

## Timescape 791

Chapter 791: Locking Onto the Source!

Time passed. It was now only a day before the big showdown between the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School. On the surface, things seemed calm in the imperial capital. However, the dao seed that had been sent by the governor of Heavenbright County to serve as evidence was causing a big storm to build. Right now, it was apparently the calm before the storm, and the atmosphere in the city was *as changeable as clouds and waves*.

Everyone was waiting and watching. They were watching the emperor, and they were watching the Xeno-Immortal School.

The Xeno-Immortal School was wrapped up in controversy both inside and outside the Imperial University. Now that their tower had been locked down, the previously bustling school of thought was like *a night cactus that only blooms once*. It was back to how it had been for so long before.

People who had started practicing the Xeno-Immortal School's techniques were now stewing in anxiety, and didn't dare to reveal their true identities.

Many organizations were just waiting for the emperor to issue a dharmic decree. It was easy to imagine that when the dharmic decree came out, the Xeno-Immortal School would hit rock bottom. Their revival would be at an end, and they would end up even worse than before.

Their previous decline could be chalked up to changing times. But now their cultivation methods were linked to an incident in which the souls were extracted from millions and millions of humans. That matter had been placed right out in the open, and now all of humankind was paying attention.... And everyone agreed it was a crime against humanity. That was especially true considering that the evidence seemed incontrovertible.

It was actually the day before the appointed debate between the God-Merging School and the Xeno-Immortal School that a dharmic decree was released, which was what everyone had been expecting.

*"The Xeno-Immortal School's tower is hereby unsealed, and they're permitted to prove themselves in a dao debate with the God-Merging School!"*

Some people were surprised by the decree, while others had expected it.

The Xeno-Immortal School had been around for a very long time, since the founding of the Imperial University, in fact. They had a very storied history. What was more, from ancient times until now, there had been many human cultivators who cultivated Xeno-Immortal techniques. Though the school of thought fell into decline, the truth was that it had created many connections with other human organizations over the years. In fact, it was impossible to say how many people were loyal to the school in their heart. It seemed entirely conceivable that the decree was made for the sake of multiple parties. What was really happening beneath the surface would only be known by certain extraordinary people.

The various deep connections the Xeno-Immortal School had made throughout the years were what bought it a chance. A chance to prove the school's innocence.

Around evening on the day before the dao debate, the Xeno-Immortal School's white tower in the Imperial University slowly opened. Since the schoolmaster had been confined inside, he was the

first to appear. His gaze made him seem a lot older than before as he stood there quietly looking up and down the street in the Imperial University.

Many surrounding students noticed what was happening and looked over. They had mixed emotions in their eyes. Some looked disgusted, some sympathetic, some angry, and some hesitant.

After a short time passed, the schoolmaster turned and went back inside, where he sat down in the main hall to wait. Time passed by. No students entered the school. The schoolmaster's eyes seemed blank, but in their depths burned a fiery defiance.

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In the evening outside the Imperial University, a cold winter wind blew. It sounded like a poem, or weeping, or cursing. It swept over the ancient city walls, seemingly intent on scraping the streets free of dust and snow. With it came a sensation of bitter coldness that reached everyone in the capital. The wind was like an old poet, lamenting about the history of heaven and earth. Either that, or it was an emotionless observer, silently recording all the sorrow in the world.

As the winter wind blew in the middle of night, a figure as dark as ink joined the poetry. The wind just barely defined the outline of a shadowy figure who was rapidly approaching a building near Grand Prince's mansion. The darkness cloaked that individual, and the cold wind masked his aura. As a result, he went completely undetected as he appeared in front of the building.

This was Xu Qing, who had just returned to the capital. As he stood there, he cast his senses out.

Xu Qing had used god magic to peer into the past of that black-cloaked figure from Words of Truth. However, what he had seen was only a tiny fragment, an image of the figure worshipping on an altar. He hadn't been able to see the object of worship. He just knew that this person was from Words of Truth. That said, after investigating the two Xeno-Immortal School students who were now dead, Xu Qing knew that, in addition to Words of Truth, there was someone that had been referred to as the 'employer.' Perhaps the word 'employer' was a deliberately mystifying word choice.

