

Timescape 701

Chapter 701: You Can't Even Imagine My Past (1)

As the thought occurred to him, the enormous blood-red hand rumbled forth. It moved at high speed, and within a moment, was bearing down on the Heir Apparent and his siblings. The ex-wife the Captain had mentioned still hadn't come.

When Xu Qing saw that, his eyes flickered with determination. He wasn't sure what would happen if he summoned the images from within the violet crystal. But considering that the Heir Apparent and the others seemed powerless to defend themselves, all he could do was help in whatever way possible.

Yet even as the violet crystal started to glitter, the Heir Apparent and the other siblings unleashed trump cards, causing an ancient aura to pulse off them explosively.

“Father!” the Heir Apparent shouted. Princess Brightblossom and the others echoed his call.

Beneath the red moon, the statue of Imperial Sovereign Li Zihua stirred. The sensation of awakening was now extremely intense, and the statue's eyelids twitched as if they might open. Breath escaped the statue's mouth, swept over the surface of the red moon, and entered the Moon Palace, as if for the express purpose of blessing his children there.

Inside the Moon Palace, time glittered, magical laws descended, and sword light shone brightly. The power of the Heir Apparent and the others converged in the form of six world projections that smashed into the blood-colored hand. A heaven-shaking, earth-shattering boom rattled out with destructive force. The six major worlds withered.

Blood sprayed out of the Heir Apparent's mouth. Princess Brightblossom's armor shattered. Eighth Sib's flesh was shredded. And Ninth Sib's sword crumbled as blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. But the blood that splattered everywhere then converged, fusing with the breath of the Imperial Sovereign and transforming into an enormous, illusory finger. Radiating a terrifying aura, it jabbed toward the huge hand.

When they collided, the red moon shook. The Moon Palace rocked back and forth. And the blood-colored hand stopped in place. Up above, even louder cracking sounds drifted out from the Mirror of Moonrebel. Then the mirror shattered, causing mirror shards to fall everywhere.

The destruction of the mirror affected the hand. It was shredded to bits by the falling fragments, and then those bits tumbled down and once again turned into a blood sea. The world of the Moon Palace was now filled with a host of mirror fragments. They floated everywhere, creating a very shocking sight.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings were running on fumes. Off in the distance, Zhang Siyun had two fingers jabbed into his neck, where they had latched onto the final thread. He started pulling it out.

Seeing that, Ninth Sib inhaled deeply. Then his eyes glimmered with sharp light as frigid energy rose up around him. As he stood there with his back straight, he looked like a deadly sword. His gaze was locked onto Zhang Siyun as he slowly lifted his right hand and took control of the

surrounding fragments of the Mirror of Moonrebel. They shifted, with each fragment tilting at a different angle to shine light onto Ninth Sib.

In the blink of an eye, every single fragment contained a reflection of him. Countless versions of Ninth Sib all raised their right hands. Suns, moons, stars, and heavenly bodies appeared everywhere. Threads of magical law floated around him. And on each of his shoulders was a major world.

Then those worlds started to burn. As fire raged over them, all the living beings within them lifted their hands. Within each of those hands was a sword. Their sword energy converged, filling the worlds, and filling Ninth Sib. Then it came together at his right hand, where it formed... a sword! The arrival of that sword caused wild colors to flash in heaven and earth.

And it wasn't just Ninth Sib himself that was holding a sword. Thanks to the countless fragments of the Mirror of Moonrebel, there were many versions of himself that all held swords. And then all of them looked at Zhang Siyun.

Zhang Siyun paused with hīs fingers stuck into hīs neck. Also looking up, hē focused on Ninth Sib. When their gazes locked, Zhang Siyun waved hīs left hand. Yet again, the Moonlight Sea seethed, and a new blood-colored hand formed that shot toward Ninth Sib.

“Execute,” Ninth Sib said in a low voice.

It was one word. And the moment it left his mouth, the sword in his hand slashed down. At the same time, the swords in the hands of all the living beings in the major worlds also slashed down. So did the swords in the mirror fragments.

One sword could shock heaven. A myriad of swords could shock gods. In every single mirror fragment, sword light gleamed, sweeping forth to form an enormous, astonishing sword. Sword light flared with boundless power as it slashed toward Zhang Siyun.

Winds screamed. The world shook. The air shattered.

This was Ninth Sib's strongest sword attack. Blessed by the power of the Mirror of Moonrebel, it became a violent, explosive force that slammed into the blood-colored hand.

Rumbling booms echoed out as the five fingers of the hand bent as if to grab the incoming sword. But then the hand lost control. The palm exploded, causing blood to rain down. The five fingers were vaporized, creating a blood mist that roiled out in all directions.

And yet, the power of the sword had not yet faded away. After destroying the hand, it continued onward with unstoppable momentum toward Zhang Siyun. Right before it hit, Zhang Siyun lunged backward, and the pāramitā lily beneath hīs feet rapidly bloomed to create a protective barrier.

Intense rumbling sounds swept out of the Moon Palace to fill the red moon. The gruish, blood-colored pāramitā lily was unable to stop the sword, and was ripped apart. At the same time, it managed to dispel the mightiness of the sword. When the sword light reached Zhang Siyun, hē shoved hīs left hand out in front of hīm.

As a result, Zhang Siyun shook from head to toe. Hīs clothing was ripped to shreds, and hīs hair whipped about hīm wildly. The air around hīm shattered as hē staggered backward, a huge wound

opening up on hīs palm, out of which flew a drop of golden blood. After taking five steps backward, hē stopped moving and looked up.

“That’s a stunning sword move,” hē said softly. As everyone looked on, the sword light in front of hīm faded into nothing.

The gleam in the eyes of everyone present faded along with the sword light. From the look of it, talk of killing gods was little more than a joke.

After the words left Zhang Siyun’s mouth, hē pulled his right hand away from hīs neck, and there was a thread locked between hīs two fingers. That was the last thread within hīm. After extracting it, hē squeezed his fingers together, and the thread collapsed into ash. Zhang Siyun’s expression became calm again as hē looked at everyone. The shattered fragments of the pāramitā lily swept toward hīm and attached to hīs clothing like embroidery. Next, hē took a step forward.

No one could stop hīm from taking that step. The Heir Apparent and the siblings backed up, yet they weren’t able to escape.

In the blink of an eye, Zhang Siyun was in front of Fifth Sister. Hē thrust out his finger.

She looked at hīm bitterly. But then, the severely injured Eighth Sib chuckled harshly. All of his feelings collapsed, causing the power of the seven emotions and six sensory pleasures to sweep forth in a five-colored beam of light. It was a very gruish technique.

Even as Zhang Siyun’s finger moved through the air, Eighth Sib swapped positions with Fifth Sister. She vanished, and he appeared where she had been standing, glaring at Zhang Siyun. Zhang Siyun’s finger touched Eighth Sib’s forehead.

It was a light touch. But it caused Eighth Sib to shiver before exploding into a haze of blood.

Eighth Sib’s death infuriated the Heir Apparent and the other siblings. They wanted to interfere, but they couldn’t even touch Zhang Siyun. Next, Zhang Siyun blurred forward again, and a moment later, hē was once again standing in front of Fifth Sister.

“You have a god sealed in you in the future,” Zhang Siyun said softly, “and therefore, you can’t die in this irreversible situation. However... I am also a god.”

Once again, hīs finger swept through the air.

The Heir Apparent howled in rage. Princess Brightblossom’s face was a mask of sorrow. As for Ninth Sib, he reached up, touched his forehead, and from there, extracted his final life essence sword. Then, all three of them closed in on Zhang Siyun.

Zhang Siyun’s expression remained the same as ever as hīs head spun in place, turning around to look calmly at the three siblings.

“One. Two. Three.”

As the words left hīs mouth, a power of restraint swept out.

The Heir Apparent, Princess Brightblossom, and Ninth Sib all stopped in place and were unable to move.

Blood oozed out of the Ninth Sib's eyes, ears, nose, and mouth as he struggled to move forward. Nothing prevented Zhang Siyun from reaching out to touch Fifth Sister's forehead with his finger.

But then, Zhang Siyun frowned, pulled his hand back, and fell back.

Fifth Sister blurred as a black cloak appeared around her. It was Emperor Ancient Spirit, who had been concealed up to this point.

Hē feared Crimson Mother, and thus had held back from doing anything. Even when Zhang Siyun was injured by Ninth Sib's sword, hē cautiously remained invisible. But now hē chose to act. Hē had come to realize what Fifth Sister could do, and hē also knew why Zhang Siyun was intent on killing hēr. Therefore, hē had to interfere. It wasn't because hē wanted to help the Heir Apparent and the others. Rather, hē really did want to devour Crimson Mother.

The eyes on the cloak opened, as did a huge mouth. And hē lunged toward Zhang Siyun to devour him. A cracking sound rang out as the mouth snapped down onto nothing.

However, things weren't over yet; the black cloak swept forward. Ignoring Zhang Siyun's godly might and personhood, it swept over him.

At the same time, Zhang Siyun's line of sight was broken, freeing the Heir Apparent and the others from their restraints. With Ninth Sib in the lead, they attacked Zhang Siyun again.

A moment later, the Heir Apparent and Princess Brightblossom were tumbling backward. Bloody wounds crisscrossed Ninth Sib as he also fell back. As for Zhang Siyun....

Chapter 701: You Can't Even Imagine My Past (part 2)

As Zhang Siyun was wrapped up in the black cloak, hē sent blood-colored light pulsing out nine times in a row. A scream rang out from the cloak, and then it transformed into the color of blood. A moment later, it flew in the opposite direction. However, at the same time, a loud gulping sound could be heard, and then Zhang Siyun's voice suddenly changed in pitch and timbre.

“I smelled you earlier. How could I have guessed that you would be patient enough to wait until now to act?”

Emperor Ancient Spirit's pupils constricted as a crown of thorns suddenly appeared overhead. Within the crown were countless eyes, filled with anguish and anticipation as they looked at Emperor Ancient Spirit.

The crown fell.

Emperor Ancient Spirit's eyes blurred. Hē was a person who had once conquered all of Revered Ancient, so there was no way hē would get flustered in a crisis. After staring at Zhang Siyun briefly, hē self-detonated, transforming into a huge pile of flesh and blood.

At the same time, Zhang Siyun transformed as well. The neck wound which had just healed burst open again, spreading out across most of his body. The sword wound inflicted by blocking Ninth Sib's attack also broke open and spread. In the blink of an eye, Zhang Siyun was covered in blood. Hē was severely injured and looked like hē might not be able to hold on for very long.

This was the power of Emperor Ancient Spirit's authority! Under that gaze, small wounds could turn into grievous injuries, and horrific wounds could cause death. His personhood was high enough that not even Zhang Siyun could do anything to stop him.

Zhang Siyun was bedraggled and badly wounded. Yet, just as before, hē swallowed hīs saliva back down, looked off into the distance, and laughed.

“You’re definitely delicious,” hē said. And the broken-down Zhang Siyun turned to look at Princess Brightblossom.

The air behind Princess Brightblossom rippled as a river of time appeared. Fifth Sister was in it, as well as the dead Eighth Sib. Thanks to the blessing of Fifth Sister, he was being resurrected.

“So, that’s where you were hiding her. That’s fine. At least now I have all of you together.”

Looking away, hē lifted his shattered arm and touched hīs forehead with hīs finger.

Instantly, a host of images appeared around hīm. Shockingly, they were images of hīs past. Not the past of Crimson Mother, but of Zhang Siyun.

They started when he was born. In fact, Xu Qing even spotted Yao Yunhui. [1]

All of Zhang Siyun’s life was there. However, they didn’t stretch all the way to the current moment. Instead... they stopped when Crimson Mother emerged from the blood-colored sky in Forbidden by the Immortal. That was the moment when Zhang Siyun’s destiny changed, and no longer belonged to hīm.

Zhang Siyun’s expression didn’t change upon sensing hīs past. Hē reached out, grabbed the last memory image, and dragged it close. In that image, the canopy of heaven was the color of blood, and Crimson Mother’s finger was shocking and ghastly.

After looking at it, Zhang Siyun waved hīs arm. The image vibrated, then suddenly started expanding rapidly.

It was overtaking the existing sky, spreading out over the sea, and filling the world! The sky was endless blood and the lands... were all ruins. It was as if they were back in Forbidden by the Immortal in Sea-Sealing County.

Beyond the door, Xu Qing and the Captain were swept up in the effect, and were soon looking around in shock at familiar surroundings.

There was no way Xu Qing could possibly forget what things were like around him the first time he saw Crimson Mother.

