

## Timescape 621

Chapter 621: Don't Look At Me. Don't Think About Me. Forget About Me

Time passed. Five days went by. It was now eight days since the light of the red moon first appeared on the horizon. For over a week, red light gathered there, slowly creating a crescent shape and causing shimmering redness to spread like fresh blood.

If the dome of heaven was a canvas, then in the days that had passed, the color red had come to cover about two to three percent of it. At the current rate, it would take roughly a year for the sky to turn completely blood red. When that happened, the red moon would be fully risen, causing a death knell to ring for all living beings in the Moonrite Region.

The countdown had begun.

As death approached, people saw little need to suppress the madness within. Slaughters were carried out everywhere. It happened with both cultivators and mortals. The powerful bullied the weaker. The weaker bullied the weakest. But the weakest didn't just accept their fate; they fought back viciously. Brutal howling filled the lands. The madness of death turned the world into a living hell in which demons and devils roved about freely.

It was the same in the Greenhair Badlands. Over the eight days that had passed already, different organizations devolved into madness in different ways. Kill or be killed. That was the new rule that governed everything. Entire species were wiped out. Mortal cities became places where cultivators vented their despair.

The same went for the mudbrick city that housed the Green Spirit Pharmacy. During the eight days that passed, hundreds of crazed individuals wreaked havoc by inflicting their own bitterness on others. Some people took great joy in seeing others suffer when they knew their own life was coming to an end.

Little did they know that in the Greenhair Badlands, there was one location that was even more dangerous than the Red Moon Cathedral. When the demons and devils descended on that mudbrick city, they ended up changing. Some vanished from existence. But others lost their madness. They smiled again and became ordinary citizens of the city.

In the backyard of the Green Spirit Pharmacy, the Heir Apparent had taken up a new hobby. And Ning Yan had a new line of work.

They were raising chickens.

During those eight days, a group of about twenty shivering chickens had appeared in the backyard. They didn't dare to leave the yard; they would eat their food and then hide in the corner, terrified.

"Ai, are you guys blind?" Ning Yan said as he scattered chicken feed. "What did you have to come here for? Did you really want to be turned into chickens?"

Ning Yan was already unhappy having to scrub the floors all the time, and now he had even more work. As a result, he really didn't like these chickens. In fact, when one of them got too close to him, he kicked it into the air and then spat at it.

The kicked chicken looked at him with terror, and made a few despairing clucking sounds. However, there was nothing he could do. Even though he was actually in the great circle of the

Nascent Soul level, with a Master who was the top expert in the Bitter Life Mountains, he was now just a chicken. Thinking about what he had experienced, the chicken's heart filled with grief and indignation. He hadn't come to this city to vent, but rather, to carry out orders from his Master. His job had been to scout out the mysterious Green Spirit Pharmacy, and find out if Li Youfei really was hiding out there. How could he ever have guessed that as soon as he stepped foot into the city, he would pass out? Then, when he woke up, he was a chicken.

It left him overwhelmed with terror. Deep in his heart, his Master was as lofty as the heavens. Therefore, he was convinced that once his Master showed up, he would be saved.

My venerable Master realizes I'm missing, he'll definitely figure out that something went wrong. This Green Spirit Pharmacy might be a mysterious place, but when my Master shows up, all these people will be dead! After all, my Master is backed by the Red Moon Cathedral! As for this brat, I'll make sure to kill him with my own hands!

As the chicken grumbled inwardly, Ning Yan kicked it again, then sighed. *I wonder how Biggest Bro Xu Qing is doing. Ling'er cries every day. And where did Chen Erniu go off to? Grandpa just sits there every day sipping tea, just like before....*

Ning Yan scattered the rest of the feed, dusted off his hands, and then walked back inside, shaking his head the whole time.

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Out in the Greenhair Badlands, Xu Qing raced along like a wild animal. His eyes were bloodshot, his body shimmered with violet light, and the hunger within him made it almost impossible to think. Terrifying fluctuations rolled off him constantly. They were like a tempest, causing heaven and earth to rumble loudly.

Covering his human nature and filling himself with godliness had caused an incomplete vortex to build within him. It was like a bottomless pit that could devour everything, even Xu Qing himself. He had lost all sense of himself, all understanding of his surroundings. Or perhaps it was more accurate to say that he had lost any sense of being human. The fetters created by such human identity now had a hole in them. Xu Qing was completely lost in that state of boundless release.

To him, everything that existed in heaven and earth was food to be eaten. And the idiom *the starving can't be picky about food* perfectly described his current state. Whether it was random wild animals or the walking mushrooms or the energy in the wind, he devoured it.

Even the mutagen was like sweet dew to him. It cheerfully entered Xu Qing's body, feeding his taboo poison and the violet moon. As a result, the violet light that surrounded Xu Qing grew more intense. And a halo spread out around him, which was taboo poison. He became like a conglomeration of violet light that turned all the surrounding sand into ash. It was like the coming of a god.

Off in the distance were some desert creatures that had seemingly lost their ability to flee. They stood there trembling, feeling terror that came from their instincts and their souls.

They did nothing as Xu Qing approached. When his gaze locked onto them, they rotted away, becoming nutrients that swept into him.

He occasionally encountered gargantuan beings like the mushrooms. They had trouble fleeing the fate that destiny had arranged for them. When Xu Qing came, all the mutagen in the area became like an unstoppable weight crushing down on everything.

Hard outer shells couldn't provide any protection. They crumbled beneath Xu Qing's feet. He would blast into such food, then dig out handful after handful of meat to stuff madly into his mouth. In some cases, that didn't enable him to eat fast enough, so he would just devour the food directly with his mouth.

His missing left arm had grown back. If Xu Qing needed something, a mere thought would make it happen. It was simple.

The violet moon was very active, and his taboo poison raged. His shadow was terrified to the extreme, and Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior didn't dare to even think about showing his face.

Forget about me. Forget about me....

That was what both the patriarch and the shadow were praying constantly.

Their very life force essence made them alarmed to the point of terror. They had both seen Xu Qing devolve into madness before. But they had never seen anything which made them despair as deeply as this. Both could tell that in this state, Xu Qing was definitely capable of devouring them. All he had to do was think about it.

Also in a state of terror was the god's finger in D-132. It had been stimulated awake, and when that happened, it had been about to send out fluctuations of irritation. But then it sensed what was happening outside, and felt shocked to the core. Without any hesitation, it retracted its aura and pretended to go back to sleep. The reality was that it was trembling in indescribable fear.

Wh-wh-what... what the heck is going on?? I just went to sleep for a bit, and now this is happening? How?

The finger shivered as waves of terror overwhelmed its heart. What it was sensing right now was similar to what it had sensed in the presence of Crimson Mother or Emperor Ancient Spirit. The hunger in Xu Qing led the finger to realize that he could chomp it down at any moment. That feeling left it with feelings of both fury and despair. It felt that gods had destiny as well, and apparently, it was dealing with a backlash from fate. It was as if it was being assailed by its own authority of misfortune. After all, how unlucky could it possibly be?

I hid from my true form for so many years, terrified that I would be devoured. Then I had to run into this Xu Qing. Later, I had no choice but to cooperate with him to avoid Emperor Ancient Spirit. But... why didn't someone tell me that things would end up like this? I'm hiding, in his own belly, yet here I am on the verge of being devoured!

No, this can't be! He can't have reached this state so quickly! He shouldn't have done this for years!

Furthermore, he's like all of those postheaven gods who got rid of their human nature and replaced it with godliness! They're not like the noble, natural-born gods such as me! So how come he gives me such a feeling of incomparable terror?

Also... his human nature is actually at odds with the godly nature. Is he crazy? What's he doing that for? That's why he's in such a state of madness.

The god's finger was incensed.

All of a sudden, Xu Qing stopped in place as if he was listening to something.

The shadow pretended to be dead. Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior shrank in on himself. The finger in D-132 stopped moving. All of them seemed to be praying the same thing.

Don't look at me. Don't think about me. Forget about me....

All of them were profoundly nervous and uneasy.

A moment later, Xu Qing burst into motion... heading off toward some delicious food in the distance.

The shadow sighed in relief. The patriarch shivered and looked up. The finger in D-132 started grumbling angrily.

What's the point in fighting like that? If he keeps this up, all he'll do is end up becoming a god bastard. A postheaven god bastard. Also, there's something strange with him. Normally speaking, considering he's only in the god-glimpsing phase, he shouldn't provoke such terror in me! The feeling he gives me is completely excessive!

Dammit! What do I do, what do I do?? If he really becomes a god bastard, then I'm finished! The hunger of a god bastard is so insane that they'll eat themselves up!

As the finger in D-132 fretted anxiously, Xu Qing's madness intensified, and he got closer and closer to the food he'd detected.

He could sense the food just up ahead, matchlessly sweet and delicious. It filled him with longing, and caused his hunger to reach unprecedented levels.

"Hungry... so hungry...."

Someone was standing in the desert up ahead.

It was the Captain! As he watched the violet tempest getting closer and closer to him, his expression was not as laid-back as usual. Instead, it was uncharacteristically serious.

"Little Junior Brother...."

Chapter 622: Violet Moon God Trove!

In the Greenhair Badlands, the wind was like a host of invisible knives slashing at the sand between Xu Qing and the Captain.

Xu Qing was crazed and not even aware of himself. Closing in with incredible speed, he soon reached a position only about thirty meters away from the Captain. But when Xu Qing heard the words 'little Junior Brother,' he lurched to a halt. His bloodshot eyes were full of chaos as he stared at the figure in front of him. As he did, struggle appeared in his eyes, and then a bit of lucidity. The struggle between human nature and godly nature intensified, and Xu Qing shivered. He recognized his Eldest Brother, and yet he couldn't control the hunger within him.

"Eldest Brother..." he said in a hoarse voice. As the words left his mouth, the struggle between human nature and godly nature grew even more intense, threatening to

swallow him up. Letting loose a howl of anguish, he turned and fled. He exercised restraint, and didn't get close to his Eldest Brother!

The sight left the Captain moved. He knew Xu Qing, and he also knew the torment Xu Qing was dealing with at the moment. He was also aware of how difficult it was to exercise restraint in his current state....

It proved how extraordinary Xu Qing was, and also how important the Captain was to him.

The Captain felt warmth in his heart.

"You little dork," he murmured with a smile, shaking his head. Next, he took a deep breath, and within his pupils, faces appeared. Their eyes opened, and more faces appeared within those pupils as well. It went on and on forever. Blue light flared around the Captain, and then he blurred into motion.

When he reappeared, he was right in front of Xu Qing.

As Xu Qing's face distorted, the Captain spoke in a soft voice. "If you're hungry, little Junior Brother, just eat."

He put his hand out in front of Xu Qing.

Xu Qing shivered as he looked at his Eldest Brother. Deep longing ached inside of him, pulsing out from the vortex formed from the struggle between human nature and godly nature.

Opening his mouth, he bit deeply into the Captain's hand. Blood sprayed everywhere. He swallowed the flesh. It made Xu Qing feel a bit better. However, pain still existed in his heart. He wanted restraint! He didn't want things to be like this.

Sadly, the chasm within him made that impossible. Looking ruthless and insane, he opened his mouth and made a sound like a sob. That was his human nature fighting back!

The Captain smiled. "Don't be afraid, little Ah Qing."

As the Captain let Xu Qing devour his left hand, he used his right hand to tousle his hair. Then he scooped him up with his right arm.

"Eat. Eat your fill. The old man should have been the one to handle this, but I am the Eldest Brother after all. So I'll do it. Eat up. Get full. We have something really big to do."

Xu Qing shivered, and the struggle in his eyes intensified. A terrifying thought had just occurred to him. He wanted... to completely devour this Eldest Brother of his. Every last bit of him. He wanted to swallow him whole.

What was more, as human nature and godly nature mixed within him, he finally experienced a sensation other than hunger. It was a different type of longing. It was a longing for blood. He wanted to drink the Captain's blood!

The moment the thought occurred to him, his heart filled with immeasurable pain. He didn't want that!

He suddenly stopped chewing. He stood there moaning for a few breaths of time. Then violet light flared, becoming a mountain-toppling, sea-draining force that shoved the Captain several dozen meters away.

Looking at the stump of the Captain's hand, Xu Qing seemed to struggle even harder. Shoving his hand into his mouth, he started pulling out the flesh he had consumed. Then he ripped open his belly to drag out the flesh in his stomach, one bit at a time.

Blood sprayed everywhere, soaking the ground. Most grisly of all was that the blood... became like pearls landing on the ground. When they landed, they rolled this way and that. Shockingly, on each pearl was a vicious representation of Xu Qing's face.

As Xu Qing dragged out the flesh he had consumed, the struggle within him grew even stronger. The clash between human nature and godly nature had reached an unprecedented level.

The Captain stood off in the distance, watching. His expression was one of pain and sorrow, but he didn't take any action. He knew... that Xu Qing had to reawaken his human nature if he truly wanted to survive this god-glimpsing phase.

*Back in the day, I...* The Captain thought back to things from the past that he had long chosen not to think about. Pain flickered in his eyes.

Shortly after, the increasing amounts of blood spraying out of Xu Qing had formed a totem.

Looking down at it from above, it resembled a face. The face's eyes were closed, and it looked to be in pain. And it seemed to flow with blood. In its general shape, it resembled Crimson Mother. But the facial features were Xu Qing's!

In the middle of that totem, Xu Qing was still digging flesh out from inside himself. The struggle in his heart continued to grow stronger. The reason for that was that he had discovered he still felt the longing to devour his Eldest Brother.

The sight of his Eldest Brother's mangled arm filled him with pain. Finally, Xu Qing unleashed a howl that didn't sound human at all. Turning, he raced off into the distance. He chose to take advantage of a surge of human nature to leave. He knew that he wouldn't be able to suppress his hunger much longer, and he wanted to be far away before the madness overtook him.

He couldn't see clearly. The world around him looked twisted and distorted. The apathy of godly nature was telling him that everything around him could be beneficial in his evolution, and that he should devour it. The animal nature within him was a weapon, and the godly nature within him was making sure it was liberated. But his human nature kept reminding him over and over again that there was a bottom line he couldn't cross.

Some things just couldn't be done. Some people could not be abandoned. Some ideals had to be preserved even if it meant dying!