Also, the black-cloaked individual used my soul thread connection and hidden divine will to unleash a mutagen I found familiar. And then there was the snort, whose voice I also found very familiar....

Eyes narrowing, Xu Qing pushed the door open and walked into the room. It was pitch black inside. However, Xu Qing could see clearly despite the darkness.

The room was utilitarian, with only a bed, table, and chair. On the table was an oil lamp.

Seeing that, Xu Qing closed his eyes and reviewed what he had learned via the soulsearches and god magic. Based on what he could tell, this was the very location where a meeting had taken place a month before.

The black-cloaked man had sat right there talking to three students from the Xeno-Immortal School. He had fiddled with the lamp while he spoke. No one present had seen his face.

Eventually, Xu Qing opened his eyes, walked to the spot where the black-cloaked figure had been seated, and sat down. He waved his hand, and an oil lamp appeared in front him, lit.

In the flickering, hazy darkness, Xu Qing reached out to fiddle with the flame. Sending some violet moon power out from him, he was able to insert some of his own mutagen into the lamp. Gradually, the lamp's flame grew stronger, until it seemed that it was on the verge of becoming alive.

That was another power of the gods. Mutagen could invade living beings. But it could also bring things to life, at least to an extent. That was why so many new species came into existence in Revered Ancient after the broken face arrived. It was the same with the core parts of forbidden regions. For example, the forbidden region outside the scavenger basecamp back in South Phoenix was actually formed from a zither that came alive.

Xu Qing was now using that same method to bring this lamp to life. It was true that no one in this room had seen the face of the black cloaked figure. But... this lamp had seen that face.

This was magic that ordinary people couldn't pull off. That and rifling through time were things that almighty individuals might be able to imitate. But what Xu Qing was doing right now was something that only gods could do.

The lamp's flame grew stronger and danced back and forth with more intensity. Eventually, the flame started to split apart. Tentacles of flame spread out, and eventually, facial features became visible. It was clearly very unstable, as it was already trembling and cracking apart.

Xu Qing's fingers stopped moving.

"Show me the face of the black-cloaked figure from a month ago. Now!"

The flame trembled violently as if it wanted to speak. But Xu Qing's words were like a dharmic decree that couldn't be ignored.

The lamp was starting to melt, though the fire still burned brightly. Then, just before the lamp faded from existence, the last bit of fire... revealed a face. It was the face of an old man, ancient, plain, and unfamiliar.

As far as Xu Qing could remember, he had never seen this person before. The face became very clear in the fire, but then the flames faded away. It was as if the fire had spent all the life force it acquired when coming to life. Now it was sinking into oblivion.

However, the significance of this moment was profound for Xu Qing as he leaned forward and looked closely at the face. Specifically, he was looking at the eyes! And that was because he saw four people reflected in the eyes!

What was especially noteworthy was that the four figures from this month-old image were different from what Xu Qing had seen while soulsearching. During his soulsearch, and when he used the god magic, he only saw three students from the Xeno-Immortal School. But in reality... when you included the black-cloaked figure, there had been five people present in the meeting.

There was one more than he was seeing now.

The three Xeno-Immortal students couldn't see that fourth individual. Only the black-cloaked figure could see him, thanks to some mysterious connection between the two of them. And because of that, Xu Qing was able to see the same thing when he used this unusual technique of his.

The additional figure wore a long white robe, as well as the mask of the Imperial University. He seemed unfamiliar. And yet, there was a certain charm or grace in his eyes that cause Xu Qing's

killing intent to surge. The look in this person's eyes was something Xu Qing had seen on his very first day in the Imperial University, when he saw the schoolmaster of the God-Merging School. From that moment on, he had been suspicious about that schoolmaster. Now, when he combined the sound of that familiar cold snort from earlier, plus the look in this person's eyes, a very clear answer occurred to him.

The schoolmaster of the God-Merging School really is... Bai Xiaozhuo!