Back then, shē had possessed Zhang Siyun, and was fighting with the fish god in Forbidden by the Immortal. More precisely, it wasn’t really a fight. Shē just came to eat. Just before shē finished eating, the fish god called out to its master, High God Flawless Hell of the Nine Serenities.

And then... Crimson Mother’s true form arrived. Images of that event superimposed with reality. Fluctuations rolled through the dome of heaven, along with the color crimson. Countless rifts opened up, then closed, becoming innumerable magical symbols. When the sky was completely red, it began to spin, moving faster and faster until a blood-colored vortex appeared.

A moon appeared within the vortex.

A red moon!

It was extremely gruish. Xu Qing knew that he was actually on the red moon, but when he looked up, he could see that very same moon in the vortex.

On that red moon was a statue, kneeling with its hands covering its eyes. The hands slowly lowered. The statue's mouth stretched wide in a greedy grin.

This was Crimson Mother's true self!

The world shook as the Crimson Mother from Zhang Siyun's memories of the past slowly rose, then emerged from the vortex. As she stepped out, an infinitude of blood poured out of the vortex, pulsing with godly might that vastly surpassed Zhang Siyun.

In the face of this, not even Smoldering Gods qualified to take action. The Heir Apparent and his siblings trembled; the mere waves of energy forced them to fall back.

Death covered all. Withering became eternal. Decay became irreversible. There was no way to resist, nor any way to fight back.

In that moment of deadly crisis, the Captain suddenly laughed viciously, and his eyes flickered with a crazy look.

"My freaking ex-wife is so unreliable! Guess I've got to man up and handle this myself!"

The Captain flared with blue light, and faces appeared in his eyes. A host of mouths opened up all over his body, making him look extremely gruish. He floated up into the air, throwing his arms wide. As he bore the brunt of Crimson Mother's godly might, his skin was flayed. Pain and decay built up in him, but the crazy look in his eyes only intensified.

"Past life!" he shouted. As his voice echoed like thunder, blue light erupted into a vast sea. Then a corpse stepped out of the light. It was a combination of the pontiff of the Red Moon Cathedral and his past-life body, which he had fused together. Looking extremely fierce, the Captain shouted, **"I'm going for broke, little Junior Brother!"**

With that, he blurred into motion toward his past-life body. Reaching it, he shot inside. Then the past-life body's arms stretched out, and the cultivation base of a Smoldering God erupted. Terrifying fluctuations spread out, all while the projected image of an enormous mosquito appeared behind it. The vicious mosquito had blue, greedy eyes.

After it was complete, the Captain's past-life body charged toward the emerging Crimson Mother. Frigid energy pulsed in all directions, covering the past-life body and the mosquito. In the blink of an eye, the mosquito turned into an ice sculpture that rushed into the vortex.

The Heir Apparent and the others looked on with flickering expressions.

Unfortunately... the Captain's past-life body failed to do anything to Crimson Mother. Crimson Mother's gaze alone caused the ice sculpture of the mosquito to shatter.

However, the past-life body continued onward. There was more. In the blink of an eye, the past-life body shattered and turned into a host of blue bugs. The bugs sprouted the wings and mouthparts of a mosquito. Then they madly raced toward Crimson Mother.

Some of the flying bugs spat out threads that turned into hairs, which in turn formed into the shape of a door.

An ancient, wooden door was forced to appear. Then, the bugs raced toward the door and started devouring it. It took only a moment for the door to be falling apart, whereupon a howl of rage erupted from inside. All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but it actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint.

Some of the blue bugs raced toward Crimson Mother, while some formed a wooden door, while some devoured the door.

The combination of all those things caused the Crimson Mother from the images of the past to stop moving. It only lasted a moment, though. Then shē took another step, and everything vanished.

The incoming blue bugs screamed as they were reduced to ashes. The same thing happened to the bugs that formed the door. However, the door was a different type of existence, and the howl from inside didn't stop. In fact, it became something like booming thunder filling the surrounding world.

And yet, the entity inside the door didn't come out. Shē intentionally remained hidden, and then the door started to ripple as if it was about to flee.

Meanwhile, something was brewing inside Xu Qing's heart that could shake all gods and transform the Revered Ancient mainland! He currently stood off to the side, seemingly unimportant in every way. But a tempest was building in him!

When his Eldest Brother said he was going for broke, Xu Qing sent his divine sense into the violet crystal within him, where it made contact with the first image there.

It was an image of the broken face's eyes opening. Xu Qing didn't know what would happen if he brought that image out. But right now, his mind was made up. Using his divine sense to control the violet crystal as best he could, he forced that image to become clear.

Gradually, it filled the entire violet crystal, then spread out into Xu Qing's body, until finally... it appeared outside!

A wind suddenly blew. A sound like the chime of bells filled the shattered world around him.

The images from Zhang Siyun's past that filled this area began to tremble because of the wind. The lands began to transform as well.

The ruins of Forbidden by the Immortal melted like paste. The surrounding area was no longer Forbidden by the Immortal. Instead, it was a small city, desolate, silent, and filled with death. The wind changed the sky also. Blood-colored rain fell, drop by drop, and it had nothing to do with red moon authority. Everything withered and decayed.

Crimson Mother stopped walking. Shē was shaking.

The door stopped fleeing, and seemed rooted in place. The howling from inside stopped. Shē was also shaking.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings similarly trembled.

A trembling exclamation of shock could be heard, and it came from Zhang Siyun.

Everything shook, and it was thanks to... what was happening in the canopy of heaven. There was a supreme entity there that could crush all of Revered Ancient, and could cause gods to feel reverence.

It was a broken face. It was a human face that loomed over the entire world and all living beings in it. The face was cold, with its eyes closed and hair draped down around it. Beneath it, the living beings of the world were like bugs. Insects. And the fate of the creatures in the world were ruled by that face, and existed thanks to its whims.

And right now, hē... was opening hīs eyes.

Chapter 702: What Happens When the Broken Face Looks at a God Domain?

The broken face's eyes didn't completely open. They only cracked open slightly.

But the moment they cracked open, Xu Qing shivered as indescribable pain swept through him in a furious wave. Shredded strips of bloody flesh flew off him in all directions. His blood vessels collapsed, and his bones shattered. Unable to keep standing, he collapsed to the ground. His soul and cultivation base both dimmed as though they might cease to exist. He was like a burning candle that powered the broken face's eyes. Unfortunately, his cultivation base wasn't sufficient, and thus, even after the eyes had only cracked open, he was already drained to the point of being empty.

However, the eyes just cracking open was enough to cause the entire world inside the Moon Palace to go deathly silent. The projection of Crimson Mother from the past howled in grief, then began to melt, becoming a red mist that rapidly vanished. The wooden door trembled and decayed, letting off a black steam along with a cry of terror.

“The Father God....”

The Heir Apparent and the siblings were shaken to the core. Their faces were pale as their bodies experienced serious invasion. This move from Xu Qing affected everyone equally. As long as they were within this world, they were affected.

The Captain was no exception. He had entered his past-life body and then turned into a host of blue bugs, most of which had been fighting Crimson Mother or devouring the door. But there were a few that were in hiding on the ground below. They had been in the process of merging together to make a new body, but now... they screamed, and their eyes shone with terror.

However, that terror wasn't because of the broken face of the god in the dome of heaven. Rather, it was because of the red moon itself.

Specifically, as the Captain howled, he looked at the lands of the red moon... and seemed like he wanted to say something. Except, in a very grisly development, no words would come out of his mouth. If someone was able to look down from an extremely high position, and take in all of the red moon at once, they would see that the world of the Moon Palace was also being affected.

A ruined city was visible over all the lands, blurry, almost as if it were a ghost city. And a rain of blood fell onto it. The sky was dark, with bolts of lightning streaking across it. There was no thunder. And the rain fell without sound.

High above was the broken face of the god, hīs expression one of neither joy nor sorrow. It was cold and apathetic, as if to hīm, cultivators, mortals, and even gods... were all the same.

Mutagen from the broken face surged, invading everything. It was domineering and terrifying in a way that surpassed all other gods. In other words, even other gods would be invaded by it.

After all, in Revered Ancient, hīs gaze would make a forbidden region. And when hē looked at a forbidden region, it would become a forbidden ground. If hē looked at a forbidden ground, it would become a god domain!

The Moon Palace was a type of god domain.... And no one knew what would happen if the broken face looked at a god domain. From the time the broken face had appeared in Revered Ancient until now, it had never happened. Never would the broken face look at something more than three times.

Hīs gaze could make god domains. But after a god domain formed, hē wouldn't look at that spot again!

The broken face that had appeared came from Xu Qing's memory images. But the broken face's personhood was just too advanced. Even though the image wasn't on the same level as the true form, it still had godly might. In all of the countless years of history in the Revered Ancient mainland, this was completely unprecedented.

The broken face's eyes were fixed on a god domain.... The Moon Palace and the red moon itself seemed to freeze in place... and then they transformed!

That transformation was profoundly mysterious and abstruse. The first thing that happened was that the Moon Palace and the red moon itself seemed to separate from the same time that governed Revered Ancient. The palace and the moon decayed, then formed back anew.

Mountains. Boulders. Palaces. The moon itself. All of them were changing. And that change had to do with time itself.

The flow of time on the red moon exploded dramatically! The moon would suddenly look incredibly ancient, only to then collapse into destruction, and then would be restored. It was as if it were jumping back and forth between different time periods.

It was only happening on the red moon. Everything beyond the moon was normal. Everyone present was shaken to the core by the dramatic developments.

Then High God Moonfire cried out from the wooden door.

“Stop! If the Father God looks at a god domain, something terrifying will happen! Stop!!!”

High God Moonfire's voice became a shrill scream that sounded like metal scraping against rock.

However, because the red moon was jumping back and forth between different points in time, hēr voice couldn't travel very far. And thus, shē eventually had no choice but to project a message to the Captain.

The Captain, whose body had just reformed and was now laying there shivering, was unable to stop himself from screaming. Eyes filling with terror, he looked at Xu Qing.

“Stop, little Ah Qing! If the broken face looks at a god domain... it'll turn into a god world

. God worlds are incomprehensible and absolutely terrifying!”

The Captain started crawling anxiously toward Xu Qing.

Unfortunately, Xu Qing's mind was a blank right now. He had no sense of self or soul. It was on instinct alone that he lay there looking at the transformations occurring to the red moon. As he perceived it, time was like a string with a fixed beginning and a fixed end. But the red moon had no permanent position on that string, and was jumping back and forth between different positions. Every time it moved, it went somewhere different, and the frequency of movement accelerated until it was a blur. As the blur intensified, transformations began to occur in the outside world.

Outside of the red moon, a second red moon became visible! Then a third and a fourth.... Soon, countless red moons filled the void.

“Space-time... is out of control...” the Captain murmured, his voice trembling. “At first, the broken face's gaze caused the red moon to fill with the concept of time. Then it erupted into movement. After that... it was assigned a fixed point in space. Then countless points of space appeared, along with countless red moons. That combined into space-time. Actually, it could be one, or it could be many.”

Moaning, the Captain kept crawling forward.

There was no end. Originally, all of the red moons were moving in space-time. In other words, they all flickered in their own time. But with an innumerable amount present, they... no longer conformed to their own individual place in space-time. As they moved, their space-time interfered with each other, creating overlapping superimpositions. They scattered, sometimes becoming dozens, sometimes becoming hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands. As they swirled, they interacted chaotically.

There was no order or rule at play!

Xu Qing and everyone else felt immense pressure. As of this moment, gods and cultivators were on the same level! This was something they couldn't face and couldn't resist. Everyone was collapsing, bleeding, reeling.

Eventually, the countless red moons fused with each other, turning all of their space-time into a haze. And behind that haze... there was something.

Xu Qing looked on in astonishment. And when things became clear, he shivered from head to toe. At the same time, all of the red moon's heaven and earth froze in place and ceased to move. It wasn't just the red moon where Xu Qing was. All of the red moons went still.

Then, they stopped building their power, and instead began to destroy themselves! One red moon after another collapsed and dissipated. They were wiped out as if they had never existed to begin with. Eventually, the only left was the one Xu Qing was on. And then the concept of time disappeared from it.

However everything appeared before, that was how it went away. In an instant, the red moon was back to normal. The Moon Palace was restored. Everything went back to the way it was before. The surrounding ruins vanished. The broken face disappeared.

From beginning to end, hē only opened hīs eyes a sliver. Xu Qing’s power couldn’t sustain hīm, and thus... hē closed hīs eyes. As of now, the violet crystal did not contain any image of the broken face of the god.

