone who didn’t pay spirit stones would not be allowed to observe.

Before, it would have been difficult for Meng Hao to pull something like that off. However, after the rising of the East Ascension Sun, he was the number one Chosen in the Fang Clan, and his every word and deed was the subject of widespread attention.

“This time, I’m definitely going to make a killing!” he thought. The next morning at dawn, he woke early and pushed open the door of his residence. Just when he was about to fly into the air toward

the Dao of Alchemy Division, he saw six beams of light flying toward him at high speed. They quickly arrived and surrounded him.

These six people surged with energy. Five of them were stage 7 Immortals, and Meng Hao could sense that the remaining one had a cultivation base as profound as a deep sea. He was a middle-aged man with a grim face who looked Meng Hao over and then said, “The Grand Elder has summoned you, Fang Hao. Come with us.”

Meng Hao frowned at the six men and then coolly replied, “Understood. I’ll go over a bit later.”

With that he strode forward and prepared to fly past the men.

When the middle-aged man heard Meng Hao’s response, his face tightened with displeasure.

“The Grand Elder has summoned you, and you dare to cause a delay? You’re coming with us now, or else—”

“Or else what?” said Meng Hao, stopping in place and looking at the man with an enigmatic smile. A vast coldness swirled deep within his pupils.

“Arrest him!” said the man, staring back at Meng Hao.

Immediately, the other five stage 7 Immortals transformed into beams of light, and their cultivation bases surged. Dharma Idols appeared, 21,000-meter illusory giants. Of course, none of these Dharma Idols represented the cultivators themselves; all of them were false Immortals!

They closed in on Meng Hao in the blink of an eye. One of the Dharma Idols was an enormous war drum, which emanated a rumbling like that of thunder. Two of the other Dharma Idols were vicious black dragons, which roared as they slashed through the air toward Meng Hao.

Of the final two Dharma Idols, one was a three-headed six-armed statue, and the other was an enormous crimson python with a forked tongue and sinister eyes.

The five men all attacked simultaneously, and it didn’t look like they were trying to arrest Meng Hao. Instead, killing intent flickered in their eyes, although it was faint and well-concealed. However, Meng Hao had experienced many things during his life, including two intense wars on

Planet South Heaven. He had also slaughtered countless people, so killing intent like this was something he was keenly attuned to.

“Wanna kill me?” he asked with an icy cold smile. He took a step forward and clenched his right hand into a fist. It shot toward the crimson python at high speed, creating a sonic boom that echoed out in all directions. The air distorted as the power of Meng Hao’s true Immortal fleshly body exploded out.

As the boom rang through the air, the crimson python shattered, revealing the cultivator behind it, ashen face awash with shock. Before he could retreat, Meng Hao leaped forward and kicked him viciously with his right foot. Cracking sounds could be heard as it slammed into the man’s chest, and blood sprayed from his mouth. He tumbled backward.

At the same time, the other four cultivators closed in, divine abilities and magical techniques raging. Meng Hao’s face flickered with iciness. Instead of dodging to the side, he turned and transformed into a golden roc, then shot directly toward his four opponents with incredible speed. A wave of a hand caused numerous mountains to appear, which formed a mountain chain that dropped down toward them.

Next, he made a grasping motion, and a long spear appeared in his hand, the haft carved from the World Tree and the spearhead made from white bone. When he stabbed forward with it, everything darkened, and a sobbing sound rang out. The war drum collapsed into pieces, and the cultivator within it coughed up blood and fell into retreat.

Simultaneously, the head of a Blood Demon appeared, and a blood-colored halo materialized beneath Meng Hao’s feet. He punched again, and the three-headed, six-armed statue exploded. At the same time, the two black dragon Dharma Idols managed to land attacks on Meng Hao’s chest.

The two cultivators controlling the black dragons glared with killing intent. Their cultivation bases exploded with power that would be enough to fell virtually any other cultivator who was weaker than a stage 7 Immortal.

A boom could be heard, and suddenly everything went silent. The two cultivators who had just successfully landed attacks on Meng Hao stared in shock, and then gasped. It wasn’t that they weren’t aware that Meng Hao had a true Immortal fleshly body. However... in their minds, his cultivation base was not at the true Immortal stage, so therefore, they didn’t believe his true Immortal fleshly body would really be all that powerful.

As of this moment, though... they had a clear idea... of what exactly a true Immortal fleshly body was!

“So weak!” Meng Hao said casually. He glared at the men aggressively, and it was like piercing light stabbing into their eyes.

Meng Hao hadn't even budged an inch. In fact, he didn't even appear to be harmed at all. At the same time, the two men who had just attacked him felt a powerful counterattack surging toward them, and suddenly, blood oozed out of their mouths.

The two men were scared witless, and were about to retreat when Meng Hao reached out and grabbed one of them, then lifted him into the air and shook him back and forth. The man couldn't control his own body, and felt massive power battering him. Cracking sounds could be heard as his bones were broken and dislocated, and he was then thrown violently toward the second retreating man.

A boom rang out as the second man was sent tumbling backward, his bones shattered and blood spraying from his mouth.

All of this took place in only a few breaths' worth of time. Five stage 7 Immortals were seriously injured, and Meng Hao remained standing there. He then turned toward the first middle-aged man, the one with the unfathomable cultivation base.

The man's eyes widened. He had never imagined that a true Immortal fleshly body would be so shockingly powerful. It was an exceedingly rare thing for a cultivator to have a fleshly body developed to this level, and was in fact something he had never seen before.

Chapter 944: The Grand Elder's Stance

As the two of them faced off, Meng Hao's Dharma Idol appeared, 24,000 meters tall. Combined with his true Saint fleshly body, it caused his energy to surge with intense power that only continued to increase. He then extended his right hand, and a glowing sphere materialized above it. As it floated there, the sphere seemed to suck in all of the warmth in the area and cause everything to instantly grow cold.

The man's expression was solemn, and his eyes focused intently on Meng Hao. He sensed a feeling of grave danger when he looked at the sphere of light. And then, Meng Hao started to walk toward him. It was at this moment that...

“Hao’er, come to the main temple!” The Grand Elder’s archaic voice echoed out around them.

Meng Hao said nothing, but his eyes flashed almost indiscernibly. As for the middle-aged man, when he heard the Grand Elder’s voice, he gave an inward sigh of relief.

At the same time, his eyes emanated a sharp glow, and a murderous will gradually rose up in his heart. That was because he had realized that Meng Hao’s Dharma Idol was still standing there, and Meng Hao’s powerful energy hadn’t faded away. It was almost as if he was preparing to refuse the Grand Elder’s summons.

The man’s eyes glittered as he readied himself. He looked at Meng Hao.

Ten breaths of time passed, during which Meng Hao’s expression never changed. Finally, his Dharma Idol vanished, and his surging energy dissipated. Everything returned to normal. However, the glowing sphere remained floating there. As he began to walk forward, it drifted up toward the top of his head, sucking in all of the heat and light around it.

Meng Hao put the bone-tip spear away, and then completely ignored the middle-aged man as he flew into the air toward the ancestral mansion’s main temple.

Inwardly, the middle-aged man sighed in regret, and then reined in the killing intent in his gaze. Finally, he followed Meng Hao. As for the other five men, they had not received fatal injuries, but were still very seriously hurt. They wouldn’t be able to fully recover any time soon, so for the moment, all they could do was struggle to their feet and then consume some medicinal pills. After that, they followed along, faces pale.

Meng Hao flew the entire way, followed by the six men. Quite a few clan members saw him. Many of them had originally intended to go observe his efforts in the Dao of Alchemy Division, and were taken aback when they saw him flying toward the main temple.

This was especially the case when they saw the six men following him, five of whom were seriously injured and had dismal, ashen faces. The clan members who saw this were all shaken inwardly.

From the look of things, a violent storm was brewing under the surface of the Fang Clan, and was just barely being kept under control.

At some point, the sky above the Fang Clan had changed from its usual bright, sunny, and endlessly blue appearance. Now, black clouds gathered, and the rumbling of thunder shook the ground. Flashes that resembled silver dragons could occasionally be seen flickering in the clouds.

When the Fang Clan members saw this, they grew very quiet. They weren't sure exactly what had happened, but they could clearly sense that the air was growing increasingly colder.

Meng Hao's expression was calm as he proceeded forward. The sphere of light above his head continued to grow larger. Soon it was 300 meters wide, and incredibly shocking in appearance....

The six Fang Clan guardsmen behind him looked on with tingling scalps, completely astonished. No one else understood why the sky had changed color and the air was growing cold, but they knew. It was all caused by the glowing sphere of light above Meng Hao's head!

As Meng Hao headed toward the main temple, the sphere of light continued to absorb all the heat and light around him!

"This is the divine ability he created when he faced the sun!" thought the leader of the group of six men. His eyes widened, and despite the level of his cultivation base, he still felt fear growing inside of him.

It didn't take long before the sphere of light was 600 meters wide. Meng Hao was now outside of the main temple. The first thing he noticed was the Grand Elder, sitting there inside.

There were also numerous Elders sitting in the enormous seats that filled the temple hall. Each one of them wore calm expressions, and none of them spoke, which actually caused the temple hall to be filled with enormous pressure.

Sitting near the Grand Elder were Fang Wei's grandfather and father. Both of them looked over icily at Meng Hao.

Killing intent flickered deep within Fang Xiushan's eyes.

Meng Hao's expression was as calm as ever. Without any hesitation, he stepped into the middle of the temple hall.

As for the 600-meter sphere of light, Meng Hao left it floating just outside of the temple, where it continued to absorb light and heat.