He waved his right hand, causing the flames to wink out, and casting the room back into darkness.

"You've been watching for a while now," Xu Qing said. "Ready to show yourself?"

His voice echoed into the room, then faded away. A few breaths of time passed. Then, someone spoke from the corner of the room in a raspy voice.

"Just what I would expect of Region Lord Xu. Not only did you find this place, but your other methods... are astounding to say the least."

A black-cloaked figure stepped out of the shadows. It looked exactly like the other black-cloaked figure in every respect.

Xu Qing turned to look at him.

"You're not him," he said calmly. Based on what he could sense, this black-cloaked figure was a different person.

"I'm not. But I might be in the future."

The black-cloaked figure stood there looking at Xu Qing for a long moment. His facial features were a blur. He seemed to be taking the situation very seriously, as was Xu Qing. The black-cloaked figure extended his right hand, within which was a jade slip that he put down in front of Xu Qing.

"My employer is Seventh Prince. All the proof is in there. I've already organized it all for you. You can decide what to do with it." He turned to walk out, and he began to blur.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing's killing intent was burning. Ignoring the jade slip, he looked at the rapidly disappearing cloaked figure. He already had a theory about who this person was.

"If you have time," Xu Qing said, "go back and say hi to Ningyan."

The black-cloaked figure shivered and looked over his shoulder at Xu Qing as he faded from view.

Chapter 792: Imperial University Dao Debate

After the black-cloaked figure left, the room went back to being completely silent.

Xu Qing picked up the jade slip off the table and sent some divine will into it. A moment later, his eyes turned even colder. Turning, he looked out the window into the dark night, and his gaze became like a brush. Using the night wind as a palette knife, the silence as a rhythm, the universe as the canvas, and starlight and moonlight as the ink, it was possible to paint a beautiful picture of dawn. Within the painting, Xu Qing slowly blurred until he vanished from sight.

When he reappeared, he was outside of the painting, walking down the street toward the Imperial University.

He had heard the news that the big showdown between the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School would continue as planned. He also knew that the Xeno-Immortal School's tower had been unsealed the night before.

As the dawn slowly replaced the night, beams of light cut through the darkness and brought hope to heaven and earth. Everything was waking up and returning to normal.

That included the Xeno-Immortal School. Inside the tower, the schoolmaster sat alone, as he had the entire night. Looking outside, he saw the waning darkness, and the burgeoning light of the sun. He also saw... a figure approaching. That figure stepped out of the light of dawn and into the tower.

"Schoolmaster," Xu Qing said softly, bowing at the waist.

The schoolmaster looked at Xu Qing and the sunlight framing him. The schoolmaster knew who this student was, and also knew that he had joined the Xeno-Immortal School back when it was still in decline. He remembered thinking that this student had some natural talent. But later, as the Xeno-Immortal School revival picked up speed, plenty of talented people showed up, and he eventually stopped paying attention to this particular student. He could never have guessed that, after the Xeno-Immortal School was finally unsealed, this person... would be the first and only person to come back.

As the schoolmaster heaved inward sighs, Xu Qing went over to one of the jade slip shelves. He wanted to find information about the God-Merging School. Considering that their philosophy was diametrically opposed to the Xeno-Immortal School's teachings, it was only natural that there would be plenty of information about them.

That was especially true of the *Xeno-Immortal Enquirer*. Although most of the stories in the tabloid were either contrived or based on hearsay, there were still kernels of truth to be found. His plan was to go through all of the records he could find, with the goal of confirming some of his speculations. At the same time, he would plan what to do next. As far as he was concerned, Seventh Prince was already a dead man. However, Seventh Prince wasn't the only person he planned to deal with.

Bai Xiaozhuo....

After reaching the shelf, he started going through the various records.

The schoolmaster looked at him as if he wanted to say something, but couldn't find the words. Eventually, he sighed.

"Sir Dark-Thunder, it's possible that there won't be a Xeno-Immortal School after today. You can shed your conclave student status any time you want. And feel free to get rid of your dao seed, that way, your future path will be free of obstructions."