As everything went back to normal, the time surrounding Crimson Mother from Zhang Siyun’s memories shattered, and along with it, shē turned into ash. Time vanished, and Zhang Siyun was revealed. Hē hovered there trembling, hīs expression no longer calm and tranquil. He looked terrified. And hīs body was rapidly withering as if with age. The trembling wooden door of High God Moonfire was rapidly disappearing. The Heir Apparent and the siblings were unconscious.

The Captain... had climbed over to Xu Qing, and had opened his mouth as if to bite Xu Qing awake. Seeing everything returning to normal, his eyes went wide.

“Little Junior Brother,” he said in a low voice, “you’ve got to promise me not to use that move in the home of a god....”

Xu Qing looked exhausted. Gasping for breath, he struggled into a seated position. Lingering fear spread through him. Moments before, he’d had no idea the reasons for what was happening, but he had definitely felt immense terror.

With some effort, he looked up at the Captain, and then at the distant Zhang Siyun.

Zhang Siyun was crumbling into nothing. Hīs legs vanished. Hīs arms disappeared. Hīs torso started collapsing into dust. Ultimately, hē was wiped out of existence. Xu Qing watched hīm disappear. The crown of thorns on hīs head emitted cracking sounds as it crumbled, ultimately leaving behind... a single section!

That small section glittered with violet light. Based on what Xu Qing could sense, it was somehow similar to his violet crystal. As it shone, Zhang Siyun appeared within the light, and hē spoke in a hoarse voice.

“So close. Xu Qing... you came so close to wiping my true form out of existence.... But in the end, my true form is still here. I’m unharmed.”

Xu Qing’s pupils constricted, but his facial expression didn’t change much. That was because he was the type of person who always liked to have a backup plan.

“Your Majesty,” he said softly.

Emperor Ancient Spirit materialized directly in front of Zhang Siyun. He was not there to fight. Instead, he had something in his hands that he shoved toward Zhang Siyun’s face.

Then he disappeared. As he faded from view, he couldn’t help but glance at Xu Qing, his gaze filled with apprehension.

Meanwhile, Zhang Siyun’s expression transformed. Something had been put onto hīs face.

It was a mask. More precisely, it was the facial skin of an old man, his expression one of sorrow, his face full of wrinkles.

The mask's name... was Mercy.

Chapter 703: Someone Used a Fragment of My Time

Back in Forbidden by the Immortal, Master Seventh took his two apprentices to a location to look for immortal skills. From the many skin masks there, he had picked two, one each for Xu Qing and the Captain. [1]

Those two skin masks were, in fact, immortal skills. One of the immortal skills was the Heavenly Dog, which suited the Captain's personality. The other didn't really suit Xu Qing, but in consideration of his good friend the head, he had taken it. That skill was called Mercy.

It had a simple function. Whoever put it on would replace the subject of their gaze in whatever they were experiencing.

Xu Qing had previously come up with the idea of having the head wear the mask. Then, when Xu Qing himself was facing some deadly crisis, the head could share the burden with him. However, from that time until now, Xu Qing had never encountered the proper circumstances to use the mask's function.

Until now.

Immortal skills and god magics were different in many ways. But in the final analysis, they were both gruish types of magic. In fact, Master Seventh had mentioned that, according to the ancient records, such techniques had once been called forbidden magics. Later on, the name was changed to 'immortal skill' to sound better.

That said, Xu Qing was aware of the side-effects of the Mercy immortal skill. And that was that it didn't require a sustained gaze.... A single look was enough.

Therefore, as soon as the skin mask settled onto Zhang Siyun's face, Xu Qing unhesitatingly looked away from his Eldest Brother and instead focused on the second image in the violet crystal.

He hadn't been able to get the broken face's eyes to open all the way. And he had also lost a lot of life force. But that was because the broken face of the god had a personhood that was far superior to his own. But the second image featured the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, whose personhood was obviously a long way from being the equal of the broken face. Thus, Xu Qing was going to attempt to release that second image. And the reason he was doing it was because of the Captain's gaze.

The two of them had known each other for so long that they often didn't need to speak to each other. A look was often enough for them to reach an understanding. And thus, the Captain leaned forward and bit into Xu Qing's arm.

This bite was not for the purpose of devouring. It was a bolstering.

The Captain sent life force streaming into Xu Qing. He definitely didn't have enough life force to sustain the broken face. But when it came to the second image, he could try.

A tremor passed through Xu Qing as the violet crystal flickered brightly. He then became like a light source casting violet light in all directions. He could have considered concealing the light in

some way, but he didn't. In fact, not only did he not cover it up, but actually, he unleashed as much light as possible. The glow was very similar to that coming from Zhang Siyun's crown of thorns.

It all happened in the briefest of moments. As violet light shone off Xu Qing, Emperor Ancient Spirit put the skin mask onto Zhang Siyun.

Zhang Siyun shivered inwardly. Hē was a doppelgänger of Crimson Mother, and had some degree of omniscience and omnipotence. However... Emperor Ancient Spirit had the same personhood as hē did. And because of that, Zhang Siyun's omniscience and omnipotence slowed down.

In a moment like this, such slowing could be fatal. After all, hē had no idea what that skin mask would do. Most importantly, the violet light coming off Xu Qing attracted hīs notice, as it stimulated the crown of thorns hē was wearing. As a result, hīs gaze automatically focused on the violet light coming from Xu Qing.

The moment hē looked at Xu Qing, hē shivered as an image filled hīs mind.

Hē wasn't the only one who saw it. The Captain and Emperor Ancient Spirit also saw that image floating in the Moon Palace.

The dome of heaven was overtaken, turning dark, and filling with a blood rain. The lands became ruins, and Xu Qing was standing in the middle of them. He was superimposed over a young boy in the image. That boy was crying and confused. Helpless. Terrified. And all of those feelings passed from him, into Xu Qing, and beyond.

Lightning snaked through the sky, but there was no broken face in the image. Instead, there was a young man in a black robe. He was extremely good-looking, very similar to the older version of Xu Qing. Looking at Xu Qing, he sighed and walked forward.

The blood rain parted for him as he approached Xu Qing from behind. Looking tenderly at Xu Qing, he said, "Don't cry, lil' bro."

His warm, kind voice caused both Xu Qing and the boy to turn around. But then... a destructive force exploded in the boy's head. A boom rang out as the boy's head exploded, and his body flopped onto the ground, dead. Xu Qing shivered, and cracks spread out over him. That was especially true of his head, which looked like it was about to collapse into pieces.

But then, Zhang Siyun, who was watching all of this happen, moaned in agony. And the crown of thrones atop hīs head erupted with violet light. Hē was fighting back!

What hē was observing then entered hīs body, as the immortal skill of Mercy made hīm substitute for the injuries and death. This was mercy via substitution.

What happened to the boy in the image was transferred to Zhang Siyun. Hē screamed in agony as the world rumbled, and the Moon Palace shook violently. Zhang Siyun's newly reformed body had just been injured by the broken face, leaving hīm extremely weak. To be suddenly hit with such destructive force caused hīs body to start collapsing again, from limbs to torso to head. Hīs eyes filled with pain, confusion, and disappointment. Those were the emotions from the boy.

Then Zhang Siyun's head exploded. The crown of thrones vibrated and then collapsed, until only the tiny violet section was left, which fell to the ground.

Crimson Mother's doppelgänger didn't exist anymore. Zhang Siyun was really and truly dead.

The mask faded away.

In the blink of an eye, the Captain's body of worms lunged forward with incredible speed toward the violet section of the crown of thorns.

Off to the side, Emperor Ancient Spirit suddenly appeared, and also lunged forward. Hē seemed like hē was about to grab the section of the crown, but then the Captain howled and summoned a projection of a heavenly dog. The dog lunged forward with mouth gaping wide.

Next, blood sprayed out of Xu Qing's mouth. Blood also poured out of countless wounds on his body. As he staggered backward, he saw what was happening, and the violet light around him surged.

"That's mine!" he said.

Emperor Ancient Spirit stopped in place. If any other person had said those words, hē would have ignored them. Having seen Xu Qing unleash terrifying power twice in a row, hē was very leery of him. Thinking about the feast to come, hē held back.

The Captain in heavenly dog form pounced on the section of the crown, gobbled it up, then raced back toward Xu Qing, all while glowering at Emperor Ancient Spirit.

Emperor Ancient Spirit's eyes glittered as he looked at the Captain and then Xu Qing. Hē seemed about to speak, when all of a sudden, a shriek of rage erupted from the depths of the Moon Palace. It was not a sound that a cultivator could make. Its reverberations caused red light to erupt all over the red moon. The ground melted, turning into a sea of blood.

The reek of gore filled heaven and earth. The aura of a god was erupting.

At that moment, all of the Moonrite Region shook.

It was... the voice of Crimson Mother. Shē was actually waking up!

Several regions away from the Moonrite Region, in the very middle of the Revered Ancient mainland, was a region that humans considered something like a holy land.

Its name was: the Imperial Region.

It was so far from the Moonrite Region that a cultivator who tried to fly between the two locations could spend an entire life doing so and not complete the journey. In the middle of the Imperial Region was a magnificent city that was as large as an entire county. It was full of countless amazing buildings, as well as innumerable humans. And the most prominent building in the city was the luxurious imperial palace.

In a grand hall in that palace, two people sat playing Go.

One of them was a middle-aged man in a yellow robe. His hair was bound with a pin engraved with a dragon, and he sat in a way that suggested he commanded ultimate power. He pulsed with

incredible pressure, and the imperial aura that surrounded him caused projections of dragons to swirl around, exhaling the light of daybreak.

He was the reigning emperor!

He was naturally impressive, with austere facial features and eyes that seemed to contain heavenly bodies. Fiddling with one of the white game pieces, he calmly said, "Imperial Preceptor, what do you think about how the war with the Nightshades ended?"

He was about to place the game piece on the table when his eyes flickered and he looked at the person seated across from him.

"Preceptor?"

Seated on the other side of the board was a young man wearing a long violet gown. He was bewitchingly handsome, with long hair that reached the ground, each strand of which seemed to contain suns, moons, stars, and heavenly bodies.

If Xu Qing were here, he would recognize this person immediately. He was... the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan! He looked at the black game piece he held, and it was as if a cloud had passed through his glittering eyes. Hearing the emperor's voice, he dispelled the cloud.

"Sorry, Your Majesty. Someone just used a fragment of time that belongs to me."

A profound look flickered in the emperor's eyes. He put the white game piece onto the board, and then was about to speak when, all of a sudden, his expression flickered. He looked outside and into the sky.

The Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan also looked up with narrowed eyes. There was a huge dragon in the sky, which unleashed a roar that echoed far and wide as it looked up into the sky.

They weren't the only ones to react like that. A terrifying aura exploded from somewhere within the imperial capital, quickly locking down the dome of heaven.

All gazes were fixed on one thing.

The broken face of the god. The broken face's eyes were closed, but just now, the head in general had shifted directions. The broken face was now facing south! That was the direction of the Holytide Region, as well as the Moonrite Region. In other words, it was the direction of the red moon.

Numerous species noticed what happened. In the shortest of moments, all of Revered Ancient was thrown into astonishment. Not many people understood why the broken face would do such a thing. Because of Crimson Mother's authority, no one had any way of checking to see what was happening in the Moonrite Region.

Regardless, his movement caused top experts throughout Revered Ancient to reel in shock.

Chapter 704: Li Zihua and Crimson Mother

Among those reeling in shock were the Nightshades, including the Smoldering Gods there.

That said, something very dramatic was happening in Nightshade lands as well. War had broken out!

When the human emperor unleashed two Dawning Suns in a row on the Nightshades, they were spectacularly defeated. There were countless casualties, and the Nightshades were ultimately forced to retreat all of their forces into the interior of their lands. There, they activated their own domain treasure to defend themselves. Human forces fell back, but kept the light of the Dawning Suns shining over the Nightshades, which ensured that casualties continued to mount. In the years that had passed, countless Nightshades had died, and very few had been born to replace them. The war had been extremely costly to the Nightshades, to the point where their very foundation as a species had been shaken. What was more, their god had apparently abandoned them; despite endless calls for help, no assistance had been provided.

The Nightshades had thus been driven into despair. Because of their unique physical characteristics, life had been extremely difficult. They had absolutely no strength left to continue waging war, and had been focused on simply surviving the bleak times.

But then, despite the fact that they had tired of war... war came.

Aggression came from the Holytide Region in the form of an army gathered by the humans and Grand Duke Holytide. That army managed to pierce a hole in the Nightshades' defenses. Once that hole was opened, armies poured in.

The leader of the human forces wasn't Seventh Prince.... Instead, it was a powerful expert from his mother's clan, one of the thirty-three heavenly kings of humankind.

King Heaventide!