Because of the sphere, Meng Hao's entrance into the temple hall was accompanied by icy coldness. The light even began to fade, and frost began to appear on the ground.

The surrounding Elders' facial expressions did not change, but they had long since sent their divine sense out to inspect the sphere of light hovering outside the temple.

"Fang Hao extends greetings to the Grand Elder and other Elders," he said, his voice neither haughty nor humble as he clasped hands and bowed deeply. He was clearly following the clan rules down to the letter.

The Grand Elder's face was expressionless as he looked at Meng Hao.

"Hao'er," he said slowly, "you displayed shocking talent during the rise of the East Ascension Sun. You flew up higher than any member of the Junior generation of the clan has ever flown throughout our countless years of history.

"You stepped off of the planet and into the starry sky, you faced the sun for ten breaths of time, and you received significant good fortune and enlightenment.

"All of these things make me very happy for you." Although he spoke words of praise and encouragement, his expression was completely emotionless the entire time.

Meng Hao stood there silently and scanned the crowd. He remembered the words of that direct bloodline Elder who had warned him about Fang Xiushan. Half a month had already passed since then, and from what Meng Hao could tell, this summons could not be a good thing for him.

That was especially true when he noticed the anxiety within the eyes of the direct bloodline Elders who were present in the temple. Furthermore, Fang Xi's father was present, and was looking nervously at Meng Hao.

"The Elders have all proposed that you be rewarded for your actions," the Grand Elder continued, "and after much thought, I have come to the conclusion that I agree. Your reward will come in the form of access to the clan's ancestral land, which was created by the first generation Patriarch. At

one time, our ancestral land was part of the Ruins of Immortality. However, the Patriarch cut that part of the Ruins away and brought it here.”

When Meng Hao heard this, his eyes narrowed. He knew that the Fang Clan possessed deep resources, but he hadn't been aware that the first generation Patriarch was so strong that he could take away part of the Ruins of Immortality and bring it back to the clan to serve as an ancestral land!

“The divine abilities and magical techniques of the Fang Clan were not all simply handed down by the first generation Patriarch,” the Grand Elder explained. “Instead, for generation after generation, members of our clan have entered the ancestral land he left behind. After thoroughly searching it over and over again, the various magics of the Fang Clan have slowly been collected together.

“However... there are still many magical techniques that have yet to be discovered. To find them is a matter of chance and good fortune.

“Furthermore, for countless years, any Fang Clan member who reached the Dao Realm and did not perish off planet, chose to be buried in this ancestral land when it came time for them to return to the dust. There, they would leave behind their cultivation magic and other secrets, where they remain, just waiting for a predestined successor to go in and acquire them.

“As for the first generation Patriarch's five great Daoist magics, four of them have been located. However, the most powerful of them all, the One Thought Stellar Transformation, has never been found.

“In addition to all that, there are also medicinal plants and pill formulas in the ancestral land. There are even Immortal Ancient Daoist Treasures, all just waiting for their destined person to come along and take them.” As the Grand Elder spoke, his cold voice echoed throughout the temple hall.

Meng Hao listened to everything, his face as still as stone.

“Opening the ancestral land requires a significant expenditure of resources. Generally speaking, we only open it once every thousand years. However, even though the appointed time has not arrived, we are going to make an exception and open it for you.

“However...” It was at this point that the Grand Elder suddenly paused and looked deeply at Meng Hao for a long moment before continuing.

“Great danger lurks inside. That danger exists in the form of trials by fire left behind by the first generation Patriarch for his successors. The ancestral land is a bizarre place, in which various strange beings can arise.

“Therefore, to someone like you, the ancestral land might be a place of good fortune, but it can also be extremely dangerous. Although not many people have actually died in the ancestral land over the years, some have.

“You may consider... whether or not you wish to take advantage of this reward.” The Grand Elder’s final words caused Fang Xiushan’s and Fang Wei’s grandfather’s expressions to flicker almost imperceptibly. Without even thinking about it, they glanced over at the Grand Elder.

Fang Xiushan’s brow furrowed. According to their previous agreement with the Grand Elder, when the ancestral land was opened, Meng Hao would be forced to enter it whether he wanted to or not. He was not to be given a choice in the matter.

As of this moment, both Fang Xiushan and Fang Wei’s Grandfather couldn’t understand why the Grand Elder, who had always supported their bloodline, would, at the very last moment, suddenly give Meng Hao the option of whether or not to enter!

As the two of them hesitated, the Grand Elder waved his finger, causing a vortex to appear in midair in the middle of the temple. The vortex spun out, growing to dozens of meters in size. It was filled with swirling mists, within which slowly appeared the image of another world.

Gradually, that world grew clearer and clearer.

Meng Hao’s face was calm as he looked at the Grand Elder. The fact that he had been given a choice was somewhat strange. After a moment of thought, he glanced over at the direct bloodline Elders, and could see that they were also hesitating. He was now being given an opportunity that he would be hard-pressed to come across in any other situation.

At the same time, he was facing imminent danger.

“Hao’er,” said Fang Xi’s father, 19th Uncle, “you really need to consider the matter carefully. I suggest that you don’t enter the ancestral land. Wait until you’re in the Immortal Realm. In another

few hundred years, then you can go into the ancestral land. That would be much better. There's really no reason for you to enter now. Hao'er, consider things carefully."

Meng Hao was silent for a moment before turning back to the Grand Elder, clasping hands and bowing deeply.

"Grand Elder, am I the only one who can enter on this occasion? May I choose to decline the chance to enter?"

"If you enter, you will do so alone," the Grand Elder said slowly, his expression one of neither joy nor anger. "If you wish to decline the chance to enter, you may go to the Dao of Alchemy Division to challenge the medicine pavilion."

Off to the side, Fang Xiushan sat there nervously. He had paid a very heavy price to arrange this matter, and if Meng Hao didn't enter, it would be impossible for him to have Meng Hao killed.

"Bear in mind," continued the Grand Elder, looking at Meng Hao with a piercing gaze, "all contact with the outside will be severed once you enter the ancestral land. Nothing that happens inside will be visible to any of us."

Those words caused Fang Xiushan's face to twitch. He looked over at his father, and saw that, although his face was expressionless, his pupils had constricted.

Meng Hao was unsure as to why the Grand Elder was taking this stance. The normal thing to happen would be for the Grand Elder to give him no choice in the matter. For things to turn out this way caused Meng Hao to look over at the vortex thoughtfully. He was just about to say that he would decline what was obviously an ambush set up by Fang Xiushan when suddenly, a tremor ran through his body. As he looked into the world inside of the vortex, his eyes suddenly went wide.

For a moment, it seemed as if he had caught sight of something completely unbelievable. However, his expression quickly returned to normal. Nonetheless, inwardly, he was more shocked than if he had been struck by lightning. His heart began to pound beyond control.

Mouth and throat dry, he immediately said, "I choose to enter the ancestral land!"

Chapter 945: Meng Hao's Tears

When the Elders in the temple who tended to support Fang Wei's bloodline heard Meng Hao's words, they looked over at him expressionlessly. As for the direct bloodline, anxious expressions could be seen on their faces. However, since this was Meng Hao's decision, they did nothing to persuade him to change his mind.

After all, the Grand Elder had clearly explained that there would be great danger in the ancestral land. Considering that Meng Hao had chosen to enter even under such circumstances caused 19th Uncle and the direct bloodline Elders to be able to sense his level of determination.

All they could do was sigh inwardly.

The Grand Elder looked deeply at Meng Hao for a moment, his expression revealing nothing about what he was thinking. However, the way he was looking at Meng Hao did seem... somewhat strange.

Most excited of all was Fang Xiushan. He took a deep breath and stared at Meng Hao without revealing any of the boiling killing intent in his heart. Fang Wei's grandfather frowned thoughtfully at the way the Grand Elder was looking at Meng Hao. For some reason, he had a very uneasy feeling inside.

The Grand Elder was silent for a moment, then coolly said, "Since that is your decision, then go now."

He waved his hand, and a gentle breeze rose up, wrapped around Meng Hao, and sent him toward the vortex.

"In two months, the ancestral land will automatically open again, and you may come out. During those two months... please take care of yourself." Even as the words rang out, Meng Hao flew through the air in the wind. In the blink of an eye, he was right outside of the vortex. When he looked inside, his heart pounded madly, and a feeling of reminiscence floated in his heart.

RUMBLE!

Upon contact, he sank into the vortex as if it were water. Then he vanished. The vortex stopped moving, and then faded away from the temple hall.

In that same moment, there were nine areas in different parts of Planet East Victory which suddenly shone with mysterious black light. That light was cast up by teleportation portals, within which sat nine cold and expressionless cultivators wearing black robes.

These nine cultivators seethed with murderous auras, as if innumerable foes had been slain by their hands.

If Meng Hao were able to see any of them, he would recognize them immediately. The black robes worn by these nine men seemed to be exactly the same as the ones worn by the people who had ambushed him and 19th Uncle en route to Planet East Victory!

As they sat there cross-legged in the teleportation portals, light suddenly rose up around them, and they vanished. This was in the exact moment in which Meng Hao vanished into the ancestral land.

Another thing happened at exactly the same time. Deep underground beneath the Fang Clan ancestral mansion, seven withered figures sat cross-legged in meditation. One of them was the crimson-robed old man who had opened his eyes during the rising of the East Ascension Sun, aroused by Meng Hao's Essence of Divine Flame. At this moment, his eyes opened, and they shone with boundless ancientness.