With that, he took out a jade slip and put it down off to the side. That jade slip could revoke his conclave status. Having done that, the schoolmaster stood and slowly walked outside. It was dawn, and thus, the time had nearly come for the debate. As he looked off toward the horizon, the schoolmaster felt lonely and miserable.

He wasn't sure if the enigmatic master would show up. Nor did he have any idea what fate had in store of the Xeno-Immortal School, or what to do. But regardless, he was the current schoolmaster. Thus, his eyes gradually began to shine with determination.

It doesn't matter what happens. Even if this is the end of the line... I won't let the Xeno-Immortal name be tarnished!

With such thoughts on his mind, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster strode toward the Imperial University's daoist rite center.

Back in the tower, Xu Qing watched as the schoolmaster walked off. Then he went back to checking the jade slips. Eventually, he heard bells tolling. Student poured into the university, and the buzz of conversation filled the air. At that point, Xu Qing put down the ancient records he had been studying. He'd found the answer he had sought. He walked out of the tower and into the crowd.

The dao debate between the two schools of thought was already the subject of a lot of attention. But then things went really bad for the Xeno-Immortal School, and now, this debate was going to be scrutinized even more closely. That was especially true considering... that the emperor had specifically issued a command indicating that the debate should be held. As a result, a lot of people were paying attention to the event, and not just students from the Imperial University. Organizations and groups from throughout the imperial capital were using a variety of means to make sure they could watch.

There was only one place in the Imperial University where dao debates were held. It was the university's only daoist rite center, which was in the middle of the university.

It was a large facility that could comfortably hold hundreds of thousands of spectators. In years past, whenever high-profile dao debates were held, they would attract big crowds. At the moment, there were a lot of students converging on the daoist rite center. In fact, just about every student who lived in the imperial capital was planning to attend. The buzz of conversation filled the air as everyone looked up.

High in the air overhead were two very large octagonal dao altars. They were ancient and refined, with one of them being white and the other black, which seemed to hint at themes of purity and resolve. The eight-sided structures that formed their foundations signified the harmonious convergence of earth and heaven.

As pressure built up, both altars emitted sounds like daoist chanting, which spread out in all directions along with dazzling light.

The God-Merging School's schoolmaster sat on the black altar. Behind him were his chief students and other high-ranking members, including Seventh Prince. Hundreds of people all sat there cross-legged. There were also a host of God-Merging students clustered down below.

There was only one person on the white altar; the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster sat there all alone. He seemed bleak and desolate.

Among the organizations outside the university who were watching the proceedings, many shaking heads could be seen. After all... in years past the Xeno-Immortal School was the number one school of thought in the Imperial University. But now....

Many people sighed in their hearts, and that included the Xeno-Immortal students who had gathered at the daoist rite center.

Xu Qing was in the crowd. He could sense the mounting pressure, and as he looked up at the God-Merging School's altar, he saw Seventh Prince and... the schoolmaster. He looked at them calmly. For the time being, he did nothing to expose them. It seemed like a better idea to wait until the show reached a climactic juncture, then step in.

Eventually, after the bells tolled for the ninth time, the sky over the Imperial University rippled, and two figures appeared, both wearing white robes.

One was in the lead, the other followed. One was old, the other was young. In the lead position was an old man with a kindly face that was full of wrinkles, like furrows dug out by the passage of rivers over countless years of time. He could no longer stand tall and straight, but that just made him seem more wise and farsighted. This was the chancellor of the Imperial University. Behind him... was the current vice-chancellor, who was also Third Prince.

They did not wear the masks common in the university, which meant that their facial features were plain for everyone to see. As soon as they appeared, the schoolmasters of both the God-Merging School and the Xeno-Immortal School stood. Along with all the other students present, they clasped hands and bowed.

“Greetings, Chancellor.”

The chancellor had been personally appointed by the emperor, and he was known as a person of virtue and prestige. Whether it was erudite knowledge, status, or contributions, this old man possessed them all in spades. He had been around since the days that the Imperial University was founded, and over the years, had personally provided assistance to many of the schools of thought. He was a member of the imperial clan as well. In terms of seniority and ranking he was actually the paternal uncle of the reigning emperor. That was why Third Prince walked behind him in a very respectful way.