He was Seventh Prince's maternal uncle! He personally led the armies to wage war on the Nightshades, and he was also the one who used a precious treasure to break through the Nightshade defenses.

Even Grand Duke Holytide was respectful when dealing with King Heaventide! That was because every single one of the thirty-three heavenly kings... was a Smoldering God!

Even as the bitter fighting and slaughter played out, aggressors and defenders alike in the Nightshade lands looked up into the dome of heaven at the broken face. It didn't matter the level of cultivation base involved.

In the Moonrite Region, on the red moon, inside the Moon Palace... the aura of Crimson Mother surged.

The land inside the Moon Palace had turned into a viscous sea of blood. As the sea of blood churned, the Heir Apparent and his siblings woke up one after another and backed up to where Xu Qing was located. All of them were extremely weak. Xu Qing was also badly hurt, as was the Captain. All of them were like lamps without much oil left to burn.

"We can't do much about what happens next," the Captain said hoarsely.

Xu Qing nodded as he looked out at the blood sea.

The sea seethed, causing rumbling sounds to spread out as it formed a vortex, out of which emerged a figure. The figure was not humanoid. It appeared to be made of countless fleshy wings all stuck

together, interlocking to create a host of tentacles that swayed back and forth. In the middle of the tentacles was a face. However, the face had no skin on it. It was only bloody flesh that twitched and wriggled as it emanated a terrifying aura.

Surrounding the face were row upon row of eyes, some large and some small. The image of Xu Qing and the others could be seen reflected in those eyes. It was extremely grisly.

Shē had no arms or legs, and was more like a statue made of flesh and blood. Terrifying pressure caused the Moon Palace to ripple and distort, and the effect soon spread to the red moon and the Moonrite Region as a whole.

This was Crimson Mother's true form!

Xu Qing and everyone else felt pain mounting in their skulls. It was as if they couldn't even tolerate this presence. In fact, their eyes automatically adjusted the physical appearance of this god.

To them, Crimson Mother transformed into a woman with long, blood-colored hair and a matching robe. Hēr face had no eyes, only two gaping, bloody holes. Blood flowed down, covering hēr body. A vine of thorns encircled hēr, and as shē walked, the thorns pulsed as if they were absorbing hēr blood. Behind hēr was a host of blood-red pāramitā lilies.

Every step shē took caused a new flower to appear. Shockingly, within every flower was an image that resembled hēr in every way. They danced and swayed, superimposing with each other... just like the scene that had played out earlier on the red moon.

When shē appeared, a godly might arose that far surpassed anything from Zhang Siyun, and seemed capable of toppling mountains and draining seas. In fact, comparing the two was like comparing the full moon to a firefly!

"You can't look directly at a god..." the Captain said. "That's why we instinctively protect ourselves, our perceptions altering to reflect something we *can* look at."

Xu Qing watched Crimson Mother approaching, and mused that if he didn't look at hēr eyes, shē was actually quite beautiful. It was a beauty that ordinary living things couldn't possess. However, as shē walked, hēr features changed.

Occasionally, shē would look like someone else, a man, with facial features distorted in pain as if hē was being digested. At the same time, hē pulsed with godly might. That face belonged to the High God that Crimson Mother had devoured, Flawless Hell.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings closed their eyes. They had chosen not to act, but instead, to wait.

The Captain took a deep breath. He also chose to simply wait.

Xu Qing knew who they were waiting for.... Imperial Sovereign Li Zihua.

As it happened, the aura of awakening coming from the enormous statue of Li Zihua on the Penitence Steppes suddenly vanished.

He opened his eyes. Those eyes contained the passage of countless years as he looked out at the Moonrite Region. His gaze caused the region to light up. The blood-colored rifts in the sky turned

into rosy clouds. The violently shaking lands calmed, becoming towering mountain ranges. The withering vegetation changed, becoming lush plants and towering trees as far as the eye could see. Everywhere he looked teemed with hope and life.

Only the red moon was the color of blood.

Li Zihua looked up at the red moon that he held in his hands. He let it go.

The red moon didn't go anywhere. It just hovered in midair.

Li Zihua took a few breaths, then walked toward the moon. His every step caused golden ripples to spread out, forcing the red light to dim. Stepping onto the moon, he walked toward the Moon Palace. By the time he arrived, Crimson Mother had fully emerged from the blood-colored vortex. Shē looked at him.

“It's been a long time,” he said.

Chapter 705: Secrets of Deep Earth and Brilliant Heaven

Li Zihua's voice contained immense profundity. Though he spoke softly, the entire red moon trembled as a result. And the sound waves caused the blood sea surrounding Crimson Mother to go still.

Xu Qing and everyone else breathed sighs of relief as they backed up. They all knew that the fight to come wasn't something they could participate in. Not even Smoldering Gods qualified.

Crimson Mother's face was expressionless. Flames burned to life in the bloody pits that were hēr eyes. Apparently, shē didn't seem surprised at all to find that Li Zihua had awoken.

Crimson Mother's voice didn't contain even a scrap of emotion, neither joy nor sorrow, as shē said, “Dark Serenity left. Time itself changed. It's pointless for you to have woken up, Li Zihua.”

The scene playing out was different for everyone.

Each person's perceptions changed to accommodate what they could sustain. For example, the Heir Apparent and his siblings saw Crimson Mother as a vicious, evil, terrifying humanoid figure covered with feathers. And instead of fire burning in hēr eye sockets, shē had two stars. That was how gods worked. Because of existing on a much higher level of life, gods would look different to the eyes of different living beings.

If a god wanted to destroy a world, it was simple. The god just needed to reveal their true image into the eyes of the living beings, and death would come. That alone made it clear how terrifying the broken face of the god was, as all living beings, regardless of the level of their cultivation base, perceived hīm in the same way.

Crimson Mother's voice echoed like thunder in the ears of Xu Qing and the others. In the blink of an eye, they were rendered powerless.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings used various methods to be able to sustain the force.

As for Xu Qing, he unhesitatingly took out a clump of clay and held it out in front of him. It was from the clay fox.

Next to him, the Captain took out a strand of hair, which was the authentication device from High God Moonfire. Although the High God had already left, the Captain still had that hair.

Only Li Zihua didn't need anything like that. He stood silently in the Moon Palace, looking at Crimson Mother. A long moment passed.

"The mission still stands," he said.

Those four words seemed to be profoundly irritating to Crimson Mother. More blood than ever flowed down hēr, and the vine of thorns tightened. The countless versions of hēr visible in all the pāramitā lilies suddenly looked furious.

"Mission? Do you mean Brilliant Heaven's mission? Or are you talking about Deep Earth's mission? Have you forgotten what happened in Brilliant Heaven, Li Zihua? We were originally born as gods. So who sealed our ancestors, ensuring that all their descendants lost their position as gods?" [1]

Li Zihua closed his eyes and shook his head. "I haven't forgotten."

Crimson Mother flared with blood-red light as shē started walking toward Li Zihua. "Who was it that hoisted the heavenly daos over our godly lands to suppress us? And who was it that banished us beneath the Revered Ancient mainland, and then built a cultivation world on our godly lands?"

As Crimson Mother's voice echoed out, hēr spectacularly beautiful female features transformed. Cracks covered them, and blood-colored feathers began to replace the flesh.

"I chose godly ascension, Li Zihua, and it was no mistake. When you left, you were the same as me. Yet for some reason you chose to extinguish your godfire and betray our bloodline! You're from Brilliant Heaven, but you chose Deep Earth instead! Well, I'm from Brilliant Heaven, and I still chose to represent Brilliant Heaven!"

As the last of hēr words left hēr mouth, shē appeared directly in front of Li Zihua. As of now, shē looked different to Xu Qing. Instead of looking like a woman, shē seemed like the same terrifying conglomeration of bloody flesh from before. And now, all of the feathers opened up, revealing an interior of blood, flesh and feathers. In the middle of it all... was a huge eye socket with no eye inside of it, only endless blood pouring out.

As Crimson Mother spoke and neared, Li Zihua did nothing but sigh. Then he lifted his right hand and pushed it toward the dome of heaven.

The sky shattered. As the pieces fell, they transformed, becoming heaven-shaking, earth-shattering streams of energy. In the end... they turned into a host of shadowy figures.

There were suns, moons, stars, and heavenly bodies, as well as animals that resembled dragons, phoenixes, and other primordial spirits. Xu Qing even spotted a golden crow. As they appeared, and as the energy swept out, the fluctuations of imperial-class techniques rose up. All of them were imperial-class techniques, from countless species. There were roughly 10,000 of them, and with one wave of his hand, Li Zihua summoned all of them.

The moment the over 10,000 imperial-class techniques appeared, they revealed their taboo essences. In the blink of an eye... it was as if the imperial-class techniques were all unsealed.

Countless weapons and other objects appeared, including the destructive spear Xu Qing had found in his golden crow.

They were taboo weapons!

Terrifying fluctuations rolled out as they all shot toward Crimson Mother.

Xu Qing had previously come to understand the secret of imperial-class techniques by studying the golden crow within him. He knew that each imperial-class technique was actually a sealed item that had been prohibited by the heavenly daos. Seeing them all right now caused his heart to pound. A divine ability like this seemed unimaginable. Not even Smoldering Gods could do something like this. Only an Imperial Sovereign would be able to unleash such shocking power.

Whether it was Crimson Mother's attack or Li Zihua's counter attack, they both surpassed what anyone present could understand. Xu Qing and everyone else coughed up mouthfuls of blood as they backed away. And the scene playing out continued to change according to what they could sustain.

Xu Qing couldn't see Li Zihua or Crimson Mother. The shattering of the canopy of heaven was overtaken by another image. That image was made up of two colors: red and white.

The two colors crissed and crossed, then separated. The canopy of heaven was in motion as it transformed into a massive vortex. In the middle of the vortex was a solitary white eye with no pupil, but instead, a blood-red heart, the beating of which sounded like heavenly thunder. The eye was surrounded by innumerable eyelashes that were like tentacles, swaying back and forth. Occasionally, they would touch each other and form blurry shapes of a third color. That color was black, and the shapes were irregular. The moment they appeared, they would devour each other.

That was what Xu Qing saw happening in this godly battle. The fighting surpassed his own personhood, and therefore, to his eyes, the battle between Li Zihua and Crimson Mother looked like an abstract painting.

The red represented Crimson Mother, and the white represented Li Zihua. The third color was beyond Xu Qing's comprehension, as if it related to the shadows of Li Zihua and Crimson Mother.

It made Xu Qing think of his own shadow.

The Captain was firmly gripping Moonfire's hair, all while staring up into the canopy of heaven. "Little Ah Qing, remember what you're seeing. This is a clash between two peak levels of life. A cultivator and a god! On one side you have the ultimate height you can reach when walking the path of cultivation. On the other side you have godly ascension, in other words, the source of great catastrophe for Revered Ancient.

"The former involves practicing cultivation until you reach the peak of life. Such cultivators are referred to in different ways. In some universes, people who reach that level are called paragons. In others, they're called immortals. In Revered Ancient, peak cultivators like that are called Imperial Sovereigns. It's the life dream of all cultivators."

As the Captain spoke, his voice seemed to contain a profound level of age. “Little Junior Brother, did you know that there’s an even older legend in Revered Ancient...?”

“Legend?” Xu Qing’s heart started racing.

“According to that legend, a really long time ago, the Revered Ancient mainland didn’t look like it does now. There were no cultivators, no natural laws, no magical laws, and of course, no heavenly daos.

“The cultivators came from lower worlds. In those lower worlds, cultivators who reached the highest level of cultivation reached the Immortal level. They traveled among countless universes and worlds, unhindered and unthreatened. They controlled all natural laws, and were enlightened regarding all manners of essence. They could pierce through space-time with ease, transform all beings, and create all sorts of living things.”

Hearing this, Xu Qing felt shaken.

Looking up at the canopy of heaven, the Captain continued, in a low voice. “Immortals. Imperial Sovereigns. In some ways, they’re eternally indestructible, with longevity comparable to heaven itself, and different thoughts and desires compared to when they began their journey. And the daos they pursue are actually a starting point when they reach the end of the path of cultivation.

“Based on their unique experiences, perceptions, and ideals, those starting points are different for everyone. Some immortals go far beyond that, while others remain stuck in place. That’s why, in the previous era, only immortals could be a threat to immortals.

“In fact, as they made progress... they broke through the barriers of their world. They advanced from the lower worlds to the higher worlds, which was when the immortals came to know about another type of apex entity. The gods. That was when everything changed.

“They were told that the countless universes and worlds they knew actually didn’t belong to cultivators. The past, the present, and the future. Anything and everything. In the final analysis, it all belongs to the gods. And the gods had divided the worlds into the lower and higher.