"This kid's bloodline is strong.... He's a descendant of Eldest Brother. He must be THE Chosen of this generation of the clan." The old man's eyes flickered as he sensed the black-robed men vanishing, and then a cold light gleamed therein.

"Interesting. Someone actually dares to violate clan rules and fight inside the clan.... Not only that, but they chose to fight within the ancestral land!" The coldness in his eyes grew more intense.

"Is it Sixth Brother's bloodline....?" The old man's brow furrowed in thought for a while. He turned his head to look at the sixth figure sitting there meditating in the inky blackness of the stony cavern.

There were a total of seven people inside this underground lair. Originally, the old man in the crimson robe should have been asleep, and should not have awakened in this age. According to the clan rules, it was the Sixth Patriarch who was supposed to regain consciousness in this millennium.

However, Meng Hao's Essence of Divine Flame had stimulated his aura during the rise of the Eastern Ascension Sun, reviving him. Afterward, he had planned to return to meditation, but had then changed his mind.

“Sixth Brother is in an astral projection. His soul is no longer in his body.” He thought for another moment.

“Sixth Brother has already cultivated the Reincarnation Incantation Daoist magic to the pinnacle. But... was it worth it?” The old man closed his eyes. This closing of the eyes was not a return to a state of inactivity. Instead, he quietly sent out some divine sense, which transformed into a stream of divine will that made its way through the earth... toward the ancestral land!

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Heaven and Earth trembled as lightning and thunder danced about in the clouds, as if seeking a way to lash the earth. The ground itself was a brownish color that made it look like it was soaked with blood, and stretched out as far as the eye could see.

What parts of the land were not covered with deep cracks were choked with weeds.

A seemingly eternal air of desolation and bleakness spread out in all directions. Off in the distance, ruins could be seen, and even further off, a volcano which belched thick black smoke.

Occasionally, frightening roars could be heard echoing about, which raged across the lands like storm winds, causing everything to shake.

The mystery of this place came from the fact that it used to be part of the Ruins of Immortality. Its solemn dignity came because it was now an ancestral land of the Fang Clan.

The first generation Patriarch was buried here. Other Dao Realm Patriarchs of the clan, his descendants, were also laid to rest here after passing away in meditation.

The entire ancestral land was laid out in the shape of a straight line. The further one went in, the more danger there was. As for the brown-earthed region near the entrance, two chains of mountains were visible.

These two mountain ranges were like two stone dragons, lofty, imposing, and jagged.

Between the two mountain chains was a path, so far down from the peaks of the mountains that the sky was almost like a sliver up above. It was like a great door leading into the ancestral land, although there was no actual door present, only... an enormous statue larger than the mountains themselves!

This statue looked as if it were inseparably connected to the mountains. It was pitch black, and wore a heavy suit of armor. Its two hands rested on the pommel of a greatsword, and the statue itself seemed incomparably ancient.

The sword was dozens of meters wide, and was thrust down into the earth. Ancient magical symbols were engraved onto its surface, which seemed simple and almost crude, and yet contained profound meaning that was impossible to decipher.

The statue's eyes lacked any expression whatsoever, making the statue itself seem completely lifeless. It almost seemed to be a mere decoration standing guard over the ancestral land.

However, from a distance, it was possible to see that the statue was looking up into the sky, staring off into the distance as if... it was waiting for something.

Any Fang Clan member who had been to the ancestral land knew about this statue. According to the legends, the origins of the statue were a complete mystery. Supposedly, it had flown here from somewhere out in the starry sky, the same year that the Ji Clan changed the Heavens and took over the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

From then on, the statue had remained in this spot, apparently guarding the ancestral land.

Over the years, rumors began to spread that the statue was not just there to guard the ancestral land, but actually, all of the Fang Clan's bloodlines.

Years and years passed, and eventually, the rumors and stories died out. In every generation of the Fang Clan, there would be many people who came and laid eyes on the statue. However, they never called to mind the absurd stories of the past. After all... they were simply legends.

As for the reason why the statue held its head up as if it were waiting for something, people had long since stopped wondering about it.

No one had any idea why this statue had come here to the Fang Clan on its own... nor what it was waiting for.

It emanated the aura of a powerful expert, an intense aura that was strong enough to shake Heaven and Earth. When Meng Hao looked at it, the feeling he got was so intense that not even the Grand Elder could compare.

This statue was so strong... that in the past, Meng Hao wouldn't have been able to even identify how powerful it was. Now, though, when he looked at the statue, he understood.... This statue's aura was almost like that of a Paragon!

Meng Hao stood in the vast land between the two mountain chains. This was the location that he had appeared in upon entering the ancestral land. Currently, he was standing there stock-still, looking thoughtfully at the statue.

He was well aware that this trip to the ancestral land was an ambush. He also knew that the best choice had been to not come here, but instead take advantage of the opportunity given him by the Grand Elder.

In fact, originally he had no plans whatsoever to enter this place. However, after looking into the vortex and seeing this enormous statue, his heart had filled with roaring.

The roaring had soon inundated him completely, tugging at him, pulling him into distant memories.

He trembled, and his eyes flashed with reminiscence. He couldn't even control himself as he walked forward to stand in front of the statue. He came to a stop in front of its foot, after which he reached his hand out and patted it gently.

His hand shook, and after it touched the statue, his whole body started trembling. He slowly looked up at the enormously tall statue, and then started to float up into the air.

He moved slowly, as if he wanted to take a clear look at the entire statue. Eventually, he reached its head, and looked into its eyes. It was at this point... that tears appeared in his own eyes.

"Terracotta soldier...." he murmured softly. Finally, the tears began to roll down his cheeks and fall to the ground. He remembered this terracotta soldier being about three meters tall. Even though it

was now much bigger than before, he would never forget this terracotta soldier with whom he had such a connection.

The only reason he had chosen to enter this ancestral land despite all the danger... was because of this statue.

Back in the temple, when he had looked into the vortex and seen the statue, he almost couldn't believe it.

How could he have forgotten about this statue...? How was it even possible??

This was... one of the two terracotta soldiers that had been created for him in illusory world of the Second Plane of the ancient Demon Immortal Sect, by his foster father Ke Yunhai!

He would never, ever be able to forget the life he had lived as Ke Jiushi back in the ancient Demon Immortal Sect.

"Father...." said Meng Hao, tears streaming down his face. His entire body shook, and as he looked at the statue, he wept. All of the memories of the ancient Demon Immortal Sect flooded into his mind. All of a sudden, Ke Yunhai's stern and yet loving face appeared in his mind.

The ninety-nine bell tolls from that year seemed to echo in his ears once again.

He had long since assumed that he would never see the two terracotta soldiers again. He had searched for them in the Third Plane of the ancient Demon Immortal Sect, in the real world, but hadn't found them.

There was no possible way that Meng Hao would ever have thought that he might see one of the statues here... in the Fang Clan's ancestral land.

Ke Yunhai, knowing that his longevity was reaching its end, had created this terracotta soldier to protect Meng Hao. It was only because of it that Meng Hao had unhesitatingly entered the ancestral land, despite knowing of the dangers.

It wouldn't have mattered if the danger had been exponentially greater than it was, Meng Hao would never have hesitated to come here.

And the entire reason... was because of Ke Yunhai!

Chapter 946: A Certain Object, a Certain Person

What was it waiting for?

This was a question that no one in the Fang Clan had been able to answer for generations.

Meng Hao looked at the statue, weeping, fully aware... that the statue had been waiting for him.

It had waited here alone for him for tens of thousands of years....

The reason it had flown here to the Fang Clan was because of the soul blood that had emerged from Meng Hao's forehead to connect him to the statue. Because of that, it didn't matter how much time separated them, or who ended up taking possession of the soldier. Meng Hao... was always its original master.

Years ago, before Meng Hao had even been born, the statue flew through space, guided by his blood, all the way to the Fang Clan. It had found a place where it sensed a familiar bloodline, and then chosen to wait there in silence.

This was the simple answer to the question asked by so many members of the Fang Clan.

This was only one of the two statues that had been created for Meng Hao by Ke Yunhai.

As for the other statue, perhaps it had fallen in battle at some point throughout the years. Or perhaps it was in some other distant location, standing alone and looking off into the sky just like this statue, waiting for Meng Hao to come.

Time passed by slowly, and eventually, Meng Hao sat down cross-legged on the statue's head. He patted the surface of the statue, and his expression continued to be one of reminiscence. He recalled everything that had happened in the ancient Demon Immortal Sect, and his heart filled with sorrow.

Sometimes, a certain object will make you think of a certain person.

When Meng Hao looked at the statue, he missed Ke Yunhai. He missed the man he had called father in that ancient world.

At the same time that Meng Hao sat down on the statue, there were nine areas in the Fang Clan ancestral land where the air distorted, and nine black-robed men emerged. They immediately produced jade slips that they could use to detect bloodlines, then transformed into beams of light that shot away from their original locations.

Killing intent boiled in the ancestral land.

One of the black-robed men held the jade slip in hand, and the desire to kill gleamed in his eyes as he realized that he was the closest of them all to Meng Hao. He made no effort to conceal the level of his cultivation base. Power exploded out as he shot through the air in a beam of light, following the jade slip's guidance.

His cultivation base caused the clouds up above to seethe, and the ground to shake. This was an Ancient Realm cultivation base, and as he sped through the air, it was possible to see nine lamps behind him.

They were wooden lamps that burned with green flames. Eight of the lamps were lit, one was extinguished. They began orbiting around the man, and they pulsed with the power of a natural law of Heaven and Earth!