Thus, Xu Qing fled.

After he was gone, the totem formed from blood drops rose up into the air and followed him, pulsing with godly might.

The Captain kept his eyes on the fleeing Xu Qing as he followed.

Time passed. Xu Qing fled nonstop. The Captain's arrival had thrown his heart into chaos. His state of madness thanks to the mixing of human nature and godly nature was even greater than before.

"Who am I...? It's not important."

"Yes it is. It's very important. I'm Xu Qing!"

"My past isn't important at all."

"It's very important!"

"The people you meet in life are nothing but food."

"That's not true!"

It was as if two versions of consciousness existed within him, one apathetic, one in pain.

The apathetic consciousness was godly nature, and it was housed in the face of blood behind him. The consciousness full of pain was human nature, housed in Xu Qing's heart, and not willing to give up.

As the process continued, his nascent souls did not experience any change. However, the violet moon grew in intensity. Unbeknownst to him, his violet moon nascent soul had already reached the great circle of three tribulations. No heavenfate tribulation had appeared, yet the violet moon nascent soul was still growing. Eventually, it reached the four-tribulation level, and then the great circle of that level.

Yet it kept going. Five tribulations! After that, it reached the great circle of five tribulations! Even then, its growth did not stop.

Xu Qing's violet moon nascent soul eventually reached the dao begetting phase!

Violet light intertwined outside of him, gradually forming a violet secret trove. Put most precisely, it wasn't a secret trove. It was something that could only be made with the power of a god. It was... a god trove!

When that happened, the dome of heaven seemed to lose its color, and the desert was thrown into chaos. As violet moon power surged, the struggle in Xu Qing began to ebb. His human nature faded, and his hunger began to overtake everything. He once again thirsted for blood.

The face of blood behind him seemed to be smiling apathetically.

It was winning.

However, that was when something unexpected happened!

Xu Qing stopped in place. As he stood there, he saw something about thirty meters up ahead. He broke out in goosebumps, and then began to tremble. His mind was filled with unprecedented chaos. It was as if the item thirty meters up ahead of him had caused all of his thoughts to focus on it.

It was a metal box. Inside the box was some blood-colored soil. And in that soil...

Was a flower!

It seemed like nothing but an ordinary flower. It had seven sawtooth leaves, and in between each of them was a strange symbol made of gauzy threads. That symbol looked like a face that was crying and laughing at the same time.

When Xu Qing saw that flower, his mind felt like it was being struck by 10,000,000 lightning bolts. He felt like his soul was being ripped to shreds.

Countless images appeared in his mind. Countless memories welled up from the depths of what he had felt was an unimportant part of his heart.

“Lifespan flower, also known as life-extending flame and god-spirit weed, is a mutated variety of a god-type vegetation known as regeneration tree. There are actually seventy-three known mutations, but only the first type can be used in medicines. They grow randomly in forbidden regions, without any specific habitat pattern. They’re extremely rare. They can be used to regrow severed limbs, reinvigorate life force, and treat any injury other than those inflicted by the god above.”

Shivering, Xu Qing walked over and knelt in front of the flower. He reached out and touched it.

“Lifespan flower...”

He had searched for this flower for years, but had never found one.... It was the very same flower he’d hoped to use to extend Sergeant Thunder’s life. The lifespan flower. [1]

“Sergeant Thunder...”

Tears welled up in his eyes and then flowed down his face, dropping into the sand below like blotches of ink. Those tears came from human nature. The blood-colored face behind him suddenly collapsed, becoming countless droplets of blood that flowed through Xu Qing’s injuries back into his body.

The Captain stood off in the distance, watching. The tight pain in his heart was finally starting to ease. He smiled.

Someone appeared noiselessly next to him. It was the Heir Apparent.

“Now I believe it,” the Heir Apparent said as he watched Xu Qing. “The two of you have a very unusual Master. He’s either the reincarnation of some powerful expert from my time, or one of the elite descendants of an Ancient Emperor who left this place.”

Once again looking like the picture of flattery, the Captain said, “The old man’s so-so. He definitely can’t compare to you, Senior. If you ever start recruiting apprentices, your humble servant will be the first to sign up.”

The Heir Apparent looked at the Captain. He didn’t trust one word that came out of his mouth.

“That said, I’m curious. Did you and Xu Qing seek out your Master? Or did he seek the two of you out?”

Chapter 623: Xu Qing’s Authority!



“Now that you mention it...” the Captain said, looking very pleased with himself. He took out a peach and helped himself to a bite. He was about to continue eating when he noticed the Heir Apparent looking at him. He blinked a few times, took out a pear, and offered it to the Heir Apparent. “You should eat, Grandpa.”

The Heir Apparent looked at him expressionlessly.

The Captain plastered a smile onto his face, put the pear away, then cleared his throat. “Now that you mention it, the old man was the one who sought me out. It was back when I was wearing diapers and used to play outside in the mud with the neighbor girl. I had a good thing going, but the old man showed up and messed it all up. He checked my bones and said that we were connected by destiny. And then he just outright kidnapped me. As for little Ah Qing, he sought out Master. Very different from me.” [1]

The Heir Apparent glanced at the Captain. He understood everything. The brat had obviously sought out his Master, and was accepted due to his extreme shamelessness. The Heir Apparent was about to inform the Captain of his conclusions when something else caught his attention. He looked back at Xu Qing off in the distance.

The Captain noticed the same thing.

Xu Qing stood in the darkness and green wind, looking at the lifespan flower in front of him. He knew that his Eldest Brother had put the flower there. The fact that the Captain knew about this element of Xu Qing’s past was clearly because of their Master. As a result, the sight of the flower wasn’t that much of a surprise. His Master had predicted all of this.

Xu Qing carefully picked up the metal box. As he looked at the flower inside of it, he couldn’t help but think back to that old man from the scavenger basecamp.

“Sergeant Thunder,” he murmured, “I finally found that lifespan flower for you....”

He closed his eyes.

As the face of blood collapsed, and all the blood flowed back into him, he heard a begrudging sigh from the godliness.

His human nature was returning as his tears dropped to the ground.

The flower was like an anchor. In a moment of chaos, it gave him something stable to hold on to. In his stupor, he was given a clear signal. And it made sure that his human nature materialized, becoming like an unmovable boulder.

All of the memories that he had come to view as unimportant were once again becoming important. He saw his youth. His days in Seven Blood Eyes. His experiences in Sea-Sealing County.... Everything came back, and the memories became even more profound. He remembered his name. He remembered all of the people and things he couldn’t make himself abandon. The godly nature was being concealed. The animal nature was being suppressed.

Time passed.

Xu Qing opened his eyes. Within them was sadness. He was now fully awake. The chaos had vanished. The hunger was gone. Now that he was awake, he could sense that he was different from

before. Majestic fleshly body power coursed through him, and he emanated a terrifying aura and fear-inspiring fluctuations.

In the past, the god body had been difficult for him to completely control. But now his control had increased dramatically. Going forward, that body did not belong to the god's finger anymore. Of course, the resulting boost to his battle prowess was even more fearsome.

Next, Xu Qing sensed the violet moon power, which was now a god trove. He also could tell how the godly nature had been driving his thoughts. There was now a golden magical symbol imprinted in the core of his life force. It could be activated at any time. Compared to everything else, that was the most precious thing to come out of this experience.

He could sense how he had lost his human nature and devolved into the madness of animal nature. He also remembered the apathy of godly nature.

In the end, he had his anchor to hold onto. He took control of the animal nature. He concealed the apathetic godly nature. And he brought back his human nature as the dominant force.

"This process is called god-glimpsing," the Heir Apparent said from behind him.

Xu Qing didn't say anything.

"After what you experienced, little Ah Qing," the Captain said curiously, "do you sense authority within yourself?"

Xu Qing looked over his shoulder. He saw the Heir Apparent and the Captain standing there.

He greeted them in a hoarse voice. "Eldest Brother. Senior."

He looked at the Captain's mangled hand.

Apparently, something special happened to the parts that Xu Qing had devoured. Despite the Captain's recovery powers, those areas weren't growing back like normal. Noticing Xu Qing's gaze, the Captain put his arm behind his back and smiled nonchalantly, then tried to get his powers working at full speed again.

The Heir Apparent felt like shaking his head. He didn't see how someone could develop authority after their first experience with god-glimpsing. Normally speaking, it took several times. But given what he knew of Xu Qing's powers of understanding, he chose not to shake his head.

This little punk has some freakish powers of understanding.... Let's wait and see what happens before making a determination.

Xu Qing looked at the Heir Apparent and then the Captain. Heart racing, he thought back to the instincts he had experienced in his moment of chaotic madness. Unfortunately, he hadn't really been himself in that state, and thus his memories weren't very clear. Time passed. After two incense stick's worth of time, he frowned.

He remembered that, in addition to the hunger he had felt, he had experienced the intense longing to drink blood. However, that did not really conform to what he expected godly authority to be.

Noticing Xu Qing's facial expression, the Captain cleared his throat. Looking very proud, he said, "It's highly unlikely you could sense authority with your first attempt at god-glimpsing, little Ah

Qing. However, I have to say I'm a bit disappointed. Don't be discouraged, though. You're still young, so keep working hard. I'm sure you'll succeed on your second try, just like I did."

The Heir Apparent looked closely at Xu Qing for a moment, and it was impossible to say if he was sighing inside, or gasping. Finally, he said, "Let's go. We need to get back."

The Heir Apparent took a step forward with the intention of taking Xu Qing and the Captain away with him.

But then Xu Qing hesitated. "I think I did feel something, but... I can't be sure."

As the words left his mouth, he experimentally extended his right hand and waved it a bit.... Drops of blood began oozing out of his pores. It was as if each drop of blood contained a will of its own as they floated out in front of him. The blood converged, swirling around Xu Qing to eventually form a blood-colored vortex.

The Captain's eyes went wide. The Heir Apparent stopped walking.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the vortex grew larger, until it was like a blood-colored lake. Then a face rose up from within the lake.

It was Xu Qing's face.

It looked apathetic, but unlike before, it... could be controlled.

Looking at the Captain and the Heir Apparent, Xu Qing said, "I'm not sure if this is 'authority.' Back then, when I took that scrap of godsource, it contained... a bit of blood."

The Heir Apparent's heart was pounding, and the Captain was visibly moved. The Captain could sense that, as that blood vortex appeared, and especially when the face emerged, all the blood in his body started stirring as if it was about to go out of control.

It was as if... if Xu Qing wanted it, all the blood in his body would explode out and enter his control. As a matter of fact, that was exactly the case. Xu Qing could sense blood fluctuations in all sorts of locations in the desert. All he had to do was exercise a thought, and all of that blood would rush toward him.

"I can do more than control it..." he murmured. He closed his eyes, and the surrounding blood vortex rose up, completely surrounding him. As it became a sea of blood, it also became possible to see a god trove.

Terrifying pressure weighed down on the lands below. The sea of blood surged and began to descend. Rumbling could be heard as the green desert became as red as blood. Countless droplets of blood entered the ground, spreading out for one kilometer, five, fifty.... In the end, it spread out to the shocking degree of 250 kilometers.

The desert in that area was crimson. All of the animals that the blood touched howled and then collapsed, becoming part of the blood. There were even some giant mushrooms in dao begetting who trembled and collapsed. One of them managed to form its roots into the shape of a giant, and tried to flee. But the rapidly expanding sea of blood hit it, and it suffered the same fate.

A feeling of hunger once again appeared in Xu Qing, and yet again, he experienced the longing for blood. He felt the desire to expand the range of his devouring, and consume everything.

But thanks to the restraint and self-control of human nature, he also knew his limits. Given his current level of strength, if he kept doing this, he would lose control.

A moment later, all of the blood swept back toward its origin. As the Heir Apparent and the Captain watched, it once again turned into Xu Qing. It started blurry, but quickly turned clear as countless blood droplets converged. His hair started gray, but quickly turned black. And soon his body was back to normal.

The Heir Apparent waved his hand, causing one droplet of blood to emerge from the blood sea and fly over to him. Within the blood drop was Xu Qing's face, looking apathetically at the Heir Apparent. The Heir Apparent's gaze sharpened. He could tell that the blood didn't just contain the simple authority of Crimson Mother.

Authority was something unique to each god, and thus, each god's authority had different characteristics.

*Is this the essence of the red moon??* The Heir Apparent was deeply shaken. He knew full well that Crimson Mother had worked hard to make people think that shē and the red moon were the same thing. But the reality was... the red moon came first, and Crimson Mother came later.

The red moon had existed from the most ancient times, even before Revered Ancient was born. In contrast, Crimson Mother... was a postheaven god that came after the arrival of the broken face. The reason Crimson Mother resided in the red moon was that shē wanted to actually supplant the red moon. To become the red moon. That was Crimson Mother's path to godly ascension.

That was how shē got hēr authority.

Stealing some of Crimson Mother's authority was the same as taking some of hēr power of enlightenment. It was like eating food that others had already digested. But Xu Qing... was different. Forgetting the levels of power involved, it was completely appropriate to say that the moment Xu Qing gained enlightenment of blood, he began walking the same path as Crimson Mother! And the destination, whether intentional or not, was the red moon.

Such thoughts left the Heir Apparent feeling profoundly astonished. However, he instinctively kept his cool.

"Not bad," he said calmly. "It's just as I thought. One drop of blood to mold the soul. One drop of blood to bring unbounded growth. Xu Qing, when you turn all of your blood violet, it will mean you'll have even more authority over blood. In fact, it's possible that one day... you might be able to turn the red moon violet.

"But right now, this session of cultivation has reached an end. Go back and rest. In seven days... I'll take you somewhere to see a certain person."

The Heir Apparent's calm expression and mysterious wording made it seem like all of this was what he had predicted would happen. As he started walking forward, he waved his hand, sending the drop of blood back toward Xu Qing, where it merged into his forehead.

Xu Qing opened his eyes and looked at the Captain.

The Captain forced a smile onto his face. He suddenly felt a lot of pressure. In fact, Xu Qing was putting far more pressure on him than he ever had before.

I can't believe he actually took control of authority on his first attempt at god-glimpsing! I wasn't even being serious before. And that authority.... This is not gonna work! I have to keep opening my seals!