“The lower worlds were called Deep Earth. The higher worlds were called Brilliant Heaven. At that time, the most appropriate way to describe cultivators was *frogs in a well*. And that... was when war broke out. The immortals and the gods battled each other. The lower worlds fought the higher worlds. In other words... it was a war between Deep Earth and Brilliant Heaven.”

The Captain stopped talking for a moment.

“How did it end?” Xu Qing asked.

“The immortals won,” the Captain said. “But they also lost. Brilliant Heaven fell, and became forbidden and sealed. The heavenly daos rose up. Natural laws brought new meaning. That was how the immortals won. But at the same time, all the immortals from the lower worlds came to realize a desperate truth.

“The massive Brilliant Heaven was just one of many major god worlds. The vast and boundless higher worlds... contained many, many such major god worlds. Brilliant Heaven was only the tip of the iceberg. And it wasn’t the strongest of them. It really and truly did belong to the gods.”

The Captain turned and looked Xu Qing in the eyes.

“Li Zihua and Crimson Mother... are both from Brilliant Heaven.”

Chapter 706: Why Didn’t You Call Me Over Earlier?

Imperial Sovereign Li Zihua and Crimson Mother fought back and forth in the dome of heaven, and to those below, it still seemed like an abstract painting.

As for Xu Qing, his heart was pounding. *Immortals... Imperial Sovereigns... Deep Earth... Brilliant Heaven... major god worlds....*

The Captain's words struck his sea of consciousness like bolts of lightning. This information was new to Xu Qing. During his enlightenment of the God Decapitation Altar, he had come to realize that Li Zihua and Crimson Mother weren’t from Revered Ancient, and instead came from a forbidden world. As it turned out, that place really was known as Brilliant Heaven.

And though Xu Qing had long come to realize that the Captain knew a lot of things, at the moment, he couldn’t help but inhale deeply and ask, “How do you know so many secrets, Eldest Brother?”

The Captain smiled enigmatically. “I said it was a legend, little Junior Brother. What, you actually think it’s all true?”

Xu Qing looked at the Captain. “How many lives have you lived, Eldest Brother?”

The Captain blinked a few times. He was actually very pleased to see Xu Qing reacting like this. Inside he was thinking, *Oh, little Junior Brother, at long last you’re coming to realize how awesome your Eldest Brother is, huh?*

The Captain cleared his throat. “*Before heaven existed, I was there; when there was no earth, I had already been born.*”

“I think you need to stop hanging around Wu Jianwu so much, Eldest Brother.”

Xu Qing looked away from the Captain. It didn’t matter whether or not the Captain’s story was a legend, and it also didn’t matter how many lives he had lived. What was important was what was happening right now.

Xu Qing looked up into the sky at the battle of the gods. Because of his personhood and perceptions, he couldn’t see what the fighting was actually like. But he knew that this battle was both critical and meaningful. After all, this was a battle between a cultivator and a god, which was something very few cultivators would ever be able to witness.

Heart filling with determination, he stimulated the violet crystal so that its healing powers spread through his body. Then he gathered taboo poison in his eyes. In the shortest of moments, his eyes turned pitch black.

There was more than that, though. He also unleashed his red moon authority, causing blood to swirl around him and form a vortex.

With those two godly powers, he looked up into the sky. The 'painting' up above changed! The abstract image shifted, almost like a flower blooming. As the effect spread, the two colors within the image intersected. That intersection lasted for a very long time, and at the same time, lasted only for an instant.

Next, the image blurred, and within that blur, Xu Qing saw a person.

It was Li Zihua. He was in human form as he fought Crimson Mother. Every single attack involved hurling natural laws of Revered Ancient at Crimson Mother.

The heavenly daos were like furnaces that constantly bolstered his battle prowess. Their fight was not taking place in a single aspect of space-time. Instead, there were countless aspects of space-time in which they attacked. The scene was very similar to what happened when the gaze of the broken face affected the red moon.

Numerous taboo weapons screamed toward Crimson Mother with heaven-destroying, earth-extinguishing power. Just before striking the target, the weapons would change. Instead of looking like weapons, they looked like gods. It was as if they had actually been gods in the past. Now they had been unsealed and driven to action!

The fighting seemed simplistic, but Xu Qing realized that was because of the limitations of his perception. If he actually saw the real fighting, he would be destroyed in body and soul. That said, watching Li Zihua in action was deeply moving to Xu Qing.

I never realized the natural laws of heavenly daos could be used in this way. That makes sense considering that heavenly daos act like furnaces in the secret troves of Spirit Trove cultivators. But in reality... in the hands of high-level cultivators, the ancient heavenly daos of Revered Ancient can also be furnaces.

According to the Captain, Revered Ancient's ancient heavenly daos were created by the earliest inhabitants.... In that case, that means heavenly daos are actually precious treasures created by cultivators!

Wherever cultivators go, the first thing they need to do is create heavenly daos! Doesn't that indicate that once your cultivation reaches a certain level, you can take your heavenly dao and put it into the orbital track of your world... just like the godchild of the Red Moon Cathedral when igniting his godfire?

Xu Qing's secret trove appeared behind him, and based on this understanding, he started making some adjustments.

The bluegreen dragon was there, and it wasn't just a furnace. It was also a weapon.

But Xu Qing had learned more than just that.

As it turns out, the taboo weapons can change in another way. The weapon form is only their exterior shell, not their essence! Their essences... look like gods! Don't tell me it's because the taboo weapons sealed inside the imperial-class techniques are actually gods that were defeated in the war between immortals and gods that the Captain just mentioned?

Xu Qing felt like his mind was tearing apart. What he was seeing, and the thoughts that filled him, made him feel like he was being pushed to the limits of his ability. Yet again, the blurred image he was seeing changed into an abstract painting. Xu Qing once more looked at the fighting between Li Zihua and Crimson Mother.

Crimson Mother was no longer beautiful like before. Hēr form was difficult to describe. Simply put, Xu Qing perceived hēr as being a combination of a human body and a mass of fleshy feathers dripping with blood. Sometimes shē was more like a woman, sometimes more like the fleshy feathers. The combination was profoundly grisly. Red threadworms swirled around hēr, vicious in appearance, with terrifying auras and the power of the red moon. Apparently, they were manifestations of red moon authority. Actually, it wasn't appropriate to use the word 'apparently.' The proper word was 'definitely'!

When Xu Qing looked at them, he experienced a sensation of familiarity. And he also got the distinct sensation that the threadworms were looking at him. His mind spun and blood oozed out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. As he staggered backward, he coughed up mouthful after mouthful of blood, and his body began to decay, with bits of flesh sloughing off him everywhere.

The canopy of heaven was already like an abstract painting, and as he looked down, he saw everything rippling and distorting. Although the sensation ended almost as soon as it began, Xu Qing still felt like his mind was being ripped apart.

“Red moon....”

Looking down at the ground beneath his feet, he realized he could never forget what he had just seen.

Based on what he had just seen, the red moon wasn't made up of soil and rocks. It was made of countless red threadworms! It was like a lair of worms! And beneath all of the countless red threadworms that made up the red moon, in the very depths, there was a gaze.

That gaze was cold, yet it felt familiar to Xu Qing. But as everything rippled and went back to normal, Xu Qing had no way to probe for further details. He focused on the power of the violet crystal, coughing up blood as he recovered. As he stabilized, the fighting above changed again.

Apparently, the right combination of determination and opportunity had arrived, as High God Moonfire's ancient wooden door was back. The door was much larger than last time, so much so that it seemed like the entire sky was the door.

And then the door opened!

A huge figure emerged. At first glance, the figure was the size of a normal person. With the next glance, the figure was incomparably large, so large that it seemed impossible to determine its actual size. Countless antlers like that of a deer grew out of hēr head, so many of them that they almost resembled the branches of a tree. In the middle of the antlers was a gray moon that pulsed with a

sensation of destruction and death. The head didn't appear to be either male or female. It was a skull with empty eye sockets that burned with gray fire. And the mouth was nothing but a jagged hole. The body was humanoid, with hands covered in so much blood it looked like a pair of red gloves. The body was covered with gray hair that swayed back and forth like clothing. The only part with no hair was the belly, which was a black hole that contained starlight, as if it was its own universe.

This was High God Moonfire.

Like Crimson Mother, it wasn't possible for Xu Qing and the others to look directly at hēr, so their perceptions automatically changed until shē looked like a middle-aged woman in a gray robe. The woman had pronounced cheekbones and an ice-cold expression. Shē had very unique features that some people would find beautiful, while other people wouldn't.

High God Moonfire strode to the abstract painting, and as soon as shē touched it, the painting changed. There was now another color inside. Gray, which mixed with the white and red. As a result, a third shadow appeared.

The Captain backed up until he was standing next to Xu Qing. Looking up at the painting in the sky, he proudly said, "My ex-wife is a real foodie. I was sure she would show up eventually. What do you think? Is my ex-wife pretty or what?"

Xu Qing ignored the Captain and kept his eyes on the painting.

The Heir Apparent and the others had serious expressions on their faces as they watched the fighting and similarly ignored the Captain. Thanks to the blessing of Fifth Sister, Eighth Sib had returned to life in Princess Brightblossom's river of time. Though he was incredibly weak, he couldn't help but comment on the situation.

"We're not blind. We can see what the old freak looks like. Erniu... I never realized you had such unusual taste. You can even accept something like that...? That said, I'm curious. That hole in hēr belly. Did you do that?"

Eighth Sib's tongue was as sharp as ever despite him being injured. When the Captain heard his words, his face twitched.

Turning to Eighth Sib, he said, "Well, Grandpa Eighth—"

"So, it was you," Eighth Sib said with a thoughtful nod. "No wonder shē hates you so much. In fact, she didn't even look at you just now. Come on, Erniu, you've got to spill the beans. What other offensive things did you do to her? If we handed you over, would your ex-wife be happy? Would she fight a bit harder?"

Fifth Sister and Princess Brightblossom both looked over thoughtfully at the Captain.

Looking visibly alarmed, the Captain said, "You've got it all wrong. I was actually joking around before. High God Moonfire isn't really my ex-wife. I just said that randomly..." As if to prove his point, the Captain quickly took out a peach and bit into it. "I love peaches! And my Lady Peachy is waiting for me back in Sea-Sealing County."

Eighth Sib looked at him suspiciously. At this point, even the Heir Apparent was looking at the Captain.

“I think we should take Eighth Sib’s suggestion seriously,” the Heir Apparent said.

The Captain inhaled sharply, and was about to launch into another explanation when Ninth Sib suddenly spoke up.

“Another one’s coming out!”

The sky suddenly changed color again, as if a sheet were being drawn over it. On that sheet was a painting.

The last time Xu Qing saw that image, it had been dark and shadowy, but this time it shone with warm light. It depicted a blue sky and a vast sea. In the sky flew innumerable fish. Whales even floated along. It was extremely beautiful. In the sea below, countless birds swam through the water, adding to the beauty. A divine likeness sat cross-legged between the sea and the sky. [1]

The statue was a large clay fox, clad in a red robe, emanating golden light that illuminated the sea and the sky with holiness. The fox appeared to be the ruler of that world, commanding ultimate respect.

Hēr eyelashes fluttered, and hēr eyes opened. Then, shē walked forward, swaying out of the painting with seductive grace. As shē emerged, hēr appearance changed. Now shē looked like a charming, beautiful young woman. The gauzy dress was draped over fair skin in a very attractive manner. Shē had an ample chest, long legs, and a tail that swished back and forth behind hēr. All-in-all, shē was profoundly flirtatious. Hēr soft curves and innate charming nature were unforgettable, and shē was so tantalizing that any man who looked at hēr would be filled with temptation.

After walking out of the painting and into the Moon Palace, shē looked around, and hēr eyes focused, not on the battle of gods, but on Xu Qing. Shē smiled charmingly.

“Ever since you left, you naughty little boy, my entire life has consisted of two things. Thinking about you, and waiting for you. Why didn’t you call me over earlier? I’ve been waiting this whole time!”

Hēr words, coupled with hēr bewitching gaze and the way hēr lips curled into a faint smile, made it clear shē was trying to seduce him.

Xu Qing didn’t say anything.

The Captain, meanwhile, was very taken aback. He looked at the gray color in the sky, and then at the flirtatious woman. He was really at a loss for words.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings all looked at the Captain, especially Eighth Sib, who sighed loudly.

“The two definitely aren’t on the same level.”

Chapter 707: Attack of the Giant Baby!

The Captain opened his mouth to speak, but no words would come out.