The Ancient Realm is also called the Ancient Soul. Based on the accumulations and preparations made in the Immortal Realm, a minimum of nine Soul Lamps will appear upon breaking through to the Ancient Realm. More can appear depending on the profundity of the cultivator's cultivation base. To proceed through the Ancient Realm, the lamps must be extinguished one by one. The extinguishing of each lamp counts as a deadly test, and if the cultivator can extinguish all of the lamps and remain alive, then they will be qualified to step into the Dao Realm!

However, to do so is incredibly hard!

The more Soul Lamps one possesses, the harder it is to break through, and the greater the chance of death. At the same time, though, the more Soul Lamps one has... the more shockingly powerful they will be if they succeed in breaking through!

That was so much so that there were some people with ten or more Soul Lamps who, after reaching the late Ancient Realm, were qualified to fight with someone in the Dao Realm!

In any given clan or sect, a cultivator with one extinguished Soul Lamp would be considered to have the status of an Elder. The single stamp of a foot could shake everything. Just one such person would be enough to slaughter Meng Hao, but Fang Xiushan was obviously uneasy about the situation. It was impossible to say what vast price he had paid, for he had actually hired nine almighty Ancient Realm cultivators, each of them with one extinguished Soul Lamp. Clearly, he wanted no mishaps or accidents in having Meng Hao exterminated.

Meanwhile, a vague image appeared high up in the air where it was impossible for anyone to see. An old man hovered there, looking down at Meng Hao, who was still sitting on the statue's head.

This image was none other than the divine will of the Seventh Patriarch from the subterranean cavern beneath the Fang Clan.

When he saw Meng Hao sitting there abjectly on top of the statue, he gaped in shock.

“What’s the kid doing?” he thought.

Meng Hao sat there atop of the statue for a while before raising his head and looking off into the distance, where he saw a figure speeding toward him like an arrow piercing through the roiling clouds.

The figure moved with incredible speed, bursting with astonishing energy that seemed capable of splitting Heaven and Earth. This was a power that Meng Hao could never fight against. Behind the figure were nine lamps, eight burning and one extinguished, which emanated a primordial will that cast strange colors into the sky.

Meng Hao’s eyes widened. This was his first time seeing Soul Lamps, and after a moment of consideration, the coldness in his eyes grew more intense.

“Soul Lamps are cultivated in the Ancient Realm...” he murmured. “So, an Ancient Realm expert has appeared in the ancestral land. Fang Xiushan... is this the expression of your killing intent?” He looked at the figure that split the air as it shot toward him. It was a powerful expert wearing a black robe, and he was closing in rapidly.

He made no effort to conceal his monstrous cultivation base or his massive killing intent. A wind kicked up, spreading across the lands and kicking up dust. The wind couldn't dispel the bleak feeling that lay over the land, and in fact, made everything even more harsh and desolate.

The moment Meng Hao saw the black robe, killing intent flickered in his eyes. He immediately thought back to how he had fled from deadly pursuit in the starry sky.

"So, I guessed correctly," he thought. "It was Fang Wei's bloodline who tried to prevent me from making it back to the clan alive." His face was calm as he faced the wild wind. His robes and hair flapped in the wind, and yet, he continued to calmly pat the statue's head.

The Seventh Patriarch's divine will image floated in midair, astonished. In his opinion, Meng Hao was now facing an Ancient Realm expert with one extinguished Soul Lamp. For him to be acting so calm left the Seventh Patriarch in a state of wonderment.

"Let's see what kind of trump card the kid has to get him out of this deadly situation," thought the Seventh Patriarch, smiling and paying close attention. He had already decided that he would take action in the moment before Meng Hao would actually be killed.

The reason he had come here, though, was not for Meng Hao, but rather, for those people who had dared to violate the clan rules.

Screaming wind filled the air as the black-robed man shot toward Meng Hao. He was middle-aged and very skinny. His expression was calm, without the slightest bit of excitement visible. To him, killing a member of the Junior generation who wasn't even an Immortal, was far too simple of a task.

It didn't matter if his target had a rare true Immortal fleshly body. To him, Meng Hao was merely a member of a younger generation. In his opinion, Fang Xiushan was making a mountain out of a molehill to ask nine people to all attack Meng Hao.

By this point, he was about 3,000 meters away from Meng Hao. In a flash, that distance shrank to only a few hundred meters.

He said nothing, just extended his right hand and pointed toward Meng Hao.

In response, the land up ahead twisted as a huge fissure opened up. It looked like a vicious, evil dragon that shot toward Meng Hao.

Bizarre colors flashed, and natural law manifested. The light and the darkness in the world seemed to be in flux.

From a distance, the sky appeared to have become a huge net; as soon as the fissure appeared in the ground, the entire sky seemed to have shattered!

Meng Hao's pupils constricted. The man's arrival made it seem as if a stifling pressure were weighing down on the entire area, like Heavenly might. The pressure caused his blood to seethe, and his cultivation base to begin to shatter. Even his fleshly body began to emanate cracking sounds.

"So this is an Ancient Realm expert, huh...?" A strange light gleamed in Meng Hao's eyes as the air ripped apart in response to the man's waving finger. This man's manipulation of the natural law of Heaven and Earth had already reached the acme of perfection; apparently, if this man wanted the air to rip apart, then the air would absolutely do just that.

An intense sensation of deadly crisis rose up in Meng Hao.

However, as that fissure snaked toward him, Meng Hao's lips twisted up into a smile of ridicule.

In that moment, he did not move. What moved was the statue beneath him!

The statue's eyes had previously been blank, without the slightest sign of life. But now, they suddenly began to shine with bright light that turned into consciousness. The face now flickered with expression, and its aura roiled out.

It was nothing more than an aura, and yet it caused Heaven and Earth to tremble, and the fissure that was extending rapidly toward Meng Hao suddenly vanished into nothing!

The massive net up in the sky also collapsed.

Rumbling sounds echoed out in all directions, and the ground quaked. The mountains themselves shook as Meng Hao's statue seemed to wake up from a slumber that had lasted for tens of thousands of years. It was as if it were being resurrected from the dead.

Its aura grew stronger and stronger, growing infinitely close to the level of a Paragon. This type of Paragon was not the same type of Paragon as the title held by that white-robed woman who had appeared in that year in the Three Great Daoist Societies' trial by fire. This was... the Quasi-Dao Realm, which was referred to by the title Paragon in the Nine Mountains and Seas!

As for why exactly it was referred to in that manner, there was a specific reason!

The terracotta soldier's eyes were growing brighter and clearer, and its energy was surging to monstrous heights. It was as if the statue was now rising up to accomplish the mission assigned to it by Ke Yunhai all those years ago!

Its mission... was to protect Meng Hao for all time, to eternally act as his safeguard!

It was to never allow Meng Hao to come to any harm, to never experience grief, and most definitely to never be killed. That... was the statue's mission, and the entire purpose why Ke Yunhai had created it.

Meng Hao sat on top of the statue, and he saw Ke Yunhai in his mind's eye. His face was stern, but his eyes were filled with love. Yet again, tears appeared in Meng Hao's eyes.

Once again... he felt Ke Yunhai's fatherly love.

This time, it was manifested in the real world.

Cracking sounds could be heard, and everything shook. Fissures appeared in the mountain chains and then spread out in all directions.

The middle-aged man's face flickered with disbelief and astonishment, and his mind reeled. He subconsciously stopped in place, and his eyes widened.

He was also a member of the Fang Clan, and what he was seeing left him stupefied. He watched with his own eyes as the legendary protector of the ancestral land and the Fang Clan itself, that enormous statue which had never budged over countless years... suddenly moved!

He saw Meng Hao sitting atop the statue as it lifted its right foot and took a step forward.

From a distance, the statue looked boundlessly tall and shockingly powerful. When its foot landed on the ground, the entire world quaked. At the same time, the statue's arms moved, and cracking sounds could be heard as the mountains that were connected to the statue crumbled, transforming into nothing but rocks and dust that rolled off of the statue down onto the ground.

Chapter 947: Quasi-Dao Paragons

Everything was covered in a haze of dust, which only served to make the statue in the center of it all even more shocking.

It raised its other foot and took another step, causing the land to rumble, and more mountains to collapse.

The haze of dust continued to spread out rapidly in pulsing waves, creating an astonishing sight. The middle-aged man's scalp went numb, and his mind spun. This was literally the most unbelievable thing he had ever seen in his entire life. His face instantly became devoid of blood, and he looked shocked beyond belief.

He suddenly cried out involuntarily, "That's... that's... that's the aura of a Quasi-Dao Realm Paragon!"

His eyes were wide, and his heart pounded wildly.

He was well-aware how powerful a Quasi-Dao Paragon was, and what they represented. He was extremely conscientious of the fact that the Quasi-Dao Realm... was a completely astonishing Realm within the Nine Mountains and Seas. It was a realm of madness and terror, so powerful that strongest experts in the Nine Mountains and Seas had no choice but to call people in that Realm... Paragons!

The middle-aged man wasn't the only shocked one. The old man up in midair, the manifestation of the Seventh Patriarch's divine will, was watching with wide eyes and open mouth. He was completely astonished, and could scarcely believe what he was seeing.

“How is this possible?!?!” he thought, panting, his mind spinning. “The Dao Guardsman, is actually... moving!!” He suddenly looked at Meng Hao sitting on top of the statue’s head, and viewed the look of sorrow on his face in a new light. For an instant, the rarely-shocked Seventh Patriarch’s scalp went numb.

The ground quaked and mountains crumbled. A massive rumbling sound filled the air, and the haze of dust churned as boulders crashed down.