Of course, those were his thoughts. What he said out loud was, "Not bad. Not bad at all. Just like me, back in the day. Hahaha...."

The Captain hurried to catch up with the Heir Apparent.

Xu Qing nodded and followed along.

The green wind blew just like before. The red color in the dome of heaven grew brighter. As it shone down on the three of them, it cast their shadows onto the ground below. Soon, they disappeared into the distance.

Chapter 624: A Man Carrying a Sun

Wu Jianwu looked at the busy street outside the Green Spirit Pharmacy in the Bitter Life Mountains. Citizens walked to and fro freely. Lately, Wu Jianwu had been feeling very inspired in his poetry. In fact, he'd even been experimenting with using different poetry rhythms.

*"Pills, pills, pills; you're like a catkin in the hills; seeking sleep but finding thrills; now hurry up and buy some pills!"*

Off to the side, Li Youfei loudly exclaimed, "Amazing poem, young sir!"

Wu Jianwu laughed heartily and was about to continue with some more poetry when Ling'er suddenly raced past him like the wind. At almost the same moment, Xu Qing, the Captain, and the Heir Apparent appeared down the street.

Ling'er threw herself right into Xu Qing's arms.

"You're finally back, Big Bro Xu Qing..." she said, her eyes bloodshot. She had been fretting day and night recently, to the point where even her beloved bookkeeping wasn't enough to keep her occupied. Now that Xu Qing was back safe, her tense heart could finally start to relax.

Xu Qing smiled and tousled her hair, then looked in the direction of the Green Spirit Pharmacy. Although only a few days had passed, it seemed more like years for Xu Qing. Finally being able to return prompted a sigh of relief to escape his lips.

Striding into the medicine shop, the Captain loudly said, "I'm back, Little Spritey! Get that big booty of yours out here and give me a hug!"

Nethersprite was currently squatted down next to the stove boiling some water. For the past few days, she'd finally been able to calm down a bit, but as soon as she heard Erniu's voice, a wave of revulsion exploded in her.

Sooner or later I'm going to eat that slutty Ox alive!!

The Heir Apparent grinned. He really loved the comforting atmosphere of the Green Spirit Pharmacy. Sitting down at his usual spot, he picked up his cup and took a sip of tea.

The parrot immediately flew over and sat on the Heir Apparent's shoulder. Looking down at his mostly featherless body, the parrot grumbled, "Grandpa, I ran into some more bad guys recently. It was hard to say who exactly they were. They used a bag to grab me! It was outrageous. They didn't beat me or anything, they just plucked out all my feathers!"

Ning Yan kept his head bowed as he scrubbed the floor with increasing vigor. However, after only swiping the rag back and forth a few times, he noticed Xu Qing. He stopped, a quizzical expression appeared on his face.

"Biggest Bro, w-why... why do you seem so different from before?"

Ning Yan's words caused Wu Jianwu to look more closely at Xu Qing. Li Youfei did the same. Both were somewhat confused, as nothing about Xu Qing struck them as being very different, though he did have a bit more of a sparkle on him. Ling'er was also curious about what Ning Yan meant. The Captain chuckled proudly.

Xu Qing grinned but didn't say anything. After looking around the shop, he noticed the chickens in the back.

"They just showed up one day," Ling'er said quietly.

Xu Qing nodded. As everyone looked on, he walked into the back room. After sitting down cross-legged, he took a deep breath and thought back to everything he'd experienced. Then he closed his eyes and took time to study his authority and his violet moon god trove.

Right now, I could use the violet moon god trove by itself to crush a dao begetting foe.... But I still can't get the taboo poison into my gaze. It would only work if I let the godliness take over. However, my authority seems to have other uses....

What's more, the fleshly body strength, plus my violet moon power turned into a god trove, makes all of my other nascent souls a bit underwhelming. And that could lead to problems. I need to upgrade my other nascent souls as quickly as possible. If I somehow end up in that same state as before and start absorbing everything, they could end up damaged or worse.

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Seven days later, the Heir Apparent said that it was time to leave. Before departing, he gave Xu Qing a dull gray ball made of some sort of metal.

"Use your violet moon power to tie this metal sphere around your waist. Don't take it off unless absolutely, positively necessary."

As Xu Qing accepted the ball, he studied it briefly. There was something familiar about it that he couldn't place. The moment he clasped his fingers around it, a boundless and indescribable force erupted from within it. It was suddenly so heavy that Xu Qing's hand sank down, and his entire body trembled.

A moment later, Xu Qing instinctively released the power of his god body. Rumbling sounds echoed out, and a sixty-meter-tall projection appeared in the middle of the backyard. Only being bolstered in that manner could Xu Qing manage to successfully hold up the metal sphere. Of course, the weight of the ball wasn't being sustained just by his body. He also had his nascent souls and his

actual soul to share the weight. Even still, that weight was so great that Xu Qing immediately started sinking down into the rocky surface of the mountain.

Cracks spread out in the ground around him until he was nearly down to his waist. The chickens scattered in terror, leaving behind a cloud of feathers. Xu Qing was visibly moved.

Now he realized what this metal sphere was. It was the very same sun that he and the Captain had dredged up out of the Yin Sacrifice River. And the Heir Apparent had been inside of it.

“This...” Xu Qing said, inhaling sharply. He looked at the Heir Apparent.

“I’m loaning the thing to you while we travel. You can’t use your god body to share the weight. You can only use the violet moon power to hang it on your waist. Going forward, use the violet moon power and your other nascent souls to carry it. That will ensure that your violet moon power doesn’t get out of control. And with your other nascent souls working hard, your cultivation base will improve slowly but surely.

“Alright, I’ll wait for you outside the entrance of the shop. You take your time to walk out. Control your strength otherwise you’ll destroy the shop. And I’m not helping you in any way.”

Clasping his hands behind his back, the Heir Apparent walked out the main entrance.

Outside, there was now another person standing next to the exit in addition to Wu Jianwu. He was an old man, tall and burly, with dignified features. He almost looked like a door god. His extraordinary aura spread out, and his eyes contained numerous dao lineaments swirling about. Shockingly, that was the sign of the first stage of Void Returning. However, this Void Returning expert was clad in the rough hemp garment of a shopkeeper’s assistant. And he seemed to be sticking very close to Wu Jianwu.

As Wu Jianwu attempted to avoid even looking at him, the old man opened his mouth and solemnly said, “*Pills, pills, pills; you’re like a catkin in the hills....*”

He sounded sorrowful and even hopeless as he spouted the poetry. Then the old man noticed the Heir Apparent walking out. A tremor passed through him, and he wiped the grief off his face and replaced it with respect. Feeling terrified, he clasped hands and bowed.

“Senior!”

The Heir Apparent snorted coldly. Ignoring the old man, he floated up into the air and waited for Xu Qing.

Wu Jianwu blinked a few times and then fervently launched into some more poetry.

Trembling in fear, the old man repeated every line of Wu Jianwu’s poetry. He couldn’t help but think back to what happened three days ago....

Less than a week ago, he was still the number one rogue cultivator in the Bitter Life Mountains. People respectfully called him Patriarch Inkrule, and he was one of the main points of contact for the Red Moon Cathedral in this area.

Given that the red moon was about to rise, he had decided that he needed to finally join the Red Moon Cathedral. But everything changed after he sent his apprentice to scout the Green Spirit Pharmacy, only for him to go missing.

Given his experience in life, he knew that there was more to the Green Spirit Pharmacy than met the eye. But even he, the type of person who would *seek revenge over the smallest grievance*, decided to avoid the area, especially given that Li Youfei had been spotted. He didn't even go personally to look for his missing apprentice.

Instead, he used a type of magic available in the Red Moon Cathedral's church temple to try to find out what was going on. Never could he have imagined that, before he could even finish using that special magic, he would suddenly lose consciousness. When he woke up, he was in the backyard of the Green Spirit Pharmacy, in the form of a chicken. That was where he found his apprentice....

Of course, the entire experience terrified him. After all, he had been unleashing that special magic from within the Red Moon Cathedral's church temple. And yet that hadn't stopped the grisly event from unfolding.

He was even more astonished when he laid eyes on the Heir Apparent. It only took a glance for him to know he was dealing with a living Smoldering God, which caused a boundless tempest to smash into his mind like an ocean of lightning.

After that, he had begged and pleaded until a girl named Ling'er mentioned that they could use another host at the front door. And thus, he became the Green Spirit Pharmacy's second host.

As Patriarch Inkrule groveled, Xu Qing struggled to extricate himself from the ground in the backyard. He was very careful in how he did it. After some hard work, he managed to get his foot back up and not shatter the ground. It was a very simple action, but given his current state, it was extremely difficult. The metal sphere was astoundingly heavy.

In the moments that passed, Xu Qing forced himself to acclimate. He also forced his nascent souls to get used to the weight. After that, he slowly reined in his god body, shrinking down from a height of sixty meters down to thirty.

The more he shrank down, the less he was able to distribute the weight. And thus, a moment later, creaking sounds echoed in his body before the ground shattered beneath his feet and he sank down. Ashen-faced, he struggled back out of the ground. His violet moon nascent soul was doing fairly well, but his other twelve nascent souls hurt so badly they felt like they might collapse. That was especially true of the golden crow.

After taking a moment to get used to the sensation, Xu Qing's eyes shone brightly. *This method actually works pretty well.*

As long as it was effective, he was willing to persist. He continued to work hard for another two hours. At that point, he felt comfortable shrinking his body down to about fifteen meters. Rumbling sounds echoed out loudly.

Xu Qing disappeared, and the spot where he had been standing was now a crater.

Things continued like that until nighttime. Xu Qing had sunk down into the ground many times. But along the way, he managed to get his body back to normal size.



With the metal sphere hanging from his waist, he was able to lurch forward like a wooden marionette. He had to focus all of his strength to take even a single step, and sweat flowed down him in rivulets.

In the end, he managed to slowly walk through the Green Spirit Pharmacy. Every step he took caused the place to creak, and sent dust flying about. Ling'er, Ning Yan, Nethersprite, and everyone else watched with mouths agape. Eventually, he reached the front door, leaving behind a series of footsteps and a lot of cracks in the floor. The stove used to boil the water had fallen over, and part of Ling'er's counter was crushed. Ning Yan looked furious. After all, he was in charge of keeping the floor clean....

Xu Qing looked at him apologetically, then struggled to keep walking. As more rumbling sounds filled the air, he managed to walk outside. Behind him, the creaking sounds grew even more loud. Clearly, the Green Spirit Pharmacy was now tilted a bit to the side.

"Senior," Xu Qing said, his face completely expressionless.

The Heir Apparent glanced at the shop, smiled, and then turned to leave. "Let's go."

Xu Qing looked at the Heir Apparent casually leaving, and started walking after him. Loud thumps rang out with each step. The ground trembled, and surrounding buildings rocked back and forth. Deep footsteps appeared in the street....

"Senior, where are we going?"

"Not far," the Heir Apparent answered. "We're going to see someone here in the Bitter Life Mountains that you've met before. My third sister. This is where she chose to settle down and heal. She recently reached out to me to explain that some flies have been buzzing around bothering her. I told her not to kill them. They'll be perfect to test out the limits of your authority."

Xu Qing nodded. He had long been wondering why the Heir Apparent had wanted to come to the Bitter Life Mountains. He had guessed that there had to be another reason besides tempering Xu Qing. Hearing the explanation wasn't much of a shock.

However, he still wondered... why was everyone so focused on the Bitter Life Mountains? The Captain. Princess Brightblossom. What was so special about this place?

Xu Qing couldn't fly in the air. He could only struggle forward on foot. Sometimes he ran into places where the ground wasn't very solid, and he sank down....

In fact, that had just happened a moment ago, prompting the Heir Apparent to squat at the edge of the resulting pit and assess the situation.

Chapter 625: Yesterday's Youth, A Thing of the Past

"Fell down again, huh?" the Heir Apparent said coolly from the side of the pit.

Xu Qing didn't reply. Looking around, he saw that he was in an empty mansion grotto. The place had long since been abandoned. There were mansion grottoes like this throughout the Bitter Life Mountains. Most were places that cultivators had hewn out over the years as places of refuge.

Looking at the mountains from a distance, you would never notice them. But because Xu Qing was so heavy, it was easy for him to break through the ceilings of such places.

“There are a lot of caves like this in these mountains. It looks like you’re going to be doing plenty of climbing on this journey.”

When the Heir Apparent looked at Xu Qing, he seemed very relaxed. It was almost as if seeing Xu Qing in this bedraggled state was somehow comforting to him. The truth was that it reminded him of his own childhood, when his father would have him walk around with a sun tied at his waist.

He just needs that hat.

The only difference was that when he was a kid, he would have the sun at his waist and a special hat to add weight to his soul. Seeing Xu Qing without such a hat left him sighing inside.

Xu Qing looked up at the Heir Apparent for a moment, then used his violet moon power and the strength of his other nascent souls to bear the weight of the sun. Bit by bit, he climbed back out into the open. Xu Qing felt like he was expending every bit of effort possible to ascend skyward. But because of the power of the sun, the weight he bore was so incredible that he could barely stand up straight. Xu Qing was not unfamiliar with situations like that.

Back when he was in the Corrections Division in Sea-Sealing County, he had experienced something similar. The only difference was that he had been dealing with the pressure of a minor world. [1]

One might think that something called a ‘minor world’ would actually weigh more than the little metal sphere. But Xu Qing was now personally coming to realize that it was the exact opposite.

It made him think about what the Captain had told him about the history of this sun. It was the first artificial sun created in the Moonrite Region, in the era when the Imperial Sovereign ruled the place. Countless years had passed since then, and there were no records indicating who created it originally.

The Heir Apparent watched as Xu Qing finally dragged himself out of the ground, then said, “Take advantage of the pressure of that thing. It was a toy given to me by an Ancient Emperor of the time.”

Xu Qing glanced down at the metal sphere at his waist. “Senior, other than weight and pressure, what else can it do?”

The Heir Apparent stood and started walking away. “Back then, when it was just a heavenly body, it had other powers. It could tap into the power of the immortal net that covered the Revered Ancient mainland, and use it to unleash heaven-destroying, earth-extinguishing power. But nowadays...? After the Ancient Emperors left, the immortal net collapsed, and it became a lot weaker.”