The clay fox above was already swaying forward seductively, hēr curves more than prominent as shē approached Xu Qing. Hēr beautiful eyes shimmered with tender affection as shē softly said, “You’ve lost weight, you naughty little boy. Did you miss me while we were apart?”

Xu Qing hesitated briefly, then rose and bowed. “Well met, High God Starfire.”

When the clay fox heard his words, the look in hēr eyes turned into one of hidden bitterness. “I guess you didn’t miss me, naughty boy.”

Hēr arrival had caused the Heir Apparent and his siblings to go fully on guard.

The Captain seemed deeply forlorn, and instinctively looked up at the gray color in the canopy of heaven. He couldn’t help but muse that life really wasn’t worth it. After all, there were two High Gods here, but they could hardly be more different from each other. One of them was indifferent toward him, and actually wanted him dead. The other was obviously completely obsessed with his little Junior Brother. If that had been all there were to it, he might have been able to accept it. But what was worse, one of them wasn’t very good-looking, while the other was extremely attractive.

Though his heart was in chaos, when he heard the words being spoken, he came to the conclusion that, as the Eldest Brother, he should step in to help Xu Qing respond. Walking forward he cleared his throat.

“Big Sis Starfire, my little Junior Brother is relatively shy. I can answer the question for him. Of course he missed you! He missed you very, very much!”

The clay fox frowned and looked at the Captain disdainfully. “Don’t say one word to me, Kidney Boy. I’m worried my naughty little friend might misunderstand. In fact, please get the hell back. Put some distance between the two of us.”

The Captain inhaled sharply. Neither in past lives nor in the present life had anyone called him Kidney Boy. And if someone called him that who he could beat in a fight, he would instantly get very angry. But considering the level disparity, all he could do was bow his head and back up until he was behind Xu Qing, all while musing that considering the difference in cultivation level between himself and Grandpa Eighth, it was definitely Grandpa Eighth who should have spoken up just now.

Meanwhile, the clay fox looked at Xu Qing and licked hēr lips. Shē was about to say something further when rumbling filled the dome of heaven, and the voice of High God Moonfire echoed out.

“Stop wasting time, you slutty fox. Get over here!”

The clay fox smiled faintly at Xu Qing. “I have a quick fight to attend to, naughty boy. We’ll continue our date a bit later.”

Shē turned and shot up into the abstract painting. When shē entered it, another color appeared. Pink. Now a total of four different colors were clashing in the sky. The vortex in the painting was spinning faster and faster. It looked like the red color inside was under a lot of pressure.

But Crimson Mother was strong. Even with Li Zihua, High God Moonfire, and High God Starfire all attacking hēr, shē still wasn’t completely shaken.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings were watching with serious expressions.

As for the Captain, he was starting to get nervous. Finally, he gritted his teeth and said, “When the critical moment arrives, I still have to rely on myself! My ex-wife is just too weak! Little Junior Brother, help me out here. I need you to take this and smack me in the head with it. Hard!”

The Captain took out a scepter and tossed it to Xu Qing.

Xu Qing caught it. Looking down at it, he saw that it was completely blue, but also somewhat blurry. And the longer you looked at it, the more you felt drawn into it. This was the very same scepter the Captain's past-life body, the one formed from his heart, had wielded at Mount Heavenly Ox.

"This is the Dream Scepter of the Grand Dancer!" Xu Qing looked at the Captain.

"That's right," the Captain said, his eyes gleaming with a crazy look. "I'm going to use that thingy to send the dream shadow of my past life into Crimson Mother. Maybe by awakening hēr human nature, I can disrupt the stalemate!"

A blue worm suddenly flew out from the Captain and landed on the ground in front of him. Then the Captain's sleeves snapped as he started performing a very strange dance. It looked as if some sort of sacrificial offering was being made right here in the Moon Palace. As the dance proceeded, the Captain started chanting a song. It was impossible to make out the details of the lyrics, but it conveyed a very complicated sensation.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings noticed what was happening, and in particular, Eighth Sib's eyes gleamed with a curious light.

"How interesting...."

As the Captain sang and danced, billowing mist built up around him, flashing with seven colors. Within the hazy mist, it was just possible to make out some indistinct images. Those images were dreams. They were dreams of beauty, sorrow, pain, and confusion, and all of them contained human nature. To cultivators, those dreams seemingly contained countless lives, and when they poured into the mind, they were like reincarnation. Anyone who experienced them would feel like they were living over and over again. If the effects became serious, that cultivator might become lost forever.

But to gods, dreams meant something different than they did for cultivators. For preheaven gods, it might not be as serious of a situation. But postheaven gods had to balance human nature, animal nature, and godly nature. And if that balance was disrupted, it could cause everything to come crashing down. In other words, to postheaven gods, dreams of human nature were like a deadly poison. Normally speaking, such poison, though harmful, could be wiped out by godfire relatively quickly. By suppressing them with godliness, the balance could be restored.

But Crimson Mother was fighting Li Zihua and two High Gods. Therefore, a loss in balance could be very dangerous.

Xu Qing had picked up on that, as had the Heir Apparent and his siblings. All of their eyes began to shine.

After some thought, the Heir Apparent exhaled, sending his perception-altering powers into the Captain's mist. The mist seethed as it absorbed that power and became stronger as a result.

Princess Brightblossom muttered something under her breath and sent out a river of time, giving a sensation of space-time to the dream mist.

Eighth Sib added in his powers of the seven emotions and six sensory pleasures, which made the dream's human nature even more realistic. In fact, his assistance was much more useful than that from the Heir Apparent and Princess Brightblossom. After all, Eighth Sib's authority was related to emotions, which were a fundamental embodiment of human nature. The mist instantly became much more colorful and dazzling.

As everyone assisted, the Captain's dancing sped up, and the mist grew thicker with the power of a dream. From that it could be seen how well the Captain had prepared in his past life here. Eventually, all the dream elements coalesced, and the Captain went stock still. Then his voice echoed out from within all of the dreams, right into Xu Qing's ears.

“Little Junior Brother!”

Xu Qing didn't hesitate to heft the scepter and then lunge into the dream mist. Because of the blue light emanated by the scepter, he wasn't dragged into the actual dreams. Piercing through one dream after another, he eventually reached the Captain. There, he raised the scepter and then brought it crashing down.

Because the Captain had asked him to use force, he didn't hold back at all. When the scepter hit the Captain with a thump, his head exploded. However, there was no blood or flesh. Instead, bubbles erupted from his head, which swept through the mist and into the sky. In the blink of an eye, they reached the vortex above, where they split up into a host of smaller bubbles.

Each smaller bubble caused the vortex in the painting to spin faster, and provoked agonized shrieks from inside. Thanks to the bubbles, the vortex was soon a mass of chaos.

The eye inside bled. The blood-colored heart began to race. The irregularly shaped eyelashes transformed into shadowy shapes that began to devour each other.

The Captain's actions had significantly changed this battle of gods. Then, the shadow form of the Captain sped back to the wriggling blue worm, merged into it, then appeared back by Xu Qing.

“These dreams of human nature are going to make that shrew Crimson Mother suffer!” the Captain said proudly.

It was at that exact same moment that Emperor Ancient Spirit chose to come out of concealment. This time, he wasn't just a single eye. He was a host of blood-soaked eyes, all of them pulsing with greed as they shot toward the blurry vortex above. As he entered it, the vortex acquired another color.

With him in the vortex, the image blurred even further, but at the same time, coalesced into a more cohesive scene. The fleshy feather form of Crimson Mother was visible. The antlered Moonfire was there. Starfire was also present. Starfire, though somewhat different in appearance than before, hadn't changed as dramatically as Crimson Mother and Moonfire, and was still incredibly charming. Most noteworthy was Li Zihua. From beginning to end, he had maintained the same form. Just now, he had lifted his right hand and pointed out toward nothing.

The Moon Palace trembled as an enormous, shadowy figure smashed through the barriers of space-time to arrive in the canopy of heaven. It was an enormous flame beast, with the body of a horse, the head of a crocodile and the tail of a dragon. A sea of flames spread out beneath its feet, and its

eyes shone with incredible majesty. The ancient aura that spread out from it was full of the lineaments of natural and magical laws.

Next, a second similar beast appeared. This one was a headless giant with two pitch-black eyes on its chest. Radiating a sense of fury, it carried an entire sea on its back as it stomped forward. It also emanated a profoundly ancient aura.

After that came a third, fourth, and fifth beast.... And more continued, all of them pulsing with ancient auras as they showed up one after another in the sky. They included solemn humanoid figures, seemingly illusory netherworld souls, and golden magical symbols. There were all manner of ferocious nonhumans that seemed no weaker than gods.... They just kept popping into being until there were a total of ninety-nine of them.

“Ancient heavenly daos!” the Captain growled. The dome of heaven seethed with the arrival of the ninety-nine ancient heavenly daos. And then, another one appeared.

It was a huge baby, crawling on hands and knees.... The baby whimpered, though it sounded like thunderclaps. Tears leaked out of the corners of its eyes, which dripped down its face and nose like rain, then fell to create puddles beneath it. It was crawling from some distance away.

When the Captain saw the huge baby, his eyes shone brightly, and he turned to look at Xu Qing. Xu Qing also noticed the huge baby, and all of a sudden, his eyes gleamed with a strange light.

“Son?” the two of them said at the same time.

Chapter 708: How Dare You Hit My Daddy!

Legend had it that the ancient heavenly daos had been created by the victors in the war between immortals and gods, by means of some boundless magic. By sending them into the world, they bore the brunt of the mission of protection and suppression. That meant suppression of Brilliant Heaven, concealment of all taboos, and the protection of cultivators and conversion of all creation into something suitable for cultivation.

Each one had a very long history, as well as their own associated myths. They had terrifying power, and years ago, had been converted into natural and magical laws of Revered Ancient. Because of them, cultivators could live, propagate, and become rulers of this world. In the countless years that had passed, the guardianship of those ancient heavenly daos resulted in one species after another rising to glory.

Every single Ancient Emperor that had ever conquered Revered Ancient was someone that was approved of by the ancient heavenly daos. In some respects, the ninety-nine ancient heavenly daos were the protectors of all of the Revered Ancient mainland. Time passed. Imperial dynasties came and went, and species rose and fell. But the ninety-nine ancient heavenly daos remained constant, bearing witness to Revered Ancient as it flourished over and over again.

Of course, some situations arose that enraged the heavens. For instance, Emperor Ancient Spirit conquered Revered Ancient and then went insane and tried to possess an ancient heavenly dao. That angered the ninety-nine ancient heavenly daos so much that they came in person to crush Emperor Ancient Spirit. As a result, Emperor Ancient Spirit’s dynasty collapsed, and the Ancient Spirits were cursed. Of course, Emperor Ancient Spirit suffered the most.

From that it could be seen where the ancient heavenly daos stood in terms of Revered Ancient as a whole.

When the broken face of the god arrived, everything changed. The broken face existed on a higher level than the heavenly daos, and was in some ways an expression of the standoff between immortals and gods. The result... was that though the ancient heavenly daos continued to exist, they were severely suppressed and weakened. They did not recover their previous strength, and thus, mutagen invaded Revered Ancient, bringing catastrophe.

The broken face changed everything. All living things experienced something like the Awakening of Insects. The heavenly daos struggled to continue their mission, but could not prevent the invasion of their own destiny. [1]

That was why, though Li Zihua had the power to summon heavenly daos, he still died in battle. The heavenly daos were weak.

But things were different today. Although the ninety-nine heavenly daos were still weak, just like they had been back in the day for Li Zihua, this time, it wasn't Li Zihua fighting Crimson Mother alone. High God Moonfire had joined the fight, and High God Starfire also arrived. Emperor Ancient Spirit came as well. Combined with Li Zihua's battle prowess, it ensured that Crimson Mother was in a very rare but deadly crisis.

Crimson Mother was terrifyingly strong, and had already devoured three High Gods. Unlike most gods hidden in Revered Ancient, shē had revealed herself openly. Because gods could devour each other, most gods weren't willing to do that. That was the case with Flawless Hell, the fish skeleton god, and all the other gods Xu Qing had encountered.

Only Crimson Mother, being so incredibly powerful, chose to ignore that custom.

However, shē wasn't invincible. For hēr to face so many other gods at the same time was dangerous. Of course... the characteristics of gods ensured that the chances of multiple gods joining forces was very slim.

But today, that very rare development was playing out right in front of Crimson Mother. Two High Gods, a weakened Ancient Emperor, and an Imperial Sovereign were all teaming up against hēr. And for the ancient heavenly daos to show up right at the critical moment made that danger even more fatal.