The chancellor stopped in midair, looked up into the canopy of heaven, and bowed.

“Well met, Emperor.”

His words caused a stir amongst the students below. Meanwhile, looking at the spot in the sky to which the chancellor had spoken, it was possible to see the air rippling as an image appeared. It provided a view of the imperial palace. The emperor was there, seated on his throne, looking very solemn.

When the chancellor clasped hands in greeting, the emperor rose and returned the salute. It wasn't a salute based on the etiquette of social standing. Rather, the emperor was representing humankind as a whole, which transcended everything else. The reason for him standing was that he wanted to show respect. It was respect for the chancellor of the Imperial University, and all of the work he'd done over the years.

Seated at a lower level than the emperor were thirteen figures who also stood and clasped hands. Each of those figure pulsed with a shocking aura. In fact, all it took was a single glance for Xu Qing to confirm... that all of them were Smoldering Gods. It was self-evident who these people were. They were the heavenly kings who were currently in the imperial capital.

After the ceremonial greetings, the emperor sat back down, as did the heavenly kings.

Meanwhile, the chancellor turned his attention to the daoist altars, and to the people from the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School. Then he looked at the hundreds of thousands of students who had gathered. A kind smile appeared on his face.

“It’s been a long time since I officiated over a dao debate in the Imperial University. I’m very pleased that this is finally happening again.

“This dao debate will consist of three stages: first, *heavenly daos debate approval*. Second, *human hearts debate falsehood*. Third, *morning and night debate the hereafter*. The victor will not be determined by either of the schools of thought participating in the event. You students will decide. All of you possess wisdom and agency, and thus, the winner will be picked by whomever you approve in your heart.”

The moment the words left his mouth, a prismatic beam of light shot up from the God-Merging School’s altar. Rumbling sounds echoed out as it rose high into the sky, glittering and bright. That beam of light was created by the hearts of the students. Its size and height was a visible manifestation of how much people approved of the God-Merging School.

The Xeno-Immortal School also had a beam of light, but in contrast... it was only about 9 meters tall. The difference between the two was about as dramatic as the difference between heaven and earth.

All groups and organizations took a long moment to take in the scene. The buzz in the Imperial University grew louder.

Beneath his mask, Xu Qing frowned.

Up in midair, the chancellor shook his head slightly. However, the dao debate had to go on. Clearing his throat, he said, “And now, let the heavenly daos debate approval.

“Before two schools of thought can begin a dao debate, their techniques and thinking patterns must be approved of by a heavenly dao. That is a basic requirement for dao debates.

“In Revered Ancient, there are 99 ancient heavenly daos that are currently sleeping. Humans can’t easily sense those heavenly daos. But there are also 100,000 ordinary heavenly daos, 3,000 of which blessed the creation of the Imperial University’s daoist rite center. Therefore, this place can be used to connect with those 3,000 heavenly daos.

“If the heavenly daos do not approve of you, the debate cannot continue, and that will indicate that the school of thought in question requires adjustments. At this point, both the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School can choose whether or not they wish to proceed.”

On the black altar, the God-Merging schoolmaster chuckled beneath his mask.



“God-Merging students.”

The students from the God-Merging School released their auras, which merged together to create a huge shadowy figure looming overhead. It had three heads and six arms, and seemed to be made of a host of godly entities all combined into one. That combination created an incomparable aura. Surrounded by ripples and distortions, it almost looked like a god.

As the God-Merging schoolmaster looked up, the huge figure overhead lifted its right hand into the sky and pinched its fingers together. An intense rumbling sound echoed out. At the same time, the God-Merging schoolmaster stood and bowed.

“Please, let the heavenly daos debate approval.”

All of a sudden, a host of rifts spread out in the sky, large and small. They became a collection of cold eyes that opened and looked at the figure summoned by the God-Merging School.

“Go ahead.”