His voice thrummed with reminiscence and ancient time. Xu Qing started following, one booming step after another. The wind blew as they walked off into the distance, carrying their voices and surrounding them.

“Senior, someone told me that the places the Ancient Emperors went off to are called holy lands?”

“Do the hiding spots of cowards deserve to be called holy? The Ancient Emperors... got old. And when you get old, you cling to life.”

“Oh. In that case, where did the cowards go?”

“Hahaha! Every year on the twelfth day of the sixth month of the human calendar, look into the sky toward the north. You’ll notice an unusual star there. That’s where you’ll find one of the coward lands, the one closest to Revered Ancient.”

“How many coward lands are there?”

“In the year they departed, there were as many of them as there were Ancient Emperors and Imperial Sovereigns who left. Including the ones from all of the countless species that existed, there were probably over a hundred. The Ancient Emperors even offered one to my father, but he refused to accept it.”

As the night deepened, booming sounds rang out, and the conversation continued between the old man and the young one.

Eventually, dawn arrived.

The red moon continued to cast its light over the horizon. It felt like the countdown to death. However, at least there was some light in the canopy of heaven over the Moonrite Region. The only downside was that it was blood-colored light. When the magical light sources that were used during the day in the Bitter Life Mountains were lit, they now were tinged with red.

Within that faint light, it was possible to see that there was a very unique mountain at the far end of the mountain range. It was roughly the same height as all the other mountains, and was connected to them as well. However, upon nearing, Xu Qing came to realize that it actually wasn’t a mountain. It was a gigantic, petrified tree. Everything beneath the crown of the tree was buried in the desert sands. As for the crown itself, it had been filled in with so much sand and rock that it looked like a mountain.

Looking at the gigantic tree which was now a mountain, the Heir Apparent said, “It’s a joytravel tree, and is actually an ancient mutant beast. There are a lot of trees like this in this region, but most people don’t notice them. And fewer people know that this specific tree was actually planted by my third sister. I was with her to bear witness to that. But now... everything and everyone from that time are gone. And the tree has been dead for years.”

Xu Qing looked at the distant tree and noticed some cultivators in red robes flying around it in circles. They almost looked like flies. Most were Nascent Soul cultivators, with only one in dao begetting, and one in full Spirit Trove. They were obviously from the Red Moon Cathedral’s church temple in the Bitter Life Mountains.

“There was a Void Returning godherald, but my third sister most likely ate him already. The others are here for you to test out your authority. I hope that you can have them taken care of before my third sister and I come out.”

The Heir Apparent blurred, then vanished.

Xu Qing looked at the metal sphere at his waist, then closed his eyes. Circulating the power of the violet moon, he forced numerous droplets of blood out of his skin, until they were swirling around him in a blood-colored vortex. As the vortex spun, it surrounded him, eventually turning into an expanding blood-colored lake that started moving forward.

Wherever it passed, boulders would shatter, and trees would be stained red. The blood lake emanated something gruish and inauspicious in all directions. It was shocking and ghastly, and immediately attracted the attention of the cathedral cultivators.

“What is that thing?!”

All of them began to tremble to varying degrees. It was an instinctual reaction that came from their life force, and also the source of their faith. What was more, it affected their own internal blood flow.

Their blood... went out of control! It was as if their blood had a will of its own and wanted to break free. If their hearts wanted to stop that blood, their hearts would be shattered. If their flesh wanted to stop it, their flesh would be shredded. If their souls wanted to stop it, their souls would be eradicated.

It was as if, at this moment, Xu Qing couldn't be looked at directly!

Therefore, the moment that the group of cathedral cultivators looked at him, the roughly dozen Nascent Soul experts let loose bloodcurdling screams. Then, popping sounds rang out as cracks spread out over their bodies, out of which sprayed masses of blood. That blood almost seemed to be cheering as it shot toward the blood-colored lake.

The cathedral cultivators instinctively started backing up and trying to take back control of their blood. Such efforts failed, and their bodies continued cracking apart. From a distance, it looked like the sky was filled with blood-colored flower petals.

Among those cultivators was an old man in the dao begetting phase. His face was a mask of astonishment as he felt himself trembling, and the blood inside him going crazy.

The middle-aged godservant with a fully formed secret trove had a look of unprecedented seriousness on his face.

As they backed up, the blood-colored lake rose up into the air. Rumbling sounds echoed out as it then flew forward. Every drop of blood in the lake had Xu Qing's face in it. And those countless faces formed a much larger face that looked around apathetically. At the same time, a god trove appeared.

It immediately crushed the cathedral cultivators.

Howls of anguish rang out as the Nascent Soul cultivators completely failed to prevent their blood from spraying out. Seemingly endless volumes of blood flowed out of their eyes, ears, noses, mouths, and pores. Once outside of them, the blood turned into sharp blades.

Those countless blades then turned on the dao begetting old man and the middle-aged Spirit Trove cultivator. The two of them looked around with numb terror. Both of them attempted to flee.

Unfortunately, there was a massive difference between dao begetting and Spirit Trove. The Spirit Trove cultivator summoned his secret trove, which expanded outward. His heavenly dao roared, altering the magical laws around him. Then he tried to break free.

Deafening booms rang out as the Spirit Trove cultivator managed to smash through the blades.

The dao begetting old man was too slow. In the blink of an eye, he was surrounded. He fought viciously, and summoned his illusory secret trove. But it did no good. The sea of blood around him became a rapidly spinning vortex that sucked him inside. Terrified, the old man performed incantation gesture after incantation gesture, and even used magical devices. Nothing worked! The boundless and unfathomable blood sea swept over him. Then the blood burrowed into him, provoking a miserable scream to erupt from his mouth. From a distance, it was an appalling sight!

A moment later, the sea of blood vanished, having completely burrowed into the old man. He shivered, and his eyes shone with despair. Apparently, his body couldn't contain all of that, as he exploded a moment later.

The blood rushed back out into the open, turning into the apathetic face of Xu Qing. The face turned to look at the Spirit Trove cultivator.

This is probably going to be a tough fight. I wonder how I match up to a cultivator with a full secret trove. I guess I'm going to find out!

Xu Qing's mind and heart thrummed with the desire to do battle. As the sea of blood spread out and his god trove pulsed with destructive power, he raced toward the Spirit Trove enemy.

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Inside the joytravel tree, two pairs of eyes were looking outside. They were currently in a massive cave temple. Numerous roots spread out into the cave, where they clumped together in midair to form a cocoon. Dazzling light shone out through the many cracks on the surface of the cocoon, painting the entire area in bright color.

The Heir Apparent stood next to the shining cocoon. Smiling, he said, "Third Sister, you saw a lot of chosen throughout the years. What do you think about this quasi-apprentice of mine?"

"He's your apprentice?" a cold voice replied from within the cocoon. "Did he agree to actually address you as Master? Given how old you are, why are you still going around trying to steal other people's apprentices? Are you that shameless?"

There were very few people who qualified to speak to the Heir Apparent like that, but one of them was his third sister. The Heir Apparent wasn't taken aback by her words. She was his big sister, so she was supposed to be cold on the outside but warm on the inside.

"Well, I've taught him a thing or two already. And I helped him a lot. In order to help improve his cultivation base, I even gave him a little gift." The Heir Apparent continued to smile approvingly as he watched Xu Qing fighting.

"You call that a gift?" the cold voice said. A moment later, the shining cocoon exploded, and a figure emerged. That figure immediately left the mountain, appearing in midair just in front of the Spirit Trove cultivator Xu Qing was pursuing.

The Spirit Trove cultivator didn't even have time to react when a delicate and beautiful finger suddenly appeared and touched his forehead. Rumbling sounds rang out and a tremor passed through the Spirit Trove cultivator. Then he transformed into a tree, which rapidly grew taller until it produced a fruit.

Xu Qing in his sea-of-blood form stopped. Then he formed back into his normal shape, and he looked hesitantly at the woman in front of him.

She had a face so beautiful it could topple kingdoms, but within that graceful elegance was a radiant, heroic spirit. Her cheeks were as rosy as the sunset, and her hair was bound into a simple bun adorned with a few glistening pearls. Those pearls, despite their beauty, couldn't compare to her sparkling eyes. They glimmered like stars, were as azure blue as the sky, and seemed capable of captivating generation after generation of admirers. It was no exaggeration to say that her physical appearance was like that of flowers blooming in spring, while her spirit was like the autumn frost on the leaves of a tree.

She reached out her fair hand to pluck the fruit off the Spirit Trove tree. With a glance at the Heir Apparent, who had followed her out, she handed the fruit to Xu Qing.

"Now this is a gift," she said. "I was in a bit of a rush last time, sweetie, so I didn't have anything ready. This time, allow me to give you this gift to mark our meeting."

Chapter 626: Fourth Dolly's Lost and Won't Come Back Again!

Xu Qing looked hesitantly at the fruit, and then at the peerlessly beautiful young woman offering it to him. Given that the Heir Apparent was with her, it was easy to guess who she was. However, it was hard to match up what he was seeing in front of him with what he had seen back in the northern ice plains.

The difference was staggering. What was more, he had just been bracing himself for a big fight with a Spirit Trove expert. But now....

Xu Qing looked at the fruit, stowed any questions he had, and respectfully accepted it.

"Many thanks, Senior."

Things were fine this way as well.

Princess Brightblossom nodded slightly. She had already taken a liking to this young man. One reason was that her little brother approved of him. The other was that she knew he had played a key role in freeing her from captivity.

She was the type of person who *knew whom to show gratitude to, and whom to feel resentment against*. And thus, she just couldn't bear to watch the results of her little brother's so-called 'tempering' and 'gift-giving.'

The Heir Apparent looked vaguely irritated. He had been hoping to temper Xu Qing further, only to have his third sister take charge and do this. In the end, all he could do was smile.

"Well, I guess we should get going now," he said, looking at his third sister.

Princess Brightblossom looked at the Heir Apparent, and the doddering form he had assumed, and sighed inwardly. Though she knew what her little brother really looked like, she could also tell that this form was a manifestation of how he actually felt about himself.

He used to be the elegant, charming, and famous Heir Apparent of an Imperial Sovereign.... But now, we're both old. Our best years were spent sealed and unable to see the sun in the sky.

Princess Brightblossom shook her head and changed her appearance so that she looked like a kindly old grandma. "That medicine shop you've been staying at seems like a nice place."

The Heir Apparent smiled. "The Green Spirit Pharmacy is indeed a very cozy little shop."

Princess Brightblossom suddenly looked thoughtful.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, blinked a few times. Looking at the grandpa and grandma in front of him, he was suddenly getting the feeling that it wouldn't be long before the Green Spirit Pharmacy acquired yet another elderly shopkeeper. The idea of an ordinary medicine shop being home to two Smoldering Gods... left Xu Qing feeling a bit dazed.

"Let's go," Princess Brightblossom said coolly. "We'll head to the spots you mentioned where Fifth Sister and Eighth Sib were sealed. After what we did at the cathedral, the restraints on their souls should have been broken. Now we can summon them to us."

She started walking.

The Heir Apparent hurried after her, beckoning at Xu Qing to come along.

Xu Qing brought up the rear, a strange expression on his face as he realized he'd made an error in judgment. It looked like the Green Spirit Pharmacy might not have two Smoldering Gods around. It might have four.

Wait, how many brothers and sisters is the Heir Apparent going to free?

Despite his level of willpower, that thought caused him to shiver and subconsciously look in the direction of the Green Spirit Pharmacy. Back when he first established the little medicine shop, he could never have imagined... that something like this could happen.

The three of them made their way off into the distance. Up in the air were 'grandpa' and 'grandma,' while Xu Qing walked.

The desert floor was so soft that Xu Qing had to be extremely careful with every step he took, lest he sink down into the ground. If he did end up sinking down, the sand would almost suck him down, making it even harder to climb back out.

The Heir Apparent seemed younger when he was around his sister. Now he behaved more like a crafty street urchin who never tired of observing Xu Qing. Princess Brightblossom watched for a few days. At a certain point, she finally waved her hand to drag Xu Qing out of a spot where he'd sunk down into the sand.

Xu Qing looked a bit embarrassed. He had been struggling for about four hours to free himself.

"You're such a good kid! I can't believe you're being tormented like this!" She glared in dissatisfaction at the Heir Apparent, who was about to speak. Before he could, she

continued, "Is this supposed to be like how father used to punish you, back in the day? That metal sphere looks familiar. Is it the same one father would strap to your waist?"

Xu Qing looked at the Heir Apparent. He had also noticed how the Heir Apparent would always watch closely when he struggled to climb out of the ground, his eyes full of reminiscence and even happiness.

The Heir Apparent laughed heartily and changed subjects. "Third Sister, the spot where Fifth Sister is sealed is very unique. Different from us. Let me go ahead to check the situation."

As Princess Brightblossom helped Xu Qing to his feet, she nodded. "How is it unique?"

"Fifth sister isn't sealed in this reality," the Heir Apparent said, sounding very serious. Voice hoarse, he continued, "She's imprisoned inside of a nursery rhyme."

Hearing that, Princess Brightblossom looked thoughtful. Meanwhile, Xu Qing thought back to all of the things he had experienced and was certain this was the first time he had ever heard of someone being trapped in a nursery rhyme.

"Down south at the foot of Mount Eternal Centipede, there's a little village. The village existed a really, really long time ago. It ended up being wiped out, becoming a village of the dead. Every once in a while, it shows up again. And there's a nursery rhyme from that village...."

"Fifth Sister is trapped inside of that nursery rhyme. If the time ever comes in which no one in the world remembers that nursery rhyme, she'll die. Except, our little godchild brother wants to torment her, not kill her. So he makes sure to always have people around who remember the nursery rhyme.

"What's more, he borrowed the power of Crimson Mother to make sure that every single time the nursery rhyme is repeated, Fifth Sister sustains serious injuries. It's the same type of pain as having your flesh and blood consumed. As for why he picked this specific village, it's because... her bloodline still survives there. Everyone living in the village is one of her descendants."

Xu Qing was visibly moved.

Princess Brightblossom said nothing, but her eyes shimmered with fury and grief. There was something the Heir Apparent hadn't spoken out loud, and she knew what it was. The godchild had ensured that the meat consumed by the residents of that village over the years was actually the flesh and blood of Fifth Sister.