The weeds in the area were blown flat by the wind, and cracks appeared in the surface of the ground, although it was all rapidly covered over by the dust.

Up in the air, the Seventh Patriarch was panting as he stared mutely at the statue.

As for the skinny man, he couldn’t be more shocked. His mind reeled as he looked at the earth-shaking statue. He could sense the aura emanating out from it, and it turned his face ashen. Without another moment’s hesitation, he fled.

This unexpected turn of events was something he couldn’t handle. From his perspective, killing Meng Hao should have been as simple as turning over his hand. Moments later, though, everything was completely reversed.

He suddenly realized why Fang Xiushan would hire nine experts like himself to kill a mere member of the Junior generation. Although the conclusion he reached was actually fallacious, in his mind, it was the obvious answer.

“Dammit! How could things turn out like this! Fang Xiushan, you bastard, you conned me. Y-y-you sent me, with one extinguished Soul Lamp, in here to kill a cultivator protected by a Quasi-Dao Paragon? Why didn’t you tell us ahead of time that this inhuman Fang Hao could actually bring the Dao Guardsman back to life?!?!” The man retreated with all the speed he could muster.

However, in the moment that he began to flee, the statue’s gaze stabbed through the haze of dust like a beam of light to land directly on the man.

In the instant the statue’s gaze locked onto him, a sound like thunder rumbled in the man’s mind. An intense sense of deadly crisis rose up, and he let out a bellow. He instantly spit out blood and unleashed a secret magic to try to flee.

He was scared. As an Ancient Realm expert, he did not often encounter frightening situations, but as of this moment, he was afraid. In fact, he was terrified, all the way down to his bones.

He knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful a Quasi-Dao Paragon was. Years ago, he had actually personally witnessed the wild and devastating power of just such an individual.

There was no way he couldn't feel terror. The awakening of the statue shook his mind, and caused him to think back to the legends he had heard regarding the statue.

"I... have provoked a truly inhuman monster! I can't believe... I can't believe this is happening!!" He felt incredible regret, and swore that, if he managed to live through this, he would make things very difficult for Fang Xiushan when he got out of the ancestral land.

However, it was at this moment that the huge statue's hands tightened on the enormous greatsword that was thrust into the ground. Rumbling and cracking sounds could be heard from the ground as fissures spread out from the sword in all directions. Suddenly, the greatsword... was pulled out from the earth!

The shocking statue's eyes were as cold as ice as it hefted the greatsword in both hands. Then it swung the sword, which descended as fast as lightning toward the fleeing man.

The sword caused the whole world to go silent.

The avalanches of boulders made no sound. The crumbling mountains were silent. The haze of dust seethed in terrifying quietude. It was as if time itself... were frozen in place.

The fleeing man also seemed to be stopped in midair, his expression that of terror and astonishment. His pupils were frozen in place, and the nine Soul Lamps behind him were motionless. It was as if everything in the world were completely incapable of moving.

The only thing that was moving was the statue's greatsword. As it cleaved downward, blood oozed from the man's forehead, then trickled down his nose, then his chin. Finally, the sword passed through his torso, simultaneously shattering his Soul Lamps.

The world returned to normal. The terracotta soldier's greatsword once again stabbed into the ground, which trembled and quaked. Sound returned... in midair, the middle-aged man's body had been completely cleaved into two pieces, and all of his Soul Lamps were destroyed.

The man had numerous magical items, all of which were shattered, and flew out in pieces along with the man's flesh and blood.

There was no way for him to fight back or block. He couldn't even struggle, let alone evade.

Blood sprayed out as his Nascent Divinity, his Soul Lamps, all of him... faded away.

Only his bag of holding remained, which came to float in front of Meng Hao.

Meng Hao sat silently on the statue.

High up in the air, the Seventh Patriarch took a deep breath. Even he felt a sense of fear when he looked at the statue, and also knew how shocking and terrifying its sword was.

"That sword has its own Dao that replaces the natural law of Heaven and Earth! That sword... can sever Daos, sever natural laws, can sever... anything that exists!

"This is definitely the power of a Quasi-Dao Paragon!! However... it's obviously nothing more than a statue! If a statue could be so powerful, then whoever created that statue... must be even more terrifying!

"I suppose... only someone in the true Dao Realm, who also possessed some rare Heavenly material or Earthly treasure, would be able to create something like this. But...with such a treasure, it would make more sense to craft some other item, something that would be of more use to a Dao Realm cultivator." Simply looking at the statue caused the Seventh Patriarch's heart to tremble.

He knew that Quasi-Dao Realm cultivators... were a maniacal bunch. They were madmen who could ignore anybody; they were people who nobody dared to provoke.

They were people who had prepared for years, who had transcended one deadly Soul Lamp tribulation after another, who had reached the peak of the Ancient Realm filled with hope. But after extinguishing their final Soul Lamp, they were unable to enter the Dao Realm, and would exist

forever half a step away from it. Their lifespans had crumbled away, and they would be left with only a few dozen years of life. People like that... were in the Quasi-Dao Realm!

They were doomed to die, and could not be saved by anything in Heaven and Earth. Therefore, they went mad, stuck half a step into the Dao Realm, possessing a certain level of Dao Essence that earned them respect and awe. No one dared to provoke them, and everyone called them Paragons.

For tens of thousands of years, only eleven such people had ever appeared in the Fang Clan. Some of them went mad and carried out slaughters. Some of them quietly waited until their life force reached its end.

When the Grand Elder had spoken of past Dao Realm Patriarchs of the Fang Clan who were buried in the ancestral land, he was referring to... Quasi-Dao Paragons! The only one among these who was a true Dao Realm expert was the first generation Patriarch!

Ke Yunhai had also met with failure at that final step. However, his cultivation base was so terrifyingly profound that, even after his failure, even being only half a step into the Dao Realm, even with a failing longevity... he had still managed to force out many more years of life to protect his son.

At that time, his battle prowess had far exceeded the Ancient Realm, and could actually be considered to be in the Dao Realm.

As for his final Soul Lamp, that was the very lamp with the body of a dragon and the wick of a phoenix, the one he had been buried with!

He had actually used that lamp to make the terracotta soldiers, which had thus contained much of Ke Yunhai's life force. As a result... they were incredibly powerful!!

The Seventh Patriarch was panting as he looked at the statue in fear. He himself... was not in the Dao Realm; he was only in the Ancient Realm. However, he had summoned fifteen Soul Lamps, and to date had managed to extinguish thirteen of them.

“Only Elder Brother, the Earth Patriarch, could suppress that statue with his Dao Realm cultivation base. Nobody else could, not even Old Second and Old Third with their fourteen extinguished Soul Lamps. They only have one more lamp each to extinguish, but they still wouldn't be matches for this statue. After all, they're still merely in the Ancient Realm!”

Most shocking of all to him was that this Dao Guardsman of the Fang Clan was actually protecting Meng Hao!

“This kid actually managed to get the Dao Guardsman to move! How did he pull it off? Why was he able to do it? The fact that he was so confident before shows that he was sure ahead of time that the statue would fight for him and protect him!

“This... is absurdly unbelievable!” The Seventh Patriarch took an incredulous breath as he looked down at what was happening. There was no way for him to explain what was going on, and if his divine will wasn't here to personally witness it, then, if he had been told the story later, he would have called it nonsensical ravings.

And yet, here he was watching it happen, shocked.

Meng Hao patted the statue's head. Gradually, the land around him quieted down. The dust faded away, and everything returned to normal. Meng Hao looked up, and returned the precious memories of Ke Yunhai to the depths of his heart. Sometimes a certain object will make you think of a certain person. His memories filled him with grief that he couldn't somehow undo the death of Ke Yunhai.

He closed his eyes for a long moment before opening them again. Then he looked down at the statue. To him, it was no mere terracotta soldier, but rather, a precious memento left to him by Ke Yunhai.

“Let's go,” he said softly. “Come with me to take a look around this ancestral land of the Fang Clan.” The statue's eyes shone brightly as it flew into the air and took Meng Hao further into the ancestral land.

That simple action almost caused the Seventh Patriarch's eyeballs to pop out of his head. He very nearly cried out in shock.

Chapter 948: Terrifying

He gasped, and a look of disbelief covered his face as he stared at the statue taking Meng Hao off into the distance. He was well-aware of the difference between Meng Hao getting the statue to protect him, and getting it to carry him around. They were two completely different things.

One required passively responding, the other required taking action!

“He... can actually control the clan’s Dao Guardsman!!” The Seventh Patriarch was panting. Now that he knew the full situation, his mind spun, and he completely forgot about any rule-violating members of the clan. He looked at Meng Hao with shining eyes, and couldn’t help but be filled with the growing notion that Meng Hao would be a future pillar of the clan.

As Meng Hao proceeded along, he opened up the bag of holding that had belonged to the man who had just been killed. He scanned its contents with divine sense, finding a good quantity of spirit stones and Immortal jade. There were also a lot of medicinal pills, and even some jade slips. One of those jade slips was black, and Meng Hao’s face grew frosty as soon as he picked it up and scanned it.

“He was an Elder of the Fang Clan!” he murmured. The command medallion he held in his hand was a token of authentication provided by the clan, and revealed that the man from moments ago was definitely one of the clan Elders.

After all, this was the Fang Clan’s ancestral land. Fang Xiushan wanted Meng Hao dead more than anything, but he still wouldn’t dare to allow outsiders into the ancestral land. He wouldn’t have been able to bear the consequences of that.

In his estimation, when it came to killing Meng Hao, reducing the risk and aftermath was only a matter of using his bloodline’s status in the clan a bit cleverly.