That said... the number of the heavenly daos wasn't correct! Crimson Mother noticed it. Li Zihua noticed it. The two High Gods noticed it. And Emperor Ancient Spirit seemed the most surprised of all. He was more familiar with the cultivation of the ancient heavenly daos than anyone else, and he was the first to notice that there was actually an extra ancient heavenly dao!

“A hundred?”

Emperor Ancient Spirit hesitated for a moment. Down below in the Moon Palace, the Heir Apparent and his siblings were shaken. All of them were well aware that there had always been ninety-nine heavenly daos. There was no way their memories could be mistaken, and yet, there were a hundred present.

The last heavenly dao to appear looked like a baby. It had greenish skin covered with countless ancient symbols. It also had spikes covering it, and clawed hands. Just looking at it would cause one to grow cold in the heart. It was obviously still growing. And it crawled slowly, as if it wasn't completely sure which direction to go. Unlike the other ancient heavenly daos, it couldn't respond with pinpoint accuracy to Li Zihua's summoning.

It was almost like this ancient heavenly dao had been sleeping when Li Zihua called. That call had stirred its mission, and woken it up. Yet its eyes were still blurry as it instinctively crawled along.

However... as it crawled, it clearly didn't know exactly where to go, as it was still a great distance away. And then, the next moment, it was even farther away in space-time, and continuing on in the wrong direction.

The Heir Apparent and his siblings were stunned. And then they heard the words spoken by Xu Qing and the Captain. However, none of them seemed to be able to comprehend the connection. After all... calling an ancient heavenly dao 'son' seemed like a completely preposterous and even impossible thing.

Regardless, the other ninety-nine heavenly daos had already begun to unleash a force of suppression. They shot toward the abstract painting, merged inside, and then began crushing Crimson Mother in ways that Xu Qing couldn't even comprehend. Occasionally, the red color in the painting seemed like it might collapse. It would grow dark, and miserable screams would echo out that sounded like metal scraping against rock.

As the battle raged, the giant baby was still crawling off into the distance....

As the Captain and Xu Qing looked at the huge baby, they struggled to control their breathing.

Finally, the Captain couldn't hold back from shouting, "Son, daddy's right here!"

He reached out and grabbed Xu Qing's arm, indicating that he should do the same thing.

Without the slightest hesitation, Xu Qing sent a divine will projection. "I'm right here!"

As the battle raged in the painting, the huge baby off to the side suddenly stopped crawling. Then his eyelids flickered as if he was struggling to open them. He raised his head, and his ears twitched. His expression was one of confusion.

The Captain started to get excited, and called out again in a loud voice. Xu Qing did the same via divine will.

Soon, the confused expression on the huge baby's face turned into one of excitement, as if he were finally hearing the voice of his family. Turning, he started crawling in the direction of Xu Qing and the Captain.

After locking onto his family, the huge baby surged with strength. Wild colors flashed in heaven and earth, all while winds screamed. The giant baby then appeared in the sky just over the Moon Palace. Having crawled to that point, he turned in the direction of Xu Qing and the Captain and squealed happily. The sound was like heavenly thunder, and it caused Xu Qing and the Captain to both cough up mouthfuls of blood.

Suddenly, the giant baby heaved itself up onto two legs, then started running toward Xu Qing and the Captain with open arms, as if he sought a hug....

However, before he could get close, the terrifyingly destructive fluctuations rolling off it smashed into Xu Qing and the Captain, shoving them backward. Even the Heir Apparent and his siblings backed away in surprise. It was only possible to imagine the terrible fate that awaited them if that destructive power got too close to them.

Seeing all that, the Captain anxiously called, "Son. Son! Don't come over here. There's a bad lady you need to hit. The red one. She's the bad one!"

The huge baby stopped in place and looked at Xu Qing and the Captain, his expression both pouty and confused. He was about to make another squealing sound when the ninety-nine ancient heavenly daos provoked a miserable shriek from Crimson Mother, which pierced through space-time to leave the abstract painting.

The moment that sound reached the outside, the Heir Apparent and everyone else trembled as if they might collapse. The Captain's fleshly body exploded, turning into a host of worms that struggled to form back together. Although Xu Qing had a god body, the piercing sound was too much for him to take. In the blink of an eye, half of him collapsed into ash, and despite the power of the violet crystal, intense pain filled every corner of him.

When the giant baby saw that, it trembled, and its face became a mask of rage. Obviously, seeing Xu Qing and the Captain hurt was provoking a reaction of fury from it. The baby turned and locked its gaze onto the red color in the vortex. It squealed again, this time in pain, then started crawling rapidly toward the abstract painting.

In the blink of an eye, it disappeared inside. That made things even worse for Crimson Mother.

High God Moonfire, High God Starfire, and Emperor Ancient Spirit took advantage of the moment to unleash their godsource, using a method Xu Qing couldn't even perceive. A moment later, the abstract painting went still!

It wasn't just the painting. It was the entire Moon Palace. The natural laws. The magical laws. Space-time. It was as if all of them had been sealed. It was the same with the life force of Xu Qing and everyone else. The entire red moon went still. The concept of time disappeared, making it impossible to determine how much of it had passed. Perhaps one moment had passed. Perhaps a lifetime.

Then, a crack appeared in the abstract painting. The crack became the only moving thing, as it rapidly extended in length. Upon looking closely, one would realize that the crack... was on the red part!

The red was crumbling! Ultimately, the painting fell apart, and all of the red inside of it... was reduced to ashes and disappeared!

A pulse of intense grief erupted from within the Moon Palace, spreading out over the red moon and filling the Moonrite Region. Off in the distance, all sorts of godly entities and gods sensed what was happening.

It was caused by the perishing of a god. A god had fallen!

However, the most intense sorrow wasn't on the red moon, though, but in the Nine Serenities. As the god perished, a howl of intense grief echoed out from there. The Nine Serenities trembled, and countless deceased souls were thrown into chaos. The howls of grief turned into a tempest that screamed through all eternity.

Chapter 709: A Space-Time Transaction

In the sky above the Moon Palace, the red color collapsed, but the abstract painting didn't fade away! It existed just as before. Then, it slowly began to move.

The red moon itself trembled. And Xu Qing, thanks to his red moon authority, realized that... The source was still there! The red moon authority he had shared with Crimson Mother had not disappeared! That caused Xu Qing's mind to reel.

The Captain, meanwhile, managed to form his head again, and as he looked around, he took a deep breath.

“What perished wasn't that shrew Crimson Mother! It was actually High God Flawless Hell of the Nine Serenities! In the critical moment, the shrew stopped devouring Flawless Hell and then forced him to substitute for her in death!”

Almost exactly as the words left the Captain's mouth, a grim voice spoke from within the painting.

“Did you really think I wasn't aware of the truth, Li Zihua? The year you reached godly ascension, you saw the future, didn't you...? As for me, I've always had the personhood of a god, and therefore what you wish for is provided by me! I had a premonition that I would face a calamity in this life, and in order to prepare for it, I devoured the bodies of other powerful gods.”

As the voice echoed out, the entire Moon Palace turned red. And that red color spread out, covering everything, including Xu Qing and everyone else. Their blood went out of control, and everything around them rippled and blurred. Boundless mutagen rose up everywhere. The gray color in the painting started fading away. The pink color darkened. Emperor Ancient Spirit's eyes started collapsing.

The heavenly daos summoned by Li Zihua started disappearing from view. In the days before the coming of the broken face, Li Zihua would have had greater command of the heavenly daos, and would have been able to continue using them in this fight. But right now... one attack with the heavenly daos was all he could manage. Their mission was to safeguard Revered Ancient, and since they still had to resist the broken face, they were extremely weak. As of now, their mission made it impossible for them to continue. And thus, they faded away.

The son of Xu Qing and the Captain was still snarling angrily, yet was also growing weak. He wasn't fully grown yet, and thus he closed his eyes and disappeared.

Next, a huge blood-colored tentacle appeared in the abstract painting, which then shot down and slammed into the ground. The tentacle was covered in feathers and also dripped with blood, making it ghastly in appearance while simultaneously pulsing with godly might. A second tentacle appeared, then a third and a fourth. In the blink of an eye, over a hundred tentacles stabbed into the ground. The blood-red color grew more intense.

A power of awakening pulsed out of the painting, and at the same time... the same thing filled the red moon. The red moon trembled as great rifts opened up on its surface. Red light seeped out, and at the same time, blood-red tentacles covered with feathers spread out from inside!

Rifts spread, and the tentacles grew more numerous. From a distance, the red moon looked like a giant ball of feathers. As the feather-covered tentacles swayed back and forth, they imparted a grisly and fear-inspiring sensation. It was as if some even more terrifying entity was waking up in the red moon, sending its energy off the moon and into the Moonrite Region below. Astonishingly, it was... Crimson Mother's energy!

Li Zihua and the others had been fighting Crimson Mother. But what existed inside the red moon was also Crimson Mother. The red moon trembled violently, and more cracks spread out over its surface. As the energy spread, the surface of the red moon became like a blood-soaked mud of flesh.

Soon, the red moon... was like a sphere of flesh, almost like a head. It was possible to see the facial features, and they were those of Crimson Mother, including two empty eye sockets. In the forehead position was the Moon Palace, with the eyes beneath that portion. Meanwhile, the abstract painting collapsed, and a second head that looked exactly the same emerged.

High God Moonfire and High God Starfire fell back from that position, their expressions very serious. High God Moonfire stepped over to the area, pulsing with terrifying might and pressure.

Speaking via divine will, shē said, "Will the same thing happen as when you people originally summoned the Father God?"

Hēr gaze fell on Xu Qing, and shē reached out toward him. In the blink of an eye, a clump of pink clay popped up in front of High God Moonfire, blocking hēr arm.

High God Starfire appeared in front of Xu Qing, a smile on hēr beautiful face, but hēr eyes were cold.

"Sister, he's mine."

High God Moonfire's eyes were just as cold as shē looked at Starfire. "Crimson Mother is just on the edge of the High God level, with godfire burning brightly. Shē's half a step from erecting hēr god altar. If we don't stop hēr right now, then this entire fight will have been pointless."

The Captain, whose head had only just formed back together, looked on with narrowed eyes that glimmered with a crazy look. He turned to Xu Qing. "Little Junior Brother, remember Sea-Sealing County?"

Xu Qing looked in the direction where the giant baby had disappeared. "When you say 'Sea-Sealing County,' Eldest Brother, do you mean the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan?"

"Exactly. The old governor of Sea-Sealing County during the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan was named Bai Xiaozhuo." The crazy look in the Captain's eyes intensified.

Xu Qing turned his head to follow the Captain's gaze. "Back in the day, Bai Xiaozhuo used a magic of sacrifice to get the broken face's eyes to open...."

Hearing that, the Captain chuckled, then lowered his voice. "Little Junior Brother, do you blame me for dragging you to the Moonrite Region and getting you involved in all this? At the moment, it seems more and more likely we're going to lose. I prepared for a long time for this day, but maybe I didn't prepare enough."

Xu Qing shook his head. "Eldest Brother, whenever you take me on big jobs, do we ever get through them without unexpected twists?"

If there was no unexpected twist, then it wouldn't be one of the Captain's jobs. On the very first occasion in which Xu Qing did something with the Captain, he had come to realize that the Captain was crazy. Working with him was always risking your life.

When the Captain heard Xu Qing's response, he laughed heartily, and the craziness in his voice intensified. "This time, there won't be any unexpected twist! Little Junior Brother, didn't you ask me before if I'd intentionally held back from a cultivation base breakthrough, all with the intention of going back to when the godchild was in Nascent Soul?"

"Well you were right! My plan was to go to the time period when the godchild was in Nascent Soul. The reason was that I wanted to make a deal with Li Zihua, who was a god at the time! Later on, before we actually stepped onto the red moon, I gave a crazy mission to Fourth Vice-Bishop and the others."

Rumbling sounds filled the dome of heaven as Emperor Ancient Spirit fell back and summoned a black hole to use as an escape route.

Only Li Zihua didn't retreat. He stared at the head of Crimson Mother in front of him, all while pulsing with an energy of destruction and intensely burning flames. He was burning his cultivation base, and everything else about him, as he strode toward Crimson Mother.

Crimson Mother's head of flesh and blood emerged from the rift, speaking in a rumbling voice that sounded like all living beings speaking at once.

"You chose Deep Earth, Li Zihua. You abandoned the path of the gods to become a cultivator. That means you have a weakness that can be exploited. You... are old. You couldn't stop me back in the day, so how do you think you can stop me now?"

Then, the head shot toward Li Zihua to devour him.

Li Zihua's expression remained the same as ever. Fire burned around him, as he allowed Crimson Mother to devour him. And yet, there was something tender in his eyes.

"Back when I left Brilliant Heaven," he said, "the god ancestor told me that you're much more suitable for igniting godfire."