“Go ahead.”

“Go ahead.”

The voices of great daos echoed out loud for everyone to hear.

The students down below were already starting to get excited. Even the chancellor had to nod.

“Of the 3,000 heavenly daos, 2,137 offered approval. What benevolence!”

At the same time, the prismatic pillar of light coming off the God-Merging altar climbed a bit higher.

The God-Merging schoolmaster turned to the chancellor and bowed deeply. Then he turned to look at the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster sighed inwardly. Then, bracing himself, he stood and released some of his aura. Clasp hands to the sky, he said, “Please, let the heavenly daos debate approval....”

He didn’t sound very confident.

Down in the crowd, Xu Qing looked up calmly at the dome of heaven.

Chapter 793: Squeal!

Numerous rifts in the sky became eyes. There were a total of 3,000 pairs. They were the heavenly daos that had been attracted to the Imperial University when it was constructed, thanks to the proliferation of destiny aura. And they had given it their blessing.

As the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster’s energy spread out, and as he spoke, a host of soul threads emerged to form the projection of a huge earthchild. It was made completely of soul threads, and all of it was done so that the heavenly dao could sense what was happening and debate approval.

However, whether it was in terms of their energy or pressure created by the earthchild, it couldn’t come close to comparing to the projection created by so many students from the God-Merging School.

The eyes in the dome of heaven stared down coldly. Then, in what was a surprise to no one, most of the eyes closed. Only about 20 remained open. It was the same with the voices of the great daos. They simply couldn't compare to the resounding scene from moments ago with the God-Merging School.

The students gathered at the daoist rite center observed all of this happening. Those who were already leaning in the direction of the God-Merging School now felt even more confident in their decision, while those who had been siding with the Xeno-Immortal School could only sigh in their hearts.

One side earned the approval of well over 2,000 heavenly daos, while the other side only got about 20....

Inferior was inferior.

Outside of the university, many of the spectators sighed at what they were seeing. This was only the first stage of the debate, and the Xeno-Immortal School had clearly lost thoroughly.

The members of the God-Merging School on the black altar all smiled arrogantly. As for their schoolmaster, he shook his head slowly, as if he were already losing interest in what was happening. That, of course, was making a mockery of the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster. It was essentially an attack.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster felt pain in his heart as he looked up into the sky. He had previously considered that something like this might happen, but to have to actually experience it was more difficult than he'd imagined. After all, this was not the first time the Xeno-Immortal School had been in a dao debate. In its heyday, it would also receive approval from more than 2,000 heavenly daos when it came time for a debate. But now... hardly 20 of the heavenly daos approved. And that meant that the remainder did not approve of the dao of the Xeno-Immortal.

So, the heavenly daos have abandoned the Xeno-Immortal School...?

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster bowed his head and seemed to age dramatically, and his eyes grew cloudy. However, he maintained his dignity, and bowed at the waist to the heavenly daos.

Meanwhile, the chancellor of the Imperial University was sighing inwardly as he prepared to begin the second stage of the dao debate.

“Next is the—”

Just then, as Xu Qing stood in the crowd below, he frowned slightly beneath his mask.

An intense rumbling sound filled the dome of heaven. Countless clouds swirled, forming together, then dispersing. It created a cycle in which ancient energy converged in the air above the Imperial University. Everyone could sense a feeling of grandeur.

The development caused the chancellor to stop short and look up, an expression of disbelief and shock on his face. He wasn't the only one. Third Prince did the same, as well as all the other students present, as well as everyone from the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School. There were also people in the organizations outside the university who felt their hearts racing. The emperor and the thirteen heavenly kings all looked visibly surprised. The emperor leaned forward slightly.

As everyone looked on, the ancient aura grew wilder and more intense. It eventually turned into heaven-shaking, earth-shattering thunder that crashed over the university.

It seemed to rip open the dome of heaven, creating a massive rift that filled the entire sky. The other rifts couldn't compare to it at all in size. And then, as the rift opened... it revealed a huge eye.

The eye completely filled the sky over the Imperial University, until it was the only thing visible. It was like heaven's eye.