After grabbing the identity medallion from the bag of holding and tossing it aside, Meng Hao pulled a jade box out. It glittered with bright light, and emanated strong Immortal qi.

After opening it, he began to pant, and his eyes shone brightly.

Inside the jade box was a tiny bell made completely of jade. It was exquisitely beautiful, and Immortal qi swirled around it. Meng Hao instantly recognized that it was an Immortal treasure of the highest quality. It was definitely no ordinary object.

He picked up the tiny bell and held it in his hand. Then, he sent some Immortal qi from his Immortal meridian into the bell, which caused it to emit a droning sound. It flew up into the air above his head, growing to a size of three meters and rotating around him, emitting countless magical symbols at the same time.

An intense pressure immediately spread out.

Meng Hao's eyes shone, and he took a deep breath.

“As far as Immortal treasures are concerned, this bell is definitely of an extremely high quality!” He could sense the Immortal might emanating off of the bell, and his eyes glittered as he opened his mouth and breathed in. In response, the bell shrunk and then turned into a beam of light that shot into Meng Hao's mouth and came to rest inside of his Immortal meridian.

Immediately, his entire body filled with the echoing toll of a bell. The bell began to emit bright light, and at the same time, his Immortal meridian grew more solid.

Meng Hao's spirits were instantly lifted. What he didn't know was that this Immortal bell had been a gift prepared by Fang Xiushan for that clan Elder. Although it wasn't an Ancient treasure, it was an extremely high quality Immortal treasure, and with a bit of refining could have been turned into something similar to an Ancient Realm treasure.

Ancient treasures were rare, and were something that many Ancient Realm experts didn't even possess. Even though the man had been a Fang Clan elder, he had only extinguished one Soul Lamp, and therefore didn't qualify to acquire Ancient treasures from the clan.

Actually, Fang Xiushan had expended quite a bit of resources a few years back to acquire the tiny bell. However, for the sake of having Meng Hao killed, he had employed everything at his disposal.

“He was a clan Elder, and all he had was this one magical item?” Meng Hao seemed a bit skeptical, but then he remembered all of the magical items that had shattered in the moment of his death.

“There seem to be many unique aspects to the Ancient Realm,” he thought. He scanned the rest of the jade slips in the bag of holding, and then suddenly, his eyes came to rest on one of them. After further scanning, his face darkened.

This jade slip was a bloodline tracker. He could clearly see nine dots of light, one of which represented himself. The other eight were spread out in various directions, and were all heading towards him.

The nearest one wasn't very far away.

“So, you actually sent nine people to kill me.” Meng Hao’s eyes were like ice as he sent out some divine will that caused the terracotta soldier to stop in place, then change directions. Suddenly, it began to speed off in the direction of the dot of light closest to Meng Hao.

“There’s no need to come looking for me,” said Meng Hao. “I’ll come to you!” He sat there cross-legged atop the statue, his eyes boiling with murderous intent. His pupils shone with an intense light like that of a razor-sharp blade.

As of this moment, his entire person seethed with the desire to kill.

He wouldn’t dare to kill anyone inside the Fang Clan itself. That was a violation of clan rules. However, in this place... he had no compunctions whatsoever. Since these people had come here to kill him, then he might as well return the favor one by one!

“This place won’t open up again for two months. That’s plenty of time for me to have some fun with you people!” Powerful killing intent flickered in his eyes, and the murderous aura which surrounded him grew stronger.

Up above, the Seventh Patriarch followed along, his excitement and interest in Meng Hao growing stronger.

The terracotta soldier moved with such incredible speed that it caused sonic booms to echo out. It shot forward, seemingly slicing a hole into the air of the ancestral land.

Meng Hao sat cross-legged up above, his hair whipping about as the powerful wind buffeted his true Immortal fleshly body.

Roughly five hundred kilometers ahead of him, a beam of light shot through the air, within which was a black-robed young man. Although his appearance was young, there was something about the way he furrowed his brow that seemed to carry an ancient will.

He was surrounded by nine lamps, which rotated around him. Just like the other man, eight were burning and one was extinguished. These Soul Lamps didn’t seem to be real, but rather illusory.

His passing caused the sky and the land to distort, and he kept his hands clasped behind his back as he proceeded.

His expression was calm, but a gleam of vigilance could be seen deep in his eyes.

“I can’t believe one of us died....” he murmured, his eyes flickering. “All we’re supposed to do is kill someone from the Junior generation, and yet somebody actually perished.... Furthermore, he wasn’t killed by something dangerous from within the ancestral land. He died a short time after making contact with that member of the Junior generation.” A strange gleam appeared in the young man’s eyes. Moments ago, one of the dots of light had vanished from the jade slip he had been observing, which left him shocked.

“No wonder Fang Xiushan wanted nine of us to come in here. This Junior... must be harboring some incredible secret!

“Whatever that secret is, it enabled him to kill an Ancient Realm cultivator with one extinguished Soul Lamp, while he himself barely counts as being in the Immortal Realm!

“However, whatever method he’s using definitely can’t be used long-term.” A cold glow appeared in the young man’s eyes, and his pupils glittered with greed. He lifted his right hand and sent divine sense into the jade slip held therein. Then, his face flickered, and he suddenly stopped in place.

“That can’t be right,” he thought, frowning. “He changed direction, and now he’s heading toward me.... And look at how fast he’s moving! Even with a true Immortal fleshly body, he shouldn’t be able to move that fast!” The young man hesitated.

“Is it just an empty show of strength, a bluff? Is he just trying to scare me off, or... does that secret technique give him the confidence to think he can kill me?” The young man’s eyes flickered a few times before filling with determination.

“It doesn’t matter. I can just check the situation out from a distance to see whether or not he’s just putting on a show.” With that, the young man hovered there in midair, coldly looking off into the distance as he waited for Meng Hao to approach.

He was being very cautious, and was even ready to flee away at top speed if necessary. He kept his cultivation base rotating, ensuring that he was at the peak of power and readiness.

After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, a rumbling sound could suddenly be heard from off in the distance. Everything began to shake.

Even the condition of the sky changed; the clouds churned, and endless bolts of lightning danced about.

The young man's eyes went wide, and he sent his divine sense out to scan the area up ahead. It was at this point that a tremor ran through him, and his eyes went wide with disbelief. He couldn't even breathe, and his eyes bulged. It almost looked like someone was strangling him. His mind filled with a buzz, as if someone has struck him hard on the top of the head.

He staggered backward, panting, face pale.

"That's... that's...." He almost didn't dare to believe what he was seeing. "What is that!?!?"

Tens of thousands of meters up in the sky, the clouds parted as an enormous statue appeared. It was thousands of meters high, and caused the clouds to surge away from it as it descended.

Its energy was shocking and virtually impossible to describe!

Its speed was incredible, causing flames to lick the air around the terracotta soldier. It was like a shooting star!

Meng Hao sat cross-legged atop the terracotta soldier, eyes flashing with killing intent. He looked like a drawn sword that refused to be sheathed without shedding blood!

RUMMMBLLLLLE!

Massive roaring sounds filled the air as the terracotta soldier screamed through the air toward the black-robed youth. As it neared, the aura of a Quasi-Dao Paragon rippled out in all directions, shaking everything.

The terracotta soldier's eyes were icy and emotionless, and it held a greatsword in its hand. When the young man saw all of this, his face drained of blood.

“That’s the ancestral land’s Dao Guardsman!!

“It has the aura of a Quasi-Dao Paragon!!

“How... how could this be? He... he can actually control the Dao Guardsman!?!?” The black-robed young man’s scalp was tingling so hard it seemed like his head was about to explode. Flabbergasted and scared witless, he didn’t even have time to think. He immediately turned and employed all the power he could muster in a mad dash to flee.

As of that moment, he cursed the fact that he had only extinguished one Soul Lamp. He cursed the fact that he couldn’t flee fast enough. He cursed the fact that he had been conceited enough to just stand there waiting for his opponent to arrive.

He suddenly understood why that other Ancient Realm Elder had died!!

“Damn you, Fang Xiushan!! I can’t believe you sent us in here to kill a monster who can control the Dao Guardsman! You... you didn’t send us in here to kill him... you obviously sent us in here so that he could kill us!!” The black-robed young man’s heart was pounding, and his face was as white as death. Nearly frightened out of his mind by the sense of deadly crisis, he roared, spitting out blood and using all the secret magics he knew to try to get away.

Chapter 949: Perilous Ancestral Land

No one outside could see the things that were happening in the ancestral land.

Neither the Grand Elder nor Fang Wei’s father and grandfather could see anything at all. The Grand Elder hadn’t been lying when he had explained that point. It was literally impossible for anyone to observe what occurred inside.

In the Fang Clan, everything was going along as normal, except that the direct bloodline clan members were very nervous. Fang Xi was in incredibly low spirits, and was very worried about Meng Hao.

The Dao of Alchemy Division had received news of Meng Hao heading into the ancestral land as a trial by fire, and were also extremely anxious. In fact, the eighteen tier 8 alchemists all went in person to speak with the Grand Elder.

A huge argument ensued that ended with the tier 8 alchemists storming off in a fury. Not long after, the Dao of Alchemy Division announced that they wouldn't concoct pills for the clan until Meng Hao returned safely.

As word of this development spread, the entire clan was shaken. The Grand Elder then personally went to the Dao of Alchemy Division to pay respects to Pill Elder, yet Pill Elder flatly refused to see him.

It was at this point that Fang Wei's bloodline was starting to realize that Meng Hao had firmly rooted himself within the clan, and had built up such a level of power that even they were beginning to feel fear rising up inside of them.