Crimson Mother was about to respond when, all of a sudden, shē sent her divine will down to the Moonrite Region. To hēr, the region was nothing but food, so up to now in the conflict, shē hadn't

paid any attention to it. But as of now, when hēr divine will swept over the region, shē suddenly pulsed with emotional fluctuations.

At the same time, the fleeing Emperor Ancient Spirit stopped in place and also looked at the Moonrite Region. High Gods Moonfire and Starfire did the same.

The Moonrite Region, which had gone unnoticed by all the gods up to this point, was experiencing a dramatic event!

The Moonrebel Congregation's Fourth and Second Vice-Bishops, as well as all of their Void Returning subordinates, had not come with the Heir Apparent and everyone else to the red moon. They had stayed behind down below. And they had been waiting for this very moment to carry out their mission. They had sealed the cultivation bases of all the Red Moon Cathedral cultivators, and had collected them in seven locations.

The largest group was located in the cathedral headquarters on the Penitence Steppes. The other six locations were various church temples located throughout the Moonrite Region. After the Red Moon Cathedral collapsed and the godchild died, the rest of the cathedral cultivators were easily captured. And thus, there were a lot of them detained in those seven locations. There were also plenty of captives from the organizations that had sided with the Red Moon Cathedral. The top experts among them had their cultivation bases sealed, and they were now held at those seven locations.

Taking in the number of captives as a whole, they weren't as numerous as the living beings Bai Xiaozhuo had sacrificed, in other words, the entire population of a county. What was more, their varied cultivation bases were also a far cry from what Bai Xiaozhuo had used.

But that didn't matter.... In the past, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan had single-handedly offered a sacrifice to open the eyes of the broken face of the god. The numbers involved weren't important. What was more important was the person making the sacrifice.

As the cathedral cultivators trembled, the spot on the Penitence Steppes where the Imperial Sovereign's statue had once stood was now wide open.

And in the middle of that open square was an explosion of white light. The light came from the void. From space-time. From the past. As it appeared, it turned into a majestic figure.

It was Li Zihua, although not the same Li Zihua that Crimson Mother was currently devouring. Instead, the Li Zihua that had just appeared actually burned with godfire. Hē was from the past! Hē was from the point in time when the godchild was in the Nascent Soul level!

The Captain became the coordinates that allowed hīm to come to this point, although it wouldn't last for long.

The moment hē appeared, Li Zihua looked up with cold eyes at the red moon. And then hīs gaze shifted upward to look at the broken face of the god.

“I, a child of Brilliant Heaven, the first to reach godly ascension after the arrival of the immortals, hereby offer a sacrifice!”

Hīs voice echoed like heavenly thunder, shaking the nine heavens and rocking the ten earths![1]

Chapter 710: A Nursery Rhyme from the Ancient Past

Li Zihua's voice echoed through the Moonrite Region, shaking everything like thunder.

The broken face remained still and unmoving. Though facing in the direction of the Moonrite Region, the eyes were not opening.

The cultivators of the Red Moon Cathedral in the seven locations were all wailing in grief. To them, Li Zihua's words signified absolute destruction. In the shortest of moments, the cathedral cultivators and all of their allies were trembling in fear. Their skin started to split apart, causing blood to gush everywhere as their bones collapsed onto the ground into piles. The final thing to fall were their fleshless skulls. From a distance, all seven locations had innumerable piles of flesh and bone. Collectively, there were seven small mountains of flesh, with the stench of gore rising up like signal smoke.

The broken face in the canopy of heaven remained unmoving.

Until... Li Zihua's body also started ripping apart. As of now, hē was a god. For hīm to be ripped apart caused wild colors to flash in heaven and earth. As hīs flesh and blood fell to the ground, it created an eighth mountain.

It rose taller and taller. Seemingly endless amounts of flesh and blood combined to create a towering mountain. It rose until it was on the same level as the red moon. And in the end... the flesh and blood of Li Zihua's head collapsed, creating the summit of the mountain. Hīs expression was cold and apathetic, bereft of any emotional fluctuations. When hīs skull finally stopped moving, īs vacant eye sockets were looking up into the canopy of heaven.

At that exact moment, the eyes of the broken face... opened!

It was very different from the version inside Xu Qing's violet crystal. This time, the broken face's eyes really did open, revealing golden pupils that were calm and placid.

As the gaze fell, the Moonrite Region rippled and distorted. A blood rain fell on Li Zihua's mountain of flesh. Doomsday came to the Penitence Steppes as... the place changed.

It was an irreversible change. A mutagen that surpassed all other gods rose up, changing the lands, changing the living beings. Changing everything.

The Penitence Steppes was turning into a new forbidden region, and gruish life forms were already starting to spread there. The mountain of flesh was rapidly becoming the foundation of the forbidden region, complete with a new life force and a new intelligence.

All living beings in the Revered Ancient mainland trembled. It didn't matter where they were. All of them could see the broken face of the god, and knew what was happening.

Terror. Confusion. Astonishment. Countless negative emotions flitted through the minds of everyone.

The vague, shadowy images of heavenly daos appeared in the sky over the mainland, looking down as if they desired to stop what was happening. But there was nothing they could do other than wail silently in sorrow. Some of them were even perishing. These were the 100,000 heavenly daos of Revered Ancient, and they were different from the 100 ancient heavenly daos. Whenever the broken face's eyes opened, they were affected, and some of them were destroyed.

The red moon was also affected. It was within the field of view of the broken face, located as it was directly above the Penitence Steppes. The moon trembled violently as events played out that were similar to when the broken face appeared from Xu Qing's violet crystal.

The first time the god's gaze landed on a location, it became a forbidden region. The second time, it became a forbidden ground. The third time, it turned into a god domain. The fourth time... it would be called a god world!

The red moon started pulsing to an irregular rhythm on its timeline. Then, in countless instances of space-time, innumerable additional red moons appeared.

They intersected and overlapped, over and over again, as something occurred the likes of which Xu Qing had never witnessed before! In the middle of all of the countless red moons was a rapidly expanding haze that was slowly covering all of the moons.

As it did, it transformed into a majestic face! It was none other than Crimson Mother's face, made up of endless red moons from different instances of space-time. As they interacted and intersected, they created the facial features of the face. The movement of the face made it seem extremely lifelike. It was as if each expression represented a change in thought, and that each thought could be made a reality in a different instance of space-time.

That was why so many red moons would appear in so many instances of space-time. Different thoughts provoked more and more instances of space-time. They were like choices. And every time the face made a choice, a different instance of space-time would appear, and a new world would be created in accordance with that choice.

This was a god world.

As of now, the Penitence Steppes had become a forbidden region, and the red moon had become a god world.

The broken face's eyes closed.

In the red moon, Crimson Mother trembled. Li Zihua, whom shē was devouring, still seemed calm and tranquil. Looking at the pain-wracked Crimson Mother, he waved his hand.

Instantly, Xu Qing and the Captain, as well as the Heir Apparent and his siblings, all vanished. An instant later, they materialized in the Moonrite Region outside of the Penitence Steppes. The moment they left, Crimson Mother's cries of anguish became a tempest that swept out, destroying every part of the Moon Palace it touched.

Crimson Mother's body was collapsing! The god world face was changing. No longer did it look like Crimson Mother. The facial features melted away until it was blank.

The broken face of the god had transformed the red moon into a god world. But Crimson Mother didn't survive the transformation. It was like how a powerful tonic could become a poison if administered in too high a dosage.

Too far is as bad as not enough!

Therefore, shē collapsed, falling into pieces. Destroyed. And then the red moon started disappearing!

Inside the Moon Palace, Emperor Ancient Spirit's eyes glittered with greed as hē raced out into the open, transforming into a host of eyes. Each eye had a mouth, and they all raced to devour Crimson Mother.

An agonized shriek rang out as countless eyes collapsed. However, some of them managed to rip off chunks of Crimson Mother's flesh, whereupon they disappeared back into the Moon Palace.

All told, Emperor Ancient Spirit managed to devour flesh equivalent to about ten percent of Crimson Mother's entire body.

It wasn't that hē didn't want to devour more. Rather, hē couldn't.

Next, Moonfire and Starfire threw all caution to the wind as thēy closed in and started ripping off flesh to consume. Each of thēm got more than ten percent. Similarly, thēy wanted to continue, but knew that staying on the vanishing red moon would be extremely dangerous.

But what sealed thēir decision was Li Zihua's weak voice.

“Don't get greedy.”

The gazes of Moonfire and Starfire glittered, and then thēy unhesitatingly vanished. The moment thēy disappeared, the red moon dimmed as though it were being erased from the sky.

Meanwhile, down in the Moonrite Region just outside the Penitence Steppes, the Captain, whose body had formed anew after being sent away by Li Zihua, suddenly exploded. A moment later, it formed back together. His eyes gleamed with excitement as he looked at Xu Qing standing there looking very serious. The Captain quickly blinked three times in a row.

Xu Qing understood the meaning. The Captain was imparting three numbers to him. However, now wasn't the time to discuss details about the message. The red moon faded away, not just from above the Moonrite Region, but from above the Revered Ancient mainland. After it was gone, Revered Ancient was permanently missing another moon.

Except, it's actually still there... Xu Qing thought, looking up into the sky. Because he had a portion of red moon authority, he could sense, albeit vaguely... that the god world version of the red moon was now very, very far away from Revered Ancient. It was somewhere in the starry sky outside of Revered Ancient, far away in the void....

In that location, there were a host of innumerable vortexes. Some were small, and some were large. All were different colors, and they all glittered in different ways as they orbited around each other. No one knew exactly what that location was. Apparently, no cultivator had ever been there.

At the moment, a new vortex was popping into being among all the other innumerable vortexes.

It was very small compared to the other vortexes. And it was red. Inside that vortex were a host of red moons that made up a very pale face. In that face's forehead was a section of space-time that had a red moon in it, burning with golden flames.

It was godfire, not from Crimson Mother, nor from Li Zihua. Close examination would reveal that the energy conformed to that of the Red Moon Cathedral's godchild, who was also Li Zihua's fourth son. There was something inside of the godfire that formed its core.

An eyeball.

It was the very same eyeball that Xu Qing had previously spotted inside the godchild's secret trove. [1]

It was... Crimson Mother's left eye. Within the pupil of that eyeball, it was possible to see Crimson Mother, growing larger and larger to occupy every part of the eyeball. Then flesh started to grow outside the eyeball.

The flesh piled up rapidly, forming a new body for Crimson Mother.

Crimson Mother's eyes opened. Previously, both of hēr eye sockets were empty, but now there was an eyeball in the left socket. A boundless majesty pulsed off hēr, spreading out into the local space-time. Then it attempted to expand into other instances of space-time to change them.

But then, a miserable shriek erupted from hēr mouth, interrupting the process.

“Li Zihua....”

As the bitter words left Crimson Mother's mouth, the image of Li Zihua appeared in hēr left eye. Hē quickly overtook that eye, and then spread out to the rest of Crimson Mother.

Crimson Mother trembled as shē fought back, except it didn't do any good. Hēr facial features changed. Hēr body changed from female to male. In the end, shē became Li Zihua.

As the process went on, hēr bitter voice filled the Moon Palace.

“So this was your plan. You knew all along how I'd set things up. So you sacrificed your fourth son in your final plot to bury me.

“It's not that you didn't want to become a god, Li Zihua. You just didn't want to bear the karma of godly ascension. That's why you beheaded my mortal husk, but didn't actually kill me. You wanted me to reach godly ascension, that way I would be forced to sustain the karma, only for you to be resurrected within me.”

Crimson Mother's voice grew weaker and weaker. As Li Zihua's features took over, shē closed hēr eyes, hēr voice trembling with defiance, rancor, and confusion. In the very end, shē sighed.

“I'm giving you what you want, big brother....”

Crimson Mother perished. Eventually, hēr eyes opened.

And Li Zihua was back.

“Fourth Sister,” hē murmured, “the path of Brilliant Heaven is incorrect.... But so is the path of Deep Earth. Immortals and gods, in reality... can be one. That's why I said the mission still stands.”

Hē looked off in the direction of Revered Ancient for a moment. Then hē closed hīs hand into a fist. The red moon god world shrank down, turning into an eyeball that hē grabbed and shoved into hīs right eye socket.

Turning, hē made his way quietly out into the void. Further and further away. Hē began to sing in a voice that thrummed in a strange pitch.

“There was once a big dolly; with a bunch of little dollys; ten little dollys 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!”

Perhaps it was the case that the ‘fourth dolly’ in the song wasn’t actually the Imperial Sovereign’s fourth son. Maybe it was hīs fourth sister.... [2]