The Heir Apparent maintained silence for a long moment.

A sensation of grief filled the silence. As they continued on their way, Princess Brightblossom didn't say anything further. Nor did the Heir Apparent. The three of them left the Greenhair Badlands. In fact, they left the entire county, eventually departing the west and going to the south of the Moonrite Region.



Ordinary cultivators probably couldn't make that journey in a lifetime without using teleportation portals. But the Heir Apparent and Princess Brightblossom were able to make the journey in a day. And that was because they had to take care of Xu Qing. Otherwise, they could have done it in the blink of an eye.

Their destination was in an area of endless jungle, much of it filled with an air of rot, defeat, and death.

In the depths of the jungle, Xu Qing spotted a very unusual mountain. It was a few thousand meters tall, and looked like a giant centipede, rearing back and snapping its jaws at heaven. The centipede's feelers were all plainly visible; it was extremely lifelike. The moment Xu Qing laid eyes on it, he felt something ferocious well up in his heart. He sensed something fiendish, as well as a rancorous energy that had been accumulating for countless years.

This was the Mount Eternal Centipede that the Heir Apparent had mentioned. The sky here was filled with dark clouds, which were formed by the never-ending accumulation of rancorous energy. Occasionally, lightning bolts snapped through the clouds, releasing loud thunderclaps. It was like the howling rage of all the living beings in the area, screaming defiantly.

Built into the foot of the mountain was a village surrounded by a rickety fence. It wasn't a very large place. The buildings that made it up were all gray, and looked inauspicious. The ground was dirty. Apparently, this place was so isolated from the world, and the rumbling of the thunder was so intimidating, that outsiders never came here. As a result, the residents were relatively numb to life. The treacherous terrain that surrounded the village made the place bleak and desolate. As the years passed by, the place seemed to sink further and further into decay.

There were children.... However, the natural disposition of children ensured that they didn't act like the parents. They took the angry lightning bolts to be fireworks, and just ran around jumping and laughing, all while reciting a nursery rhyme. Although there were only five children, the sound of their voices drifted gruishly far away from them.

*"There was once a big dolly; with a bunch of little dollies; ten little dollies one two three; bloodshot eyes with hair gray and dusty; one day they didn't say a word to me; the big kids looked around and yelled for mommy; the little kids shouldn't think it's that scary...."*

*"Then suddenly something happened when; big dolly got sick and second dolly tended him; third dolly bought meds and fifth dolly prepped them; sixth dolly died and seventh dolly grinned; eighth dolly dug a pit and ninth dolly jumped in; tenth dolly asked why they were cryin'..."*

*"Fourth dolly's lost and won't come back again!"*

As the sound of the nursery rhyme drifted about, it seemed to contain a bizarre power that ensured it could be heard despite the booming thunder. As a result, it easily reached the ears of Xu Qing, the Heir Apparent, and Princess Brightblossom, who were now standing at the entrance to the village.

Mixed emotions could be seen on the princess' face. The Heir Apparent's eyes were closed to cover the pain within them. Xu Qing sighed deep in his heart.

The Imperial Sovereign had five daughters and ten sons, and as was the custom in imperial regimes, they were ranked, the males among the males, the females among the females.

The nursery rhyme was obviously talking about the Imperial Sovereign's ten sons. As for the fourth... Xu Qing already knew that he was the godchild of the Red Moon Cathedral.

The 'big dolly' had to be the Heir Apparent.

From the expression on the Heir Apparent's face, Xu Qing could only guess that in the past... he really had fallen ill. Although he couldn't be sure what sickness he was afflicted with, it seemed highly likely to have something to do with Crimson Mother and the red moon.

*"Why did fourth dolly run away in his youth? Big dolly is the one who knows the whole truth! He knows the whole truth!"*

Xu Qing looked quietly at the Heir Apparent.

The Heir Apparent opened his eyes, looked at the village, and quietly said, "Fifth Sister's soul is already awake. The way to get her free is... for you, Third Sister, to use your authority to take the traces of all the people who have lived here through the years and manifest projections of them. We need all of the nursery rhymes that have been repeated throughout history to be heard at the same time.

"Xu Qing, the process will require help from your violet moon power. It's the key to unlocking the seal.

"I will do everything in my power to alter the perceptions of heaven and earth, and hide all fluctuations for at least ten breaths of time. I'm confident that as long as we don't go for longer than that, the Red Moon Cathedral won't detect what's going on.

"However, we'll only have ten breaths of time."

The Heir Apparent turned to look at Princess Brightblossom.

"That's enough time," she said. Walking forward, she pointed at the village. Instantly, wild colors flashed in heaven and earth. Screaming winds rose up. The thunder in the dome of heaven ceased.

A river of time appeared, sweeping through the village. The waters churned, and waves splashed. Foam sprayed everywhere. At the same time, countless figures appeared.

Any person who had been born in this place had been dredged up out of time by Princess Brightblossom. More and more people filled the village. After three breaths of time, the place was packed. The current inhabitants of the village all walked out of their houses, blank looks in their eyes.

This was a gathering of living people and souls of the past. Rumbling sounds shook everything as the river of time gurgled. Then words echoed out that came from both life and death, both past and present.

*"There was once a big dolly; with a bunch of little dollies..."*

*“Then suddenly something happened when....”*

Chapter 627: The Origin of the Doorites

When Princess Brightblossom extended her finger, causing the sound of time to ripple through the area, the Heir Apparent released his own authority.

His was different from Brightblossom's, as it could alter perceptions. But it wasn't limited to the perceptions of living things. He could alter the fundamental attributes of natural and magical laws, and even tamper with the thinking of living beings. By transforming living things, influencing magical laws, and creating a grand illusion, he could ensure that even heavenly daos would overlook what was happening. Not even gods would pay attention.

No one had any idea what was actually happening in this part of the Moonrite Region. That included the Red Moon Cathedral.

It was a terrifying type of authority. The only downside was that, despite being a Smoldering God, the Heir Apparent could only use it for ten breaths of time. After that, it would cease to work. For most people, ten breaths of time wouldn't be sufficient.

But it was more than enough time for Brightblossom. The river of time swirled out from her fingers, enveloping the village. It was possible to see children within it, as well as adults and the elderly. They packed the village, looking almost like a painting as they spread out. The nursery rhyme filled the air. To the senses, the moment seemed to stretch out. Although it seemed like ten breaths of time had already passed, in reality, only three had gone by.

It was like a person taking a message and compressing it down to be delivered in only three breaths of time. It created a terrifying sensation of collapse. If someone else was standing in the same spot as Xu Qing, and didn't have a god body or the sufficient cultivation base, their soul would shatter.

Years ago, before the ninth of the Imperial Sovereign's children was born, Princess Brightblossom had always been the most spectacular, to the point where she earned praise from Ancient Emperors.

Xu Qing was deeply moved by what he was seeing.

*Time...* he thought, his eyes shining. The chanting of all the souls became a cacophony. The nursery rhyme echoed out everywhere, causing an illusory image to form.

It was the image of a young woman, her back to the crowd, her head bowed as if she were weeping. There appeared to be countless deceased souls latched onto her, gnawing away at her, mangling her flesh. There were also crimson iron chains binding her. She looked blurry, as did the chains, making it seem like she didn't exist in this world. She only existed in the nursery rhyme. Though she was visible, her image twisted and distorted so dramatically it looked like she wouldn't stay around for very long.

“Xu Qing,” said Princess Brightblossom.

Without the slightest hesitation, Xu Qing released the violet moon power within him, causing his red moon authority to skyrocket.

Blood-colored light erupted from him, like countless streams of blood rising into the air. Princess Brightblossom waved her hand, and the blood shot toward the image formed from the nursery

rhyme. In the blink of an eye, the blood-red color had spread out to cover everything. And the crying figure was now transforming from illusory to corporeal.

In fact, right now, it seemed like the illusory and corporeal were overlapping. That caused fluctuations to spread out, shaking the surrounding image. The red chains started swaying back and forth violently, until cracking sounds rang out and they started to break.

Finally, Princess Brightblossom stepped forward, entered the illusory image, and wrapped her arms around the crying figure.

“Don’t cry, Fifth Sister. Your big sister’s here to take you home.”

Fifth Sister wept even more, trembling as she did. Then the crumbling chains exploded. All of the deceased souls howled in rage as they were wiped out of existence.

Ten breaths of time had passed. The Heir Apparent vanished. Xu Qing disappeared. The image that had formed went away. It was as if the river of time hadn’t existed to begin with. The souls it brought with it were nowhere to be seen. Everything was back to normal. The citizens in the village looked around in confusion. However, their expression quickly became numb again.

The only difference now was that the nursery rhyme being chanted by the children had changed.

*“Little cloth dolly, little cloth dolly; big ol’ eyes and hair like ebony; can you please just come along home with me?”*

*“Little cloth dolly, little cloth dolly; don’t be scared of the lightning you see; just laugh and smile for all eternity.”*

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The Doorites were a very unique species in the Moonrite Region. They didn’t have an ancestral land for their species. Whether or not a Doorite became an adult depended on whether or not they could find a personalized door in the Door Graveyard. If they did find one, then they would spend the rest of their life wandering the Moonrite Region with that door. They could do so until they went to every area possible in the region. That was their tradition. It was also their manner of living, and their method of cultivation.

No one knew why the Doorites were like this. In fact, not even the Doorites understood it. They just acted on instinct.

There was another unique thing about the Doorites. And that was... whenever Crimson Mother and the red moon came, they would be destroyed, but their doors would survive. When Crimson Mother came, their species reacted a lot more calmly than most other species. They would all return from their wanderings and gather in a specific location, where they would part ways with their doors.

The location where they met was the Door Graveyard.

It was a large valley in the east of the Moonrite Region. Most outsiders called the place the Great Abyss. The reason was that the valley was shockingly wide, and so deep that no one really knew how far down the bottom was.

Countless doors filled that valley. There were large ones and small ones, made from every type of material, in every style imaginable. The entire place was filled with a sensation of rot that would never be dispelled.

Cultivators avoided the place, the reason being that the valley and everything around it were filled with too many mysteries. A lot of people had gone missing there throughout the years.

Just now, four figures had appeared on the cliff overlooking the valley. There were two grandmas and one grandpa. The fourth... was Xu Qing.

It had been four days since they left Mount Eternal Centipede.

The additional grandma in the group was much skinnier than Princess Brightblossom. She wore a black robe, had prominent cheekbones, and didn't look kindly at all. Instead, she looked harsh and even mean. She also pulsed with a strong, forbidding aura. Whenever she looked at the Heir Apparent, she seemed even dourer. It was only when she looked at Princess Brightblossom that a trace of warmth could be found in her eyes. She was less surly with Xu Qing as well, and instead seemed like a member of the Senior generation, amiably looking at someone from the Junior generation.

Xu Qing could sense that this black-robed grandma wasn't used to kindly facial expressions, and that she was working hard to be nice to him.

"Eighth Sib is sealed here," the Heir Apparent said. "He was trapped in a very ancient door, which subsequently shattered into countless smaller pieces. That's where the Doorites came from. The Doorites themselves don't have an ancestral land. But the doors do.

"Put precisely, the Doorites actually aren't the cultivators. They're these doors. And this is the ancestral land of those doors. Every single door is a part of our eighth brother. And every time someone uses one of those doors to teleport somewhere, Eighth Sib's soul is drained a little bit more.

"That drainage creates an invisible karma that causes endless torment for eighth brother..."

Princess Brightblossom looked down into the valley. Next to her, Fifth Sister snorted coldly and completely ignored the Heir Apparent.

Clearly the two of them had a long-standing conflict. Xu Qing wasn't sure about the details, but he'd noticed that the Heir Apparent seemed to feel bad about it. Hearing the Heir Apparent's explanation made Xu Qing think back to the time when he came very close to paying for a Doorite teleportation. Now that he thought about it, he realized... that it was the Heir Apparent who had stopped him from doing that at the very last moment. [1]

"Therefore, if we want to unseal Eighth Sib, we won't just need to rely on me and Third Sister. That alone wouldn't be enough to do it right." Looking tenderly at Fifth Sister, he continued in a soft voice, "Baby sister, we need the power of your authority..."

The black-robed grandma glared coldly at the Heir Apparent. She didn't say anything. Princess Brightblossom sighed inwardly. Reaching out, she took hold of Fifth Sister's hand. The black-robed grandma stood there quietly for a long moment before finally nodding.

The Heir Apparent breathed an inward sigh of relief, and at the same time, his eyes lit up. Just like before, he would be responsible for masking all traces of their presence while Princess Brightblossom went into the valley to collect all the door fragments of her sealed eighth brother.

"I need a drop of that violet moon blood, sweetie," Princess Brightblossom said, looking at Xu Qing.

Without a moment of hesitation, Xu Qing used violet moon power to create a sea of blood. That would give her more than enough. His attitude made Princess Brightblossom smile. The black-robed grandma secretly nodded in approval, and the kindness she favored him with grew more sincere.

With Xu Qing's violet moon blood, Princess Brightblossom went straight into the valley. The moment she was gone, the atmosphere on the cliff grew a lot colder.

The black-robed grandma didn't say a word. Not quite sure what to do or say, the Heir Apparent looked at Xu Qing.

"You've been idle a lot recently, boy," he said. "Go back to the road. Don't use any of your violet moon power. You have to do it all on your own."

"Like hell he will!" the black-robed grandma snapped coldly.

The Heir Apparent smiled wryly and looked at his fifth sister. "Baby sist—"

"Shut up!"

The Heir Apparent's eyebrows shot up in anger. But then he sensed how weak his younger sister was. Sighing, he turned his angry glare onto Xu Qing.

Xu Qing blinked a few times and edged closer to the black-robed grandma. Around that time, intense rumbling sounds echoed out from the valley, causing the surroundings to shake. The Heir Apparent gathered his thoughts, then waved his hand, covering over everything so that all signs of activity in the valley were masked.

Meanwhile, the sound from the valley grew more intense. It almost sounded like countless howls of grief. Terrifying fluctuations built up, and the shaking grew more violent. Cracks appeared in the cliff face, causing rubble to rain down.

Xu Qing was so surprised he felt a sense of crisis rising in him. He could only imagine what terrifying entities existed in that valley.