The Dao of Alchemy Division was definitely Meng Hao's bastion of reliance within the clan!

The whole matter was a major slip-up on the part of Fang Xiushan. The only thing he could do was spend vast resources to placate the anger and dissatisfaction of the Elders in his own bloodline regarding the losses they had suffered.

However, Fang Xiushan still had hope. As long as Meng Hao died, then the Dao of Alchemy Division wouldn't fight against the clan over a corpse. Everything would be resolved, and his own son, Fang Wei, would once again be the number one Chosen in the clan, and his bloodline would finally be able to supersede the current direct bloodline!

However, his hope... was rapidly unraveled because of what happened next.

Fang Wei was currently sealed in secluded meditation in his secret chamber. Fang Xiushan sat cross-legged outside, his face a mass of disbelief as he looked at a crystal he held in his hand.

Within the crystal was an image of the Fang Clan's Lifeslip Hall. There, countless jade slips that represented the lives of Fang Clan members were on display.

If a clan member died, the jade slip would shatter, immediately notifying the clan, which would then investigate the matter.

Moments ago, Fang Xiushan had been looking at Meng Hao's jade slip, which rested among all the other countless jade slips.

As soon as Meng Hao had returned to the clan and acquired a jade command medallion, he had also left a lifeslip in the Lifeslip Hall. Currently, it glowed with bright light, and wasn't even the least bit cracked.

On a higher shelf were the lifeslips of all of the clan's Ancient Realm clan members. Just now, one of those jade slips had made a cracking sound and then shattered. This instantly attracted a lot of attention, and an investigation had begun.

The shattering of that jade slip caused Fang Xiushan's heart to begin to pound.

He had paid a heavy price to arrange for nine Ancient Realm Elders to go into the ancestral land and kill Meng Hao.

"What happened in there!?!?" he thought, panting. "An Ancient Realm Elder... actually died? How!?!?"

"To top it off, that damned son of a bitch is still alive!" He couldn't even imagine what possibly might have happened inside the ancestral land.

The clan began a thorough investigation into the Ancient Realm clan member's death. Fortunately for Fang Xiushan, he had previously arranged for all nine of the experts who entered the ancestral land to make it seem like they had left the planet to carry out clan assignments.

However, that would only delay the clan for so long. The rigorous investigation would eventually turn up clues.

"He probably died because of some dangerous situation in the ancestral land," thought Fang Xiushan. "This was nothing more than an accident.... It won't be much longer before that damned son of a bitch is dead in body and spirit!" Killing intent flickered in his eyes, and he couldn't wait to see Meng Hao's lifeslip shatter.

"Once the little son of a bitch is dead, and Wei'er makes his breakthrough to true Immortal Ascension, then... it doesn't matter even if people do discover the truth. By that time, it won't matter. Fang Hao's death will be meaningless to the clan!"

Fang Xiushan took a deep breath, and his eyes filled with veins of blood.

Meanwhile, in the Fang Clan ancestral land, the black-robed young man was indignantly cursing Fang Xiushan as he fled in terror.

“How shameless!” he thought. “What a deception! Two months? Dammit! There are still two more months... before this place will open up and I can get out of here. W-what do I do?” The young man’s face was pale white as he fled. Behind him, rumbling sounds echoed out, piercing through his ears into his very heart.

Further back, Meng Hao’s statue was wreathed in flames as it shot after the young man. Meng Hao sat cross-legged atop it, and as they closed in, his eyes flickered with killing intent.

The distance between them narrowed. 30,000 meters. 25,000 meters. 15,000 meters. 10,000 meters....

At that point the black-robed young man was virtually going crazy, and was ready to pull out all the stops. He spun in place, performing an incantation gesture that caused his nine Soul Lamps to rotate rapidly and then shoot toward Meng Hao.

He was attacking with Soul Lamps that contained his own life force. From this, it was possible to see how mad and desperate he was.

When the eight lit and one extinguished Soul Lamps neared Meng Hao, Meng Hao’s statue raised its greatsword, and the explosive aura of a Quasi-Dao Paragon exploded out.

“Leave him alive,” Meng Hao suddenly said.

Instantly, the terracotta soldier switched the great sword from its right hand to its left. Then, it’s right hand shot out to grab the black-robed young man.

Instantly, everything in the area stopped moving, just like before. The black-robed young man was stuck in place, his body stiff and incapable of moving. His consciousness even began to fade.

A power surged out that was impossible to resist or fight against and seemed to envelop the entire sky. In front of the terracotta soldier, the black-robed young man with his one extinguished Soul Lamp was like nothing more than an insect.

When the terracotta soldier's huge hand reached the nine Soul Lamps, it almost seemed as if it was on a different plane of existence. It passed directly through them and, to the astonishment and despair of the black-robed young man, closed around him in the blink of an eye. As the hand tightened, cracking sounds could be heard as many of the young man's bones were crushed.

After grabbing and retrieving him, the world returned to normal. The air once again moved, and the sounds of the black-robed young man's screaming echoed out in all directions.

Blood sprayed from his mouth, and intense pain wracked his body. He was completely trapped inside the terracotta soldier's hand, his cultivation base dissipated and as weak as a mortal. He trembled, and hopelessness filled his eyes, along with the fear of dying.

"Fang Xiushan!" he screamed. "I won't let you off for this even if I become a ghost!" At the moment, he hated Meng Hao, but he hated Fang Xiushan even more.

"And you, Fang Hao," he raged, "if it weren't for our clan's Dao Guardsman, I'd kill you... it would be as easy as crushing a chicken to death!" Blood oozed from his mouth, and his eyes shone with hatred for Meng Hao.

"At the moment," said Meng Hao, his face calm. "I could crush you to death much easier than crushing a chicken."

Eyes flickering, he performed a strange incantation gesture with his right hand. Suddenly, numerous magical symbols appeared on his hand.

The magical symbols flickered, some of them white and some of them black. It almost looked like his hand had turned black and white.

A bizarre aura appeared around him, seemingly forming a stream of qi that converged on his hand and then merged with the magical symbols. Soon, everything in the area looked black and white.

Meng Hao's hand trembled, although no onlooker would be able to tell, not even the Seventh Patriarch up in midair. All he could sense was that the black and white magical symbols on Meng Hao's right hand contained the aura of some sort of Essence.

This was... the Sixth Demon Sealing Hex!

Meng Hao had acquired it from the sword in the Ruins of Immortality, which contained the aura of the Sixth Hex. He had continuously contemplated enlightenment of the Hex, and was now attempting to use it. However, the magic was too difficult, and although he could complete its casting, he had never successfully used it.

Much of this had to do with his lack of appropriate targets to practice on, and right now, he had just such a living target in front of him.

His eyes shone with a strange light as his right hand suddenly stabilized, and he pointed at the black-robed young man. Instantly, the black and white magical symbols merged together and shot toward him.

The man's eyes went wide, but he was incapable of resisting. The magical symbols flickered as they slammed into his forehead, and then began to bore into his body.

Meng Hao watched closely for the space of a few breaths. The black-robed young man's face distorted, and veins popped out on his forehead. He then let out miserable scream.

The sound of that scream even caused the Seventh Patriarch to wince.

Indescribable pain wracked the young man; it felt like his soul was being consumed and his body was being ripped away. Soon, his screams turned into something that sounded like the shrieks of an animal.

It lasted for the space of about five breaths before the young man's body suddenly exploded into a haze of blood and gore. He was dead, in body and in spirit.

Up in midair, the Seventh Patriarch gasped. As his solemn gaze came to rest back on Meng Hao, his eyes gradually began to fill with admiration.

“Quite ruthless,” he thought. In his opinion, Meng Hao’s temper was actually very similar to his own.

Meng Hao frowned and then sighed.

“Another failure. Maybe I’m not using it correctly.” He thought back to the way the Sixth Generation Demon Sealer had used the Life-Death Hex, and how all the people he had hexed suddenly had their control of their own life or death taken away from them. Those people... had essentially become like puppets in the hand of the Sixth Generation Demon Sealer.

In the same moment that the young man died, Fang Xiushan was sitting in his place back in the Fang Clan’s ancestral mansion. His face was pale as he saw... another of the life slips shatter.

“Impossible! This is impossible! The ancestral land is just too perilous!!” Fang Xiushan was trembling, and his eyes were bloodshot.

Chapter 950: Scraping It Clean

In the moment that the young man died, a sharp cracking sound rang out in the Fang Clan’s Lifeslip Hall in the ancestral mansion. The sound immediately attracted the attention of all the Elders in the ancestral mansion.

As beams of light began to shoot through the air, Fang Xiushan took a deep breath and forced himself into a state of calm. Then, he also flew into the air.

It didn’t take long for multiple Elders to arrive at the Lifeslip Hall. Grand Elder Fang Tongtian was already there, hands clasped behind his back as he studied the shattered lifeslip. His expression gradually grew darker and darker.

People began to crowd into the hall, and agitated expressions appeared on their faces when they saw the shattered lifeslip.

The crowd began to converse in low tones.

“Another one... that’s two lifeslips that have shattered in the past few days. I can’t believe two Elders have perished!”

“Something strange is going on....”

“The strangest thing of all is that it was impossible to determine where exactly the first one died!”

Finally, the Grand Elder turned around and looked out at the crowd. His gaze lingered on Fang Xiushan for a moment.

Fang Xiushan’s heart thumped, but his expression was calm.

“Two Elders have died in succession,” the Grand Elder announced in a dignified voice. “And yet it has been impossible to use the power of their lifeslips to determine where exactly they died.... Where did they go?”