It was made of two colors. It had a violet pupil surrounded by blue!

The sky trembled violently as all of the other rifts, 3,000 of them in total, emitted cracking sounds as they opened up. Now, their gazes weren't cold, but rather filled with respect. Even worship.

The ancient energy grew even more intense. Brightly colored light flashed in heaven and earth, winds screamed, and lightning crashed. They were like the most primeval sounds possible, howling as unthinkable power was unleashed. And then all of the sound combined into one, tender voice.

*“Squeal!”*

The sound surpassed all of the great dao voices in every respect. What was more, the nature of the sound was clear to everyone who heard it. It was approval!

“An ancient heavenly dao??” the chancellor blurted, his heart pounding.

Third Prince was shaken to the core. All of the other students felt similar. On the God-Merging School's altar, the leaders struggled to control their breathing. Only the schoolmaster looked on with glittering eyes. The reaction outside the university was the same, and even the emperor and the heavenly kings were shaken.

Everyone knew that the 99 ancient heavenly daos of Revered Ancient were all asleep. None of them had even shown up when Emperor Dark War ascended the throne. Nor did they appear when the Imperial University was founded. But now... an ancient heavenly dao appeared and expressed approval of the Xeno-Immortal School for a mere dao debate!

Astonishing treatment like this seemed completely outrageous to most people.

Even the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was at a loss for words. He stared mutely at the ancient eye, and could hardly believe that in the debate of approval, the Xeno-Immortal School would be favored by an ancient heavenly dao.

Down in the crowd, Xu Qing looked up at the eye and nodded slightly. It was hard to say if it was because the huge eye had detected that its father was pleased, but either way, it emitted an amiable sound. Then the eye shifted to look at something outside of the university before closing and fading from view.

No one else could possibly guess what the eye had looked at. But Xu Qing got the feeling that his heavenly dao son had been looking at its other father.

In fact, inside the recently robbed Star Emperor Preeminence Sect, there was an ordinary-looking disciple sweeping the floor who suddenly looked proudly in the direction of the Imperial University.

What a good son. You haven't forgotten you have another father.

Back in the Imperial University, everything was dead silent. But then, after the ancient heavenly dao departed, a huge commotion broke out. Countless students started clamoring excitedly about the unbelievable thing they had just witnessed.

“An ancient heavenly dao...”

“The Xeno-Immortal School actually earned the approval of an ancient heavenly dao!!”

“I’ve never even sensed an ancient heavenly dao before. That type of pressure is absolutely terrifying...”

The uproar was even more dramatic when it came to the chancellor and the experts in the organizations outside the university. All were shaken to the core. At the same time, all of them were wondering about the same thing.

“I don’t remember the 99 ancient heavenly daos having one with blue eyes and violet pupils.... And that voice. It sounded so young and immature.”

And yet, there was no question that the aura they had sensed was the pure aura of an ancient heavenly dao. That was something that couldn’t be faked, and therefore, all speculations about the matter had to be put aside.

The emperor looked in the direction of the Imperial University with his eyes narrowed. His gaze swept over the crowd of students before finally coming to rest on Xu Qing.

At exactly the same time, another gaze emerged from the Star-Plucking Tower in the capital. It focused on the Imperial University, and specifically, the canopy of heaven above it. That gaze belonged to the imperial preceptor. He stood on the top floor of the Star-Plucking Tower, his hair swaying in the breeze.

“This is the second time you’ve caught me by surprise, lil’ bro.”

Down in the crowd, Xu Qing remained calm. He had known from the beginning that he would eventually have to reveal himself. That was fine. He hadn’t expected to be able to stay in hiding for the whole day. At the moment, though, he was looking at the astonished Seventh Prince on the black altar.

The prismatic beam of light coming from the God-Merging School was still high in the sky, yet it had crept down a bit, and wasn’t as bright as before.

In contrast, the approval of an ancient heavenly dao caused the light coming off the Xeno-Immortal School’s daoist altar to rise from 9 meters to 300 meters. That was because of the restored confidence of the students of the Xeno-Immortal School, as well as the shifting opinions of other students.