That said, they didn't seem to count for much to Princess Brightblossom.

A moment later, the fluctuations ceased. Princess Brightblossom appeared out of nowhere in front of them. She looked weak. In her hand was a palm-sized chunk of wood. She waved her hand, and it floated out into the air.

“The ancient door sealing Eighth Sib was completely shattered, which makes it hard to put back together. I found this piece after scouring through the rubble down there and using my river of time. This was all I could do.”

The fragment of wood emanated a sense of profound ancientness.

Sensing it, Xu Qing looked over at the black-robed grandma. He was very interested in seeing what her authority was like.

The black-robed grandma stared at the chunk of wood for a time. Then she reached out with a finger so wrinkled it seemed like it might never recover, she touched it. Instantly, she seemed to grow even older. However, the chunk of wood trembled and then started transforming. It grew longer, wider, and bigger. In a short five breaths of time, it transformed into an ancient door, standing tall in the world.

The door frame was black, while the door itself was white. It was covered with complex designs. And the design on the door itself formed a gray morning-glory flower. It was a bewitching-looking flower that seemed capable of shaking the soul. Pulses of ancient time flowed out, shattering the air and creating intense pressure. The moment the wooden door appeared, a loud knocking sound rang out.

Thunk-thunk. Thunk-thunk!

It rang out like heavenly thunder.

Looking at Xu Qing, the black-robed grandma said, “My authority is not cultivated. It comes naturally. It can revive all living things, at a price. That I pay.”

Chapter 628: Nine Sons of the Dragon

Although the words ‘can revive all things’ were spoken with great apathy, they still struck Xu Qing to the core. That was especially true when the last part was added in about a price ‘that I pay.’ That added a level of tragedy that was difficult to put into words.

The Imperial Sovereign’s youngest daughter was born with a power of authority that was no blessing to her. She could use her own life force to ‘revive all things.’ It was extremely powerful, but also profoundly brutal. And it clearly had its limits.

The Heir Apparent reached out and put his hand in front of Fifth Sister. That was what he had done since she was young. And not just him. All of the other siblings had that custom. That included Princess Brightblossom.

“There’s no need,” the black-robed grandma said coolly. “I’m not going to live much longer anyway.”

The Heir Apparent frowned. Suddenly looking very majestic, he spoke in a domineering tone that he had avoided up to this point. “Even if you don’t live much longer, you still need to stay alive!”

He smacked his hands together, sending out a stream of life force from himself to Fifth Sister.

She shivered from head to toe as her aura grew clearly stronger. She looked at her older brother with a complicated expression, but held back from speaking.

After Princess Brightblossom did the same thing, Xu Qing decided he should help too, so he produced a drop of violet moon blood.

“Yours won’t be necessary,” the Heir Apparent said. He waved his hand, sending the drop of blood back to Xu Qing. After that, he flicked his sleeve, and they all disappeared along with the black-and-white door.

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Three days later, a vortex appeared somewhere in the Greenhair Badlands. Xu Qing was inside, struggling to climb out. The weight of the sun was again making it very difficult for him to traverse the desert.

This time, Princess Brightblossom didn’t pull him out. She, along with the Heir Apparent and Fifth Sister, were up in the air, seated cross-legged in front of the huge black and white door.

Clearly, the door wasn’t going to open very easily. All three of them needed to continue drawing on their authority to make it happen. Thus, they had come to this spot, where the three Smoldering Gods all continued with their sorcery. Since none of them had interest to spare for Xu Qing at the moment, he decided to work on his cultivation.

This desert is actually the best place for me to get used to this sun. If I can figure out how to walk around normally here, then things will be much easier once we’re back in the Bitter Life Mountains.

What’s more, once I figure out walking, I should be able to start experimenting with flight! If I can figure out how to fly like normal, then I can upgrade my other nascent souls.

The fruit from that Spirit Trove expert had turned out to be a powerful tonic designed to push his cultivation base toward another breakthrough. However, the Heir Apparent had urged Xu Qing not to immediately consume the gift given to him by Princess Brightblossom.

Until his nascent souls got used to the weight of the sun, eating the fruit would be a waste. Though it would help his nascent souls to a degree, it would be squandering a good opportunity for tempering.

The process of getting used to the weight of the sun would bring out more of the latent potential in his nascent souls. The best option would be to push his nascent souls to their limit of growth, then use the fruit. Princess Brightblossom had not offered any disagreement to that suggestion. Because of that, Xu Qing was now immersed in cultivation.

Before long, another three days passed.

During that time, Xu Qing worked day and night with his nascent souls. He tapped into everything they had to offer, and when he overdrew on their stores, he would sink down into the desert. Once in the depths of the sand, he would start the cultivation process over. It became a cycle. As of today, he was able to walk on the surface of the desert and only sink down by about one third of a meter.

That’s my current limit. If I want to walk without sinking down, it’s possible, but only for about two hours. Then my nascent souls will reach their limit, and need to recover for a time before I try again.



As he was pondering whether there was another way to do this, he suddenly heard a very loud knocking sound from up above. Although this wasn't the first time he had heard the knocking, this time it was much louder than before.

Xu Qing looked up into the dome of heaven.

The Heir Apparent and his two sisters all had their eyes open.

"Eight Sib's just as irascible as ever," the Heir Apparent said, frowning. He looked at Princess Brightblossom. "It's about time."

"It seems he's still not fully conscious yet," Princess Brightblossom said coolly, her face completely expressionless. "Let's just do the same thing we used to do when we were kids. Give him a good beating."

"That's fine," the Heir Apparent said. His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, and he pointed at the door.

Princess Brightblossom and Fifth Sister did the same.

Upon seeing three Smoldering Gods take action, Xu Qing quickly hurried off into the distance. Given the conversation he'd overheard, he didn't think it was a good idea to stay too close. As it turned out, he was exactly right.

After he'd run about five kilometers away, the knocking sound grew even more intense. It was as if some terrifying entity had turned the dome of heaven into a drum, and was repeatedly striking it.

The deafening sound shattered the sand and caused cracks to appear in the air. However, there was something unique about the Greenhair Badlands that was different from anything beyond its borders. For some reason, it naturally masked the fluctuations of the knocking.

Xu Qing noticed that and came to the conclusion that it must be one of the reasons the Heir Apparent had chosen this spot.

Five kilometers might be a bit too close....

The power of the violet moon erupted, causing blood to spread out in a vortex around him and giving him a huge boost to speed.

The Heir Apparent had not indicated for him to use violet moon power, but Xu Qing felt that it would be fine to use a little at this moment.

Before long, Xu Qing was about 50 kilometers away. Feeling a bit more at ease, he turned around and looked at the sky in the distance. The limits of his eyesight made it so that he couldn't see the Heir Apparent and his sisters. But he could make out the huge door, which radiated scintillating light that shone into the sky and illuminated the surrounding lands.

The knocking grew even more urgent and more shocking. Unexpectedly, it even affected Xu Qing's heart, causing it to pound beyond his control.

As fear crept into Xu Qing's heart, he called on the authority provided by his violet moon power, causing the blood-colored vortex around him to fight back.

Meanwhile, as the Heir Apparent and his sisters worked, the black-and-white door emitted a piercing, grating sound as the door itself opened by a crack. Green mist rushed out from inside, as if the door had been sealed for so long that merely cracking it open allowed the energy inside to explode out.

Now the sky had a green tinge, as did the lands below. And as the mist proliferated, a burly, unclothed figure could just barely be seen inside. He threw his head back and roared. He clearly possessed stupefying power; despite how far away Xu Qing was, he could still sense it. It caused a burst of inexplicable rage to suddenly erupt in his heart. It was a fury beyond the comparison of anything else.

There didn't seem to be any reason for the sudden surge of emotion, as if it had come out of nowhere.

It wasn't just Xu Qing. All of the wild beasts in the desert also experienced a sudden swell of rage. Even the normally docile sandworms were suddenly viciously angry.

Everything was affected.

Thankfully, the blood vortex spinning around Xu Qing allowed him to recover quickly. As he backed up again, he realized he now knew a bit about the authority wielded by the Imperial Sovereign's eighth son.

"Violent rage!" he murmured.

Meanwhile, a cold harrumph could be heard off in the distance.

"What the hell are you howling for?" The Heir Apparent clenched his right hand into a fist. However, he seemed worried that the blow would be too much, so in the end, he only used a single finger. Everything around him rippled and distorted, and the howling figure suddenly stopped in place and trembled underneath the sudden increase in pressure.

But then the figure looked up, his expression fierce and full of even more rage than before.

"Give me—"

The burly figure's violent fury pulsed like massive waves, and it seemed to be building to a crescendo. However, that was when Princess Brightblossom frowned.

"Heir Apparent, you're being too soft."

She walked right up in front of the huge figure, reached out with her right hand, and pushed.

The massive figure spasmed. Ripples and distortions spread through him, transforming him into a ball of flesh that slammed down onto the ground below.

The ground vibrated as a huge crater appeared.

Before the ball of flesh could struggle, Princess Brightblossom threw her hands apart, causing it to be ripped in two.

A squelching sound could be heard as the two pieces separated, then sped in a circle and slammed loudly into each other. A rumbling shockwave swept out.

However, things weren't over yet. The two parts of the ball of flesh hit each other with such force that they ripped apart again. This time, the ball turned into four pieces, which all circled around and then slammed into each other again. Next, eight pieces appeared. After that, sixteen. Then thirty-two....

Meanwhile, Princess Brightblossom just stood there, her face expressionless as she waved her hand back and forth.

The Heir Apparent stood by, chuckling softly. Fifth Sister had an uncharacteristic smile on her face, as if this scene brought back memories of good times in the past.

Xu Qing watched with divine sense. He was now getting a much better idea of Princess Brightblossom's strength and style. Eventually, an anguished howl erupted from the ball of flesh, which had now been smashed into sixty-four pieces.

"Sis, I'm awake! Stop hitting me! I'm really awake!"

Princess Brightblossom didn't respond with a single word. She waved her hand again, causing a hundred and twenty-eight chunks of flesh to explode out in every direction. She seemed ready to continue, but the voice once again let loose a shout.

"Big Brother! Fifth Sister! Hurry up and tell Third Sister that this is my fault! I didn't have control before!"

In response to the terrified cry, Princess Brightblossom snorted coldly. She waved her hand again, but instead of another explosion, the one hundred and twenty-eight pieces of flesh converged and took the shape of a burly young man. He was so muscular he looked like a small mountain. The violent rage from before was gone, and instead, he seemed ingratiating.

Sounding very excited, the Imperial Sovereign's eighth son said, "Big Brother! Third Sister! Fifth Sister! Is father awake now? Crimson Mother's been cut down, right? Hahaha! The old man is finally free!" But after looking up into the sky and sensing his surroundings, he looked stunned. "What's going on? Father isn't awake? Crimson Mother is still around? Huh? And that red moon godchild too? What gall!"

The burly young man suddenly noticed Xu Qing off in the distance. Eyes filling with violent rage, he instinctively reached out with his right hand and made a grasping gesture.

Shocked, Xu Qing felt himself being locked in place. In fact, it almost felt like the air around him was going to collapse and crush him. Then he was wrenched through the air until he was right in front of the burly young man.

"That's your eldest brother's apprentice," Princess Brightblossom said coolly, "a benefactor who helped us free you."

A tremor passed through the burly young man. Suddenly moving with great tenderness, he put Xu Qing down and straightened out his clothing. Laughing heartily, he said, "Well, hello, young friend!"

His smile seemed both vicious and insane, especially when coupled with his bloodshot eyes and terrifying fluctuations. It reminded Xu Qing of the feeling he'd experienced from the god's eye in the ghastr hollow. He also felt a lot of pressure weighing down on him. [1]

“He’s been muddle-headed since he was young,” the Heir Apparent explained. “*Someone* beat him so badly it damaged his brain. Don’t take offense, Xu Qing.”

He extended his right hand in the direction of the black-and-white door. It melted, flowing into his hand, where he kneaded it into a tall, gray hat. He tossed the hat to Xu Qing.

“This door started out as a gift from an Ancient Emperor to my father. A morning glory. It’s an amazing thing. Wear it, and it will help temper your soul.”

Xu Qing took it hesitantly, thought about it for a moment, then put it on his head. Rumbling sounds filled his soul, and he experienced the same feeling as when first accepting the sun. The only difference was that it affected his soul this time. Xu Qing’s vision blurred, his soul shook, and the world seemed to overlap in front of him. Even his divine sense trembled. He inhaled sharply, then gritted his teeth to try to get used to the sensation.

Meanwhile, the Heir Apparent said, “Third Sister. Eighth Sib. Baby Sister. This kid has a medicine shop near here. It’s a really cozy place. I’d like to take you there for a bit.”

Chapter 629: Myriad Magics of Daybreak; Erniu’s Big Event (part 1)

In the Bitter Life Mountains, the blood-colored light spread from the horizon, indicating that the red moon was coming. As a result, living beings lost control over the wickedness in their hearts, allowing slaughter and chaos to spread. However, there was one very small city on the edge of the mountains where things had been warm and welcoming from the very beginning. People smiled at each other without any sense of hostility. In fact, everyone seemed friendly.

About half of the citizens were actually subordinates of Li Youfei. Because they knew of the Heir Apparent’s magnanimity, they had stayed behind. The other half of the cultivators came from other locales.

There were some outsiders who stormed into the city full of madness. However, after sensing the kind atmosphere of the place, they rejected wicked thoughts and embraced the beauty.

Looking around at the bustling streets, the Heir Apparent sighed. “The coziness here is a tiny window into what things were like when my father was alive. All species lived in joy and harmony.”

Princess Brightblossom, clad in a white robe, looked at the crowds and nodded. She could tell that the Heir Apparent truly did like this place.

A gleam of reminiscence could be seen in Fifth Sister’s eyes. Compared to being sealed for countless years of time, even just being back and able to see a small corner of the world brought a scrap of warmth to her cold heart.

Meanwhile, the burly Eighth Sib wasn’t able to keep his mouth shut. “You call this place cozy, big brother? Everything down to the blades of grass here is full of your power. They all react according to your moods. Every gust of the breeze. Every dancing blade of grass....”