An Elder stepped out of the crowd, clasped hands and bowed. “According to my investigation, both of them went out alone on assignments from the clan.”

“Assignments...? Do you really believe that?” Looking irritated, the Grand Elder flicked his sleeve and started to walk out. “Continue the investigation. Find out exactly how many Elders have gone out on supposed assignments. Furthermore, find out who gave them these assignments. I want all the details! Every single scrap of information!” The Grand Elder’s voice continued to echo out in the hall even after he was gone.

Fang Xiushan felt incredible pressure as he departed along with the rest of the crowd. Suddenly, the Grand Elder’s icy voice sounded out in his ear, transmitted via divine will.

“In our clan, nothing is more important than the clan rules. Therefore, I will be sure to shield Fang Wei from any trouble. However... if a third Elder dies, you had better start thinking of a way to explain all of this to me.”

Fang Xiushan trembled silently.

Back in the ancestral land, the black-robed young man died, and the seven other cultivators with the single extinguished Soul Lamps... all stopped in their tracks.

It was impossible for them to do anything else. All of them had a bloodline jade slip, and had clearly seen the other two suddenly die as soon as they got close to Meng Hao.

The first one could be chalked up to an accident, but two.... If any of these seven still believed that to be an accident, then they didn't deserve to be called Ancient Realm experts.

The faces of all seven men flickered with shock. They couldn't imagine what had happened, why two of their group who were supposed to kill a member of the Junior generation, were instead themselves killed.

Their hearts were shaken, and fear of Meng Hao gradually began to build inside of them. All of a sudden, the dot of light that represented Meng Hao seemed strange and mysterious.

Suddenly, the situation on Meng Hao's jade slip changed, and his mouth twisted into a cold smile. The seven dots of light were no longer closing in on him; in contrast, they were now speeding away from him in different directions.

"I bet you people are also stuck in here for two months. There will be plenty of time for us to have a little game of cat and mouse." Meng Hao patted the terracotta soldier again, which turned and flew off into the distance with him.

Meng Hao's eyes gleamed as he looked at the lands speeding by below, and gradually, a bashful expression appeared on his face. "Since I'm here, I need to get my hands on some of this ancestral land's good fortune, no matter what."

Up in the air, the Seventh Patriarch saw the gleam in Meng Hao's eyes, and then nodded to himself.

"Based on the gleam in his eyes, it seems he's going to go searching for some of the good fortune in the ancestral land. Good, this is what a descendant of the Fang Clan ought to do." Stroking his beard, he smiled. "The kid looks a bit dainty; although he slaughters enemies ruthlessly, he's also pure and charming. I wonder what kind of good fortune he's destined to get here."

This was the first time the old man had ever seen a gleam like that in Meng Hao's eyes, and also the first time he had seen him act bashfully....

"Whenever I visit a place, I scrape it clean," Meng Hao thought, justifying his actions to himself as best he could. "With this terracotta soldier to accompany me, if I let this place off any easier than usual, I would definitely regret it in the future!" With that, the gleam in his eye grew brighter.

Under Meng Hao's control, the terracotta soldier flew off into the distance.

The ancestral land was laid out in a long strip, and Meng Hao's current location was at the very beginning. After some time passed, and he had a chance to survey the lands up ahead, he sent some divine will into the terracotta soldier.

The terracotta soldier stopped, and Meng Hao rose to his feet and stared down at the ground. There below was a field of huge boulders. The surface of each boulder was carved with various images that contained natural law.

Meng Hao leapt off of the terracotta soldier and floated down into the field of boulders. As he looked around, his eyes began to shine brightly.

Up in midair, the Seventh Patriarch nodded to himself.

"Excellent. This area is nothing extremely special, but is actually very well suited to him. To gain enlightenment of some magical techniques would still count as good fortune." The Seventh Patriarch began to smile, but then quickly gaped in astonishment and then in confusion.

Down below, Meng Hao had backed up a bit, then sent his divine will out. Next, the terracotta soldier descended and used both of its hands to reach down and pluck a boulder out of the ground.

Meng Hao's eyes shone brightly as he quickly stored the boulder in his bag of holding, then sent the terracotta soldier to another boulder. It didn't take long before the dozens of boulders in the area were all pulled from the ground and placed into Meng Hao's bag of holding.

Afterwards, Meng Hao flew back up and sat down on the terracotta soldier's head, then proceeded onward excitedly.

Up in midair, the Seventh Patriarch still hadn't recovered from his shock. He stared at the dozens of holes in the ground left behind by Meng Hao, then gazed blankly at Meng Hao making his way off into the distance.

"What... what is he doing?" he murmured. "Didn't he come here to contemplate enlightenment? To gain good fortune?" Meng Hao's actions left him thoroughly shocked.

Time passed. Meng Hao caught sight of a rather small lake that looked like a mirror. As the sun glinted off of its surface, magical symbols rose up from the water.

Meng Hao waved his hand, and the terracotta soldier chopped down with its greatsword. After a few slashes, it managed to slice all of the ground surrounding the lake. Afterward, Meng Hao struggled mightily to wrench the entire lake out of the ground and then put it in his bag of holding.

He actually had many bags of holding, some larger than others. After laboriously forcing the lake into one of them, he produced yet another bag of holding. Looking around shiftily, he sat back down on the terracotta soldier and proceeded onward.

The Seventh Patriarch was panting, and his eyes were wide as he watched what was happening. He even began to tremble.

As Meng Hao continued on, he saw a small mountain, which he took!

He saw a little pagoda, which he took!

He saw a bamboo forest, which he took!

He saw a log cabin, which he took!

He saw a carved sculpture, which he took!

Everything that he saw, every location that seemed to house good fortune, was taken away by the giant hands of the terracotta soldier, and then put into a bag of holding.

Meng Hao had a vast collection of bags of holding. When he ran out of big ones, he used small ones. If something was too big, he would dismantle the object into smaller pieces and cram it in.

As he sped along, he looked a bit ill at ease, even embarrassed. Up above, the Seventh Patriarch was trembling, and his beard was in disarray. His eyes shone with disbelief, as if he simply couldn't imagine how such a charming, innocent child... would actually do something like this!

Were it not for the fact that he actually feared the terracotta soldier, the Seventh Patriarch might have instantly slaughtered the treasonous and disgraceful Meng Hao!

“Wha... what is he doing!? He’s not contemplating any enlightenment! He’s just taking all of the various items created and collected by the past Patriarchs... and putting them in his bags of holding!!”

This was especially true considering that, at one point, Meng Hao reached a palace. The Patriarch’s jaw dropped as he watched Meng Hao quickly began to dismantle the entire palace, including the floor tiles. He moved with a precision and accuracy that made it seem as if this was something he did on a daily basis.

This finally seemed to provoke a reaction from the ancestral land. Even as he went about dismantling the palace, stripping away even the columns, leaving it completely stark and bare... roaring could be heard from off in the distance as a pack of giant apes flew toward him.

There were more than a hundred of them, and each one had a cultivation base that was similar to the peak of the Immortal realm. Their bodies were covered with thick coats of luxuriant fur, and their eyes glowed bright red. Apparently, they were the palace guards, and their eyes were fixed hatefully on Meng Hao as they charged forward.

When Meng Hao saw the apes, he didn’t have the terracotta soldier attack. Instead, he slapped his bag of holding, causing the parrot to fly out.

It had apparently been stuffed into the bag of holding for too long, because as soon as it emerged, it flew several circles in the air at top speed. The meat jelly was attached to its foot in the shape of a bell, and immediately began to let out nonstop jingling sounds.

“Lord Fifth is out again!!!

“When Lord Fifth appears, who dares to cause strife!!

“Attention, all furred and feathered concubines, Lord Fifth is here to dote upon you!” Almost as soon as the parrot appeared, its eyes suddenly went wide, and it almost forgot to flap its wings. It even began to drool as it stared fixedly at the luxuriantly furred apes.

“So many concubines....” it said, eyes shining excitedly. Suddenly feeling quite hot and bothered, it squawked and then shot toward the charging apes at top speed.

Meng Hao cleared his throat, then flew back up to sit on the terracotta soldier, which sped off into the distance.

The Seventh Patriarch’s eyes went wide as it watched the parrot and the troupe of apes, and he suddenly felt completely nauseous.

It didn’t take long before miserable shrieks rang out, seemingly filled with indescribable tragedy.

By that time, Meng Hao had reached a location where the land was black. He saw a huge coffin, atop which was a stone statue of a majestic old man!

Beneath the statue were various offerings of tribute. There were chunks of rare Immortal jade, as well as other objects seldom seen in the outside world. There were high-grade spirit stones, as well as three magical items that emanated shocking auras, and even two dark green bamboo lamps.

As soon as Meng Hao saw the coffin and the statue, his expression turned serious. He dropped to the ground, then clasped hands and bowed deeply to the statue.

“Fang Clan member Fang Hao pays respects to you, Ancestor!”

When the Seventh Patriarch saw Meng Hao acting in this way, his expression softened a bit. However, what Meng Hao said next cause him to almost go blind.

“Ancestor,” he said, his tone grave, “I’m not sure which generation Patriarch you are, sir, but... I can’t believe the other Fang Clan members behaved so shockingly. How incredible that none of the previous clan members ever exchanged any of these offerings for new ones!

“Look, sir. These offerings are all dusty! They’ve clearly been sitting here for far, far too long. Patriarch, don’t you worry. I’ll help you to switch them out. As a member of the Junior generation, this is something I simply must do.”