The Heir Apparent’s expression turned down as he glared in irritation at his Eighth Sib. Princess Brightblossom turned to look at him as well, her gaze cold. Even Fifth Sister was frowning at him. The combined gazes of his three siblings caused the burly Eighth Sib to shiver and inhale sharply. Suddenly looking very ingratiating, he transformed his appearance into that of an old man.

“What a great place! So cozy! I love it!”

Face completely expressionless, the Heir Apparent continued leading them through the city. Princess Brightblossom and Fifth Sister looked away. Eighth Sib breathed a sigh of relief.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, took note of the relationship between these sons and daughters of an Imperial Sovereign.

Princess Brightblossom ranks highest, but the Heir Apparent isn't far off from her. However, they both defer to Fifth Sister. And then there's Eighth Sib....

He thought back to what he had seen with divine sense: Eighth Sib being beaten up.

He must rank similarly to Ning Yan.

With that in mind, he hurried forward to be close to Princess Brightblossom and Fifth Sister. As they got close to the Green Spirit Pharmacy, Xu Qing caught sight of Wu Jianwu and Patriarch Inkrule. A new type of poetry soon reached their ears.

“Ten heavens, nine earths, eight winds, seven seas, six daos, five elements, buy before we run out; one coming, two going, three pills, four peaces, five spirits, six classics, no discounts but we'll still sell out!”

During his time spent outside the Green Spirit Pharmacy recently, Wu Jianwu had been experimenting with many different forms of poetry. His latest creations were doing a good job of drumming up business from the passersby.

Patriarch Inkrule had seemingly accepted his fate. He stood there looking bored to death and spending most of his time trying to come up with a way to escape. Being a patient person, he hadn't done anything rash, and had instead been observing his surroundings closely. He had already started to notice some things he thought he could use to his advantage, and had been thinking hard about how to make them part of his plan. When he noticed a group of people walking toward the medicine shop, he shivered and plastered a servile look onto his face. Then, he prepared to copy some of Wu Jianwu's poetry. However....

That was when he realized that there were two old women walking with the Heir Apparent, one dressed in white, the other black. Just looking at the white-robed grandma caused Patriarch Inkrule's mind to reel.

Another Smoldering God?

He started trembling, his heart full of disbelief. Then his gaze shifted to the second grandma, the one in black. His mind reeled even further.

That's another Smoldering God!

Then Patriarch Inkrule looked at the last person in the group, who was a burly old man.

And another....

Patriarch Inkrule gulped in a breath and stopped breathing. None of this even seemed real. It was more like a dream. In fact, he actually wouldn't even dare to dream up something like this. Suddenly feeling weak all over, he dropped to his knees. He was being submissive. More submissive than he ever had been in his entire life. As of now, he wasn't putting a scrap of thought

into how to escape. He now realized that unless the Red Moon Cathedral went all out to save him, or Crimson Mother personally came, there was no way anyone in the Moonrite Region would be able to save him.

Surprised by Patriarch Inkrule's behavior, Wu Jianwu followed his gaze down the street until he saw Xu Qing, the Heir Apparent, and the others. He was about to wave and call out a greeting when he noticed the two new grandmas, and the additional grandpa. Two grandmas and two grandpas were strolling down the street in his direction. He instinctively rubbed at his eyes, convinced that he was seeing things. But then, he felt like he was being struck by heavenly lightning.

"No way. Don't tell me... we have another three??" Wu Jianwu was stunned. And though he felt like he must be mistaken, that didn't stop the waves of shock that rose within him. Standing there with his jaw hanging open, he just watched as Xu Qing and the others neared.

Eighth Sib stopped in front of Wu Jianwu, looked up and down, then grinned. "Nice poetry, little buddy."

The words hit Wu Jianwu like a lightning bolt, and he suddenly went limp and dropped into a kneeling position. Then he just stared as the group entered the Green Spirit Pharmacy. Still not convinced he was seeing reality, he bit down onto his tongue. As the pain lanced through him, he murmured, "I can't believe I'm looking at four Smoldering Gods!"

Wu Jianwu would never be able to forget this image for the rest of his life.

The moment Xu Qing stepped into the shop, Ling'er was about to excitedly rush over when she noticed the three newcomers. She stopped in place hesitantly.

"This little Ancient Spirit girl is wonderful." Princess Brightblossom looked at Ling'er and smiled. She had always admired the Ancient Spirits' fighting methods, and had even been close friends with an Ancient Spirit. What was more, Ling'er was more than just a stranger to her. After all, back when Xu Qing rescued the princess, Ling'er had been with him.

Slowly walking over to Xu Qing's side, Ling'er gripped the sides of her garment nervously, looked at Princess Brightblossom, and said, "Nice to meet you, grandmother."

Princess Brightblossom nodded and smiled warmly. Fifth Sister could already see what kind of relationship Xu Qing and Ling'er had, and it caused her expression to soften a bit. Eighth Sib, who could tell how much his siblings valued Xu Qing, flashed a silly grin.

Meanwhile, the featherless parrot flew over, cursing all the way. "Grandpa, you're back! The past few days—"

Before the parrot could reach the Heir Apparent, a whump rang out as a huge hand reached out and grabbed him.

It was Eighth Sib.

Looking curiously at the parrot, he said, "Big Brother, don't you think this thing's bloodline is familiar?"

The Heir Apparent smiled. "It's a descendant of that certain individual. Bred by that kid out there."

"Bred by him?" Eighth Sib looked curiously at Wu Jianwu outside, then pulled the parrot a bit closer to examine.

The parrot shivered, and his eyes shone with terror. He wasn't even capable of struggling as he looked at the scary old man that was holding him. That old man seemed like a burning oven who could incinerate the parrot with a mere thought.

Ning Yan trembled as he continued to scrub the floor like usual. Similar to Wu Jianwu, he could only look at the Heir Apparent and his siblings with outright disbelief.

They're all... they're all Smoldering Gods? Here in this medicine shop?

Li Youfei had long since dropped trembling to his knees.

Compared to all of them, Nethersprite seemed very cool and collected.

Although she was slightly surprised by Princess Brightblossom and the other two, it only took a moment for her to regain her composure. After all, there wasn't much difference between waiting on one Smoldering God and waiting on four Smoldering Gods. In the end, she was just boiling water. What she cared most about was her revulsion for and hatred of the Captain.

As for the Captain, he looked excited. Making sure to place a look of ingratiating flattery on his face, he rushed out and dropped to his knees.

"Grandpa! You're back, sir! Thanks to the parrot's squawking earlier, I guessed that you would be coming back today. This is amazing, sir! Nice to meet you, grandmas, grandpa." Ducking his head repeatedly, the Captain bowed at the waist and made sure to keep his tone as charming as possible. Inside he was trembling. After all, he had previously predicted that something like this would happen, yet he hadn't considered that Xu Qing would bring back a total of *four* Smoldering Gods. *Is he feeling suicidal or something...?*

Eighth Sib turned his attention away from the parrot. Looking the Captain up and down, he said, "Big Brother, why do you have a god bastard here? And why is this aura so familiar? Years ago, when I still had a bit of consciousness in me, I remember a cultivator with a similar aura coming to the door in which I was sealed. I would bang the door, and in response, he would knock on it. He was very shifty-looking." Staring fixedly at the Captain, Eighth Sib asked, "Was that you?"

The Captain blinked a few times and was about to respond, but before he could, Fifth Sister spoke in a cold voice.

"Years ago, someone used something like a sacrificial dance to send some divine will into my prison and make some unreasonable demands. I ate him."

Upon hearing their conversation, Ning Yan inhaled sharply. Outside the shop, Wu Jianwu's face went blank with astonishment. And Xu Qing eyed the Captain deeply. The Captain's heart was pounding.

“Erniu, have you been up to the same crazy antics in recent years?” the Heir Apparent said coolly.

The Captain shook his head vigorously. “Grandpa, you yourself have seen how well I’ve been behaving.... This is definitely a misunderstanding!”

The Heir Apparent smiled mysteriously but didn’t dig any further into the topic. Instead, he led his brother and sisters to the spot where he usually sat. As they settled down, Nethersprite hurried over with the kettle, which she used to prepare four cups of tea.

Princess Brightblossom picked up her cup, took a sip, then looked around. She nodded. “This place is nice.”

Fifth Sister looked around the medicine shop, taking in Ning Yan and the others. She also nodded. “How wonderful to be young.”

Eighth Sib took a sip of tea. “As long as you two like it, that’s what counts!”

Everyone in the medicine shop trembled in fear as the day passed.

Chapter 629: Myriad Magics of Daybreak; Erniu’s Big Event (part 2)

The next morning when it came time to open the shop, it was business as usual. Ning Yan scrubbed the floor, Nethersprite boiled water, Wu Jianwu and Patriarch Inkrule tried to attract customers, Li Youfei did odd jobs, and the Captain stood guard. The only difference was that everyone seemed to be working unusually hard. That, and there were now four people sipping tea.

However, as the days passed, it wasn’t unusual to see the Heir Apparent sitting by himself.

Over the course of the next half month, Princess Brightblossom gave Ling’er a lot of attention. She would take Ling’er out with her, and whenever they returned, Ling’er would be in high spirits, and her cultivation base fluctuations would be more prominent.

Fifth Sister got interested in the chickens. Apparently, she really liked chickens, so she took over Ning Yan’s responsibilities in the backyard.

After getting to know everyone, Eighth Sib seemed to develop a deep curiosity about Chen Erniu. The Captain worked hard to get on his good side, and thus, they ended up chatting with each other on almost a daily basis.

Xu Qing had already grown used to the weight of the sun, and could even deal with the special hat. That was when the Heir Apparent came to explain the details of his new cultivation routine.

This time, Princess Brightblossom joined.

“Xu Qing,” the Heir Apparent said, “your heavenly dao, your Smoldering God mountain, and your nascent soul prison cell are three very unique things. Once you achieve your next cultivation base breakthrough, you can seek further enlightenment of them. And then there’s your timescape bottle and the remains of the sun that form daybreak light. Given those things, it makes more sense for my third sister to give you pointers going forward.”

He looked at Princess Brightblossom.



Xu Qing sat in front of the Heir Apparent listening intently. It wasn't a surprise to him that the Heir Apparent could simply list out his reserve powers. When the Heir Apparent finished speaking, Xu Qing also looked at Princess Brightblossom.

"Timescape bottles are items associated with the imperial clan," she said. "I don't know any details of their mysterious origin. They do have the magic of time within them, however, it's something that can't be mastered by study. You have to seek enlightenment and imprint that on your heart. Each person is different in the way they pursue the extremely mysterious nature of time."

Princess Brightblossom looked Xu Qing up and down. He stiffened from head to toe at the sensation of being examined deeply.

"Your life lamps have already taken you down the path of time. All you need to do is keep going. The fact that you formed personalized life lamps despite not having the blood of an Imperial Sovereign like us... is impressive. I suppose that's why the Heir Apparent has taken an interest in you."

The Heir Apparent chuckled. "It's too bad we can't secretly break open Ninth Sib's prison. His Life Lamp Godfire Incantation would be very suitable for this kid."

Princess Brightblossom nodded and continued, "Daybreak light isn't very common. In fact, I've never had a chance to study it. Back in the day, one of the Ancient Emperors had a son who possessed daybreak light, and could use it to transform himself into a sun.

"Although it was difficult for him to fully unleash it, even just having part of the power of a sun was spectacularly glorious. There wasn't a magical technique that could hurt him!

"Don't be held back by the limitations of your thoughts, sweetie. Divine abilities can only truly be constrained by your own imagination. If you combine all of your other powers in the proper way, you can create something that matches perfectly."

Princess Brightblossom looked at Xu Qing with anticipation in her eyes. She knew full well that talking about things like this was easy, but actually understanding and implementing them would be extremely difficult.

Right now, she wanted Xu Qing to at least develop an awareness of how the daybreak light and the golden crow could work together to release even greater power. Ideally, the two could be combined to create a trump card. Of course, she didn't outright say that. She just gave Xu Qing some food for thought. After he developed a general awareness, then he could gain deeper enlightenment. If she directly gave the explanation ahead of time, it could have a profoundly negative impact.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing was deeply shaken by what he was hearing. Princess Brightblossom's words echoed in his mind for a long time, leaving him feeling as if he were being blessed with wisdom. As he pondered the situation, a host of ideas sprang up in his mind, slamming into each other, mixing, and eventually turning into numerous sparks of inspiration. A short time later, he felt blessed to the core. Thoughts racing, he looked up with an earnest expression.

“Many thanks, Senior! I understand now!”

The Heir Apparent, who had been in the middle of sipping some tea, suddenly glared. The last three words spoken gave him a sudden uneasy premonition, and he opened his mouth to speak.

Princess Brightblossom beat him to the punch.

“Oh? What do you understand now?” She lifted her cup of tea.

Xu Qing took a deep breath. “Senior, I understand what you’re trying to tell me. Ma’am, you’re reminding me of the fact that light... doesn’t have just one form! Its form can change. That’s one of the powers of light, and it’s a powerful one at that.”

The cup in Princess Brightblossom’s hand trembled slightly, and her cup lowered.

Looking excited, Xu Qing continued, “Therefore... since daybreak light can be used for countless techniques, then it definitely contains a myriad of magics! Yeah! Senior, what you mean to tell me is that the strength or weakness of my divine abilities is controlled by my imagination! That’s what’s been limiting me.

“Now I understand that daybreak light is one of the ways to use light. What I should be doing is using daybreak light to imitate the magical techniques of other people! Because light contains the power of transformations, I can definitely succeed. That... is the correct path to follow regarding daybreak light!”

Xu Qing shot to his feet excitedly, all while looking at Princess Brightblossom and waiting for any further commentary from her.

The Heir Apparent sat there quietly.

Princess Brightblossom likewise didn’t say anything. She seemed to be thinking. After several breaths of time passed, she nodded and lifted her cup to her lips again.

Seeing her approval, Xu Qing inhaled deeply. All of a sudden, he realized that Princess Brightblossom definitely deserved to have the respect of even the Heir Apparent. All it took was a few words from her to completely open his eyes to the truth.

Xu Qing loved that feeling. Clasp hands, he bowed to Princess Brightblossom, then rushed out to start some further study and research.

After he was gone, Princess Brightblossom put down her cup and looked deeply at the Heir Apparent.

The Heir Apparent smiled wryly and projected a message to her. “*What do you think of my quasi-apprentice’s powers of understanding? Quite the prodigy, wouldn’t you say?*”

Expression the same as ever, Princess Brightblossom said, “*Watch your wording. He’s not your ‘quasi-apprentice.’ Within three months, he’ll absorb everything you have to teach him. At that point, he won’t need your instruction anymore. I’ll take over!*”

Three days passed.

During that time, Xu Qing absorbed himself in working with daybreak light in the back room. He constantly sent out bits of daybreak light and tried hard to transform it. Things didn’t go very

smoothly, but he didn't give up. And he kept putting a lot of thought into the subject. Eventually, he thought about jade slips designed to record images.

Recording jade slips are able to record images of just about anything. That seems to indicate... that they're related to light! Back in that world fragment, Eldest Brother used that patch of skin with the palm print on it. That was also an application of light....

He sighed in his heart.

Senior Brightblossom is really amazing and gives extremely good advice. I was so stupid before! Everything was happening right in front of my eyes, yet I didn't even think about daybreak light! And if I want to use daybreak light to imitate things, then the first thing I need to think about is a carrier!

What came to mind immediately were jade slips, so he took one out and started studying it.

That night, as Xu Qing was making some progress, the Captain snuck in with a very mysterious expression on his face.

"Little Ah Qing, it's almost time for the next big job."

Xu Qing looked up at him. "Almost time?"

Xu Qing knew that the Captain was planning to do something big in the Bitter Life Mountains, although he wasn't sure what it was, and hadn't bothered asking.

"Little Ah Qing, the big job we need to do in the Bitter Life Mountains is about to go down. When we can look at the horizon and see, not just blood-colored light, but the red moon itself, then it will be time to act!

"I've been doing some calculations recently, and I can tell you that the time is almost here. This big job is going to be slightly different than anything in the past."

Looking very pleased with himself, the Captain squatted in front of Xu Qing, lowered his voice, and said, "Usually, we sneak in, do our stuff, then make our escape. And I usually spend a lot of time figuring out how to get in and out unseen. But this time.... We want all living beings in the Moonrite Region to see what we're doing!"

The Captain suddenly looked very proud. "You can think of this big job as us putting on a show on a stage. And the living beings of the Moonrite Region are going to be the audience! This time, we're going to need everyone to participate. Big Jianjian. Little Ningning. Even Ling'er.

"Sadly, even though I made a good case to the grandpas and grandmas, they said they wouldn't help. That would have made it so much easier."

At this point, the Captain tried to seal the deal. "I came to you, not just to let you know that the time is almost here to get to work, but also... to ask you to help persuade them to come along...."

Xu Qing hesitated. Before he could say anything, they heard a cold snort from the Heir Apparent.

"We're not going!"

Looking very serious, Xu Qing turned to the Captain. "Eldest Brother, I think that if we want to eventually grow up, we should probably focus on tempering ourselves."

The Captain blinked a few times. Xu Qing nodded.

"Fine...." The Captain seemed to struggle a bit before leaving helplessly. For the following three evenings in a row, it was possible to hear the Captain howling from Wu Jianwu's room. One of those days, Ning Yan also got called over. It was impossible to tell what the Captain was doing. Every morning, Wu Jianwu would come out looking pale and exhausted. On the occasion in which Ning Yan went over, he came out looking the same as well.

Curious, Ling'er asked about what was going on.

Wu Jianwu said nothing.

Ning Yan sighed. "Oh, it's nothing. And it's not the first time either...."

That got Ling'er even more curious.

The howling ended after three days. When the Captain came out, he also looked extremely pale. After casting a resentful look at the Heir Apparent and the others drinking tea, he went into the back room.

Gasping for breath, the Captain said, "We've got to rely on ourselves this time, little Ah Qing! I've got the tools ready. Now I just need you to lend me your spirit automaton."

"Just what exactly is this big job?" Xu Qing asked, taking out the Spike of Misfortune and tossing it to the Captain.

"A big performance!" the Captain said, catching the fish bone. Inside, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior shivered. "If I remember correctly, this spirit automaton of yours has read a lot of novels. That must mean he's adept at fabricating storylines. I want him to write the script for me.

"We'll also need some ancient-style clothing, which is going to be tough. Old clothing styles emphasize delicacy and beauty, and they require very expensive materials.... I guess it's not that big of a deal. The lady over there with the big booty probably has lots of stuff hidden away."

The Captain was really starting to get excited. "Little Ah Qing, this big job is going to be totally different than anything before!"

Chapter 630: Daybreak Light Dazzles the Sky

Looking at the exuberant Captain, Xu Qing nodded.

"Okay, gotta go now!" the Captain said. "I put a lot of work into preparing for this big job, most of it on the intelligence side. And now, all I need is one last report. Wish me luck!"

He excitedly prepared to leave the back room and get familiar with Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior. Before he walked out, Xu Qing mentioned wanting to borrow a patch of the Captain's skin.

The Captain didn't mind at all, and without any hesitation, tossed over a patch of his skin. It was as if his attitude was, *'I might lack some things, but skin isn't one of them!'*

"Enough? If not, I've got more!" The Captain looked at Xu Qing with a gleam of generosity in his eyes.

"It's enough...." Xu Qing said. Looking at the patch of skin, he noticed it had a bellybutton on it. An odd expression overtook his face.

Grinning proudly, the Captain strutted off.

Xu Qing watched him leaving, all the while sighing inwardly. This wasn't the first time the Captain had announced an impending big job. Given that, it seemed to Xu Qing that he should have long since grown accustomed to situations like these. And yet, after the Captain was gone, he sat down cross-legged and realized that his heart was racing.

Truth be told... whenever the Captain planned big jobs, it was very exciting. And the more Xu Qing's cultivation base improved, the more exciting the jobs tended to be. Oftentimes, Xu Qing didn't really understand why the Captain was so willing to crazily risk his own life.

*It's like he wants to put himself in deadly situations....* Then he thought back to what Eighth Sib had said when he met the Captain. 'God bastard.'

Don't tell me that Eldest Brother really was a god bastard in the past.

He considered all the things he'd witnessed his Eldest Brother accomplish, including stealing things from the Seazombies, from Nethersprite, and from the Ten Entrails Tree. Although, in reality, it wasn't so much 'stealing' as it was 'eating.'

After a short time, he looked in the direction of the Captain's room, from where he could sense excited fluctuations coming from Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior.

Based on what he said just now, it seems this job involves some sort of performance. Could it be that he's not going to steal something this time?

Acting on instinct, he opened his bag of holding and checked all of his teleportation items. After confirming that he had plenty of spares, he felt a bit more at ease.

We definitely need to bring the parrot along.

With that, he put aside thoughts of the Captain's big job and focused on studying daybreak light.

As a matter of fact, by the third day, he had already reached the point of being able to use the seven-colored transformations of the daybreak light to create some images from his imagination.

Unfortunately, those images remained stuck in his mind. Although he could imagine them, and even try to form them with daybreak light, the end result was very different from what existed in his mind. Light was still light. He still couldn't use it to form an image.

A few days after that, however, he started doing more serious research using the recording jade slip as a basis. The general principle wasn't very complex, especially after he had personally witnessed

the Captain using his patch of skin to capture a projection of a palm print. That alone gave Xu Qing a good direction to pursue in regard to understanding the magical transformations of light.

The reason light can form an image is because it reflects off things. My previous method of utilizing the daybreak light isn't necessarily incorrect, it's just that the light inherently contains a myriad of magics. Therefore, what I need to do is find a way to gather the daybreak light. Then, because of its unique properties, I can use it, not just to light up things, but to reveal the magical techniques of my enemies!

What will follow are some reflections that I can't actually see.... So what I need to do is take those invisible reflections and use them to form an image!

Eyes glittering, he took out a recording jade slip.

The difference between an ordinary jade slip and a recording jade slip... is that the former is sensitive to divine sense, and can be used to record information with divine will. The latter is sensitive to light, and can thus record images. Both the recording jade slips and the Captain's patches of skin are items extremely sensitive to light.

He put down the recording jade slip and then picked up the patch of skin. After some examination, he confirmed the results of his recent experiments.

The Captain's patch of skin was obviously a very extraordinary item. It was incredibly tough, and if you looked closely, the palm print really does remind me of magical symbols. This must be a special property of the Captain's body. Thanks to me being an ordinary person with a normal cultivation base, I couldn't do something similar.

However, I could use other methods to peel off some of my own skin and make it extremely sensitive to light.... In that way, I could stimulate this very unusual god body of mine. If I do that, then converge and reflect the daybreak light, then I could use the sensitive nature of my skin to reveal the things I can't see!

As countless thoughts ran through his mind, Xu Qing lifted his right hand and opened his fingers.

There were many options at his disposal to make his skin sensitive to light, but he was most familiar with those related to plants and vegetation.

There are a lot of medicinal plants as well as poisons that make your skin more sensitive. Although such methods are technically harmful, if you use them correctly they can be considered assets to support divine abilities.

In fact, I have a lot of poison medicines in my bag of holding that have that specific medicinal effect. Princess Brightblossom was right. Imagination is definitely one of the big limitations on the strength or weakness of divine abilities.

He took a deep breath and put even more thought into his theory. After a while, he was convinced that he should give it a try. Opening his bag of holding, he took out a handful of poison medicines that could make the skin more sensitive.

His plan was to use poison to make his right hand vastly more sensitive.

If it works, then this hand will become a hand of myriad magics!

Excited, he started working. Seven days passed in a flash. It had now been about half a month since Xu Qing had begun researching daybreak light.

Princess Brightblossom was very pleased at Xu Qing's progress. She could sense the transformation magic he was using in his daybreak light. Although Xu Qing couldn't see what was happening with his naked eye, and believed that he wasn't successful at forming any images, the reality was that both the princess and the Heir Apparent could see the images very clearly.

The Heir Apparent felt very surprised. Princess Brightblossom nodded in approval.

In fact, the princess felt that he had already made enough progress. The fact that Xu Qing could do this was impressive, and already surpassed what she'd hoped to accomplish.

Given Xu Qing's cultivation base and powers of understanding, there was no way he could possibly utilize all of the myriad magics that made up daybreak light. Actually, she had never known anyone who could do that.

But it's a good idea. If he keeps exploring this possibility, then you never know, he might actually accomplish his dream. What young people need to do is dare to come up with an idea, and then work hard to try to make it happen!

Smiling, Princess Brightblossom prepared for Xu Qing to eventually give up, whereupon she would give him some more pointers. Except... she soon realized that Xu Qing was frowning in dissatisfaction. In the following days, she found that Xu Qing was continuing to research recording jade slips, Erniu's skin, and... his own poisoned hand.

Princess Brightblossom wasn't sure what to make of that. Eventually, she looked over calmly at the Heir Apparent.

The Heir Apparent didn't react at first. But eventually, he grinned and said, "Third Sister, this kid's most freakish aspect isn't his cultivation base. It's his powers of understanding. When you told him that imagination limits the power of divine abilities, he was probably deeply moved. And now wants to break out of his cage. I'd say it's highly possible... that he'll actually figure out how to use daybreak light to form images."

Princess Brightblossom didn't respond.

As for Eighth Sib, he looked at the Heir Apparent, and then his third sister. Over the past half a month, he had noticed that his brother and sister were paying close attention to Xu Qing. As a result, he had also been surreptitiously watching everything that was playing out. Now, he was hoping to have his own chance.

Years ago, I gave a lot of advice to young chosen disciples. Eldest Brother and Third Sister have clearly taken a liking to this Xu Qing. I need to find an opportunity to have my turn.

Having made his determination, Eighth Sib waited in anticipation.

Fifth Sister had spent most of her recent days focused on the chickens in the backyard. All of them were getting very plump.

The chickens were rapidly growing in number. More were added to the collection on just about a daily basis. In fact, a few days ago they got a few dozen new chickens. At one point when Ling'er rushed out into the backyard on a task, she saw all the chickens and clicked her tongue in surprise.

“Grandma Fifth, we have so many new chickens today!” Ling’er said as she scattered worms for the chickens to eat. The chickens raced over to eat, struggling with each other to get the most food.

Fifth Sister smiled and nodded. “Once I fatten them up a bit more, I’ll slaughter them and make a very nourishing meal for you and your Big Bro Xu Qing.”

As the indignant chickens pecked at their food, they trembled, and their expressions transformed into that of fear. That was especially true of the newest batch, who clucked in absolute despair.

Those cultivators actually weren’t from the Bitter Life Mountains. They were members of the Yin-Yang Betwixt Flowers Sect, and had been trying to track down the culprits of the disaster at Mount Heavenly Ox. Upon arriving, they hadn’t caused any trouble. They first went to the Red Moon Cathedral to pay respects to the godherald there. The moment they entered the church temple, and before they could even meet the godherald, they felt the world spinning around them. When their vision grew clear, they had become chickens.

As the chickens wallowed in despair, a deep rumbling sound echoed out from the back room of the medicine shop, followed by streams of seven-colored light. The light swept over the medicine shop, covering everyone, even the chickens. As it spread out, it made a sea of light that caused ripples to flow through the air.

As the winds and clouds stirred, the sea of light rose up into the air, spreading out and constantly transforming at the same time. Eventually, something resembling a nail became visible. The moment the nail appeared, it caused wild colors to flash in heaven and earth.

Ling’er gasped. Ning Yan’s eyes went wide. Wu Jianwu gaped. Li Youfei was dumbstruck. The Captain was moved, Nethersprite looked on with a serious expression, and Patriarch Inkrule’s eyes glittered.

Some of them had seen this nail before, and were thus stunned. Some of them hadn’t seen the nail before, but when they sensed the aura coming off it, they were equally stunned.

The Heir Apparent, Princess Brighblossom, Fifth Sister, and Eighth Sib all looked up at the nail, their expression tranquil. However, if you looked closely at them, you would find their eyes glittering brightly. That was especially true of the Heir Apparent and Princess Brighblossom. The two of them looked very calm, but their hearts were actually racing. Eventually, they looked toward the back room.

That was where the seven-colored light was coming from.

“He did it...”

“The little punk actually made an imitation of our father’s nail!”