Excitement was building at this dao debate.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster took a deep breath. Eyes shining with confidence, he looked at the God-Merging School.

The God-Merging schoolmaster looked back at him for a moment, then laughed softly. "Please continue, chancellor."

The chancellor closed his eyes briefly, then opened them. As of now, he was a lot more interested in this dao debate than he had been before. Now he wanted to see... who would ultimately come out victorious, the God-Merging School or the Xeno-Immortal School? He wasn't the only one thinking something like that. All the students and all the schools of thought in the university, as well as everyone in the organizations on the outside, were thinking the same thing. Before, it had seemed a foregone conclusion who would win and who would lose. But now things had changed.

"The second stage of the dao debate," said the chancellor in a hoarse voice, "is to debate falsehood. When speaking of the dao, there is true, and there is false. The human heart can be used to determine which is which.

"I will propose three questions to the Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School. Based on the topics given, you can debate your dao.

"The first question is... if the path of the immortal is severed, how should you proceed?"

The Imperial University went silent again, and all eyes shifted to the two altars above.

Seeing all the gazes shifting in his direction, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster loudly said, "Our Xeno-Immortal School uses soul threads to weave the projections of godly entities. By developing them into spirits of godly ascension, we can gain nourishment, and then use the path of godfire as a reference point. Ignite the spirit of a god to continue on the path. On that path, one thought leads to gods, one thought leads to immortals. And that is what is known as a xeno-immortal."

His voice was loud and clear so that all students could hear, as well as people outside the university.

That was the core of the Xeno-Immortal School. That was the essence of their philosophy. In the past, many people had agreed with the idea, except, the cultivation process was so slow that eventually people viewed it as unrealistic. But now things had changed with the advent of the Xeno-Immortal dao seeds. On the other hand, it was also the dao seeds that had pushed the Xeno-Immortal School to the brink of crisis.

On the God-Merging School's dao altar, their schoolmaster shook his head. "Evil arts are like starlight that can't possibly compete with the illumination of the full moon."

Chapter 794: Why Question a Bell When You Can Question a Sword?

"The heavens have spirits," continued the schoolmaster of the God-Merging school, "while living beings have gods. It's a cold, hard fact that gods have come to us, and over the countless years that have passed, have become part of Revered Ancient. They are a part of the system of power here. And people like us should take advantage of that. We can take things that have been infected by gods and use them as material for our own godly ascension.

"By taking such materials into our bodies like we would medicinal pills, we can take the initiative to transform ourselves. We can make godly bodies that are appropriate

for our times and our situation. Mutagen doesn't need to be a poison. It can be a nutrient for cultivation, just like spirit energy. As a matter of fact, we in the God-Merging School call it god power.

“By using that as a cultivation technique, we humans can become incomparably strong. At the same time, considering the path of the immortal is severed, why try to force things in that regard? Instead, let's make our own path to walk! The philosophy and goal of the God-Merging School can be stated as such: all humans will be gods!”

The God-Merging schoolmaster didn't speak in wildly arrogant tones. But his words were still profoundly meaningful, and they became a tempest that struck the hearts of the students in the Imperial University. That was especially true of what he said about all humans being gods. That was the core of the God-Merging School, and it was also the reason it had grown so quickly. And the God-Merging schoolmaster expressed it with full confidence and conviction.

“Preposterous!” said the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster with a cold laugh. “Historically speaking, we humans have had our share of glory. We've transcended the mortal world. We've created huge civilizations. We've also experienced tragic catastrophes. Regardless of what happens, we keep going. We're still human! Our blood still runs red!

“You speak of humankind, but what you're actually talking about is casting aside the human body. You're talking about discarding human dignity! I'd rather just stay human than become some grotesque freak. You say that all humans will be gods? It sounds more like you want humans to *serve* the gods.

“Your methods are a way of exterminating a species! Everyone will be gods? If that happens, no one will be human!”

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster wasn't afraid to debate ideas with other schools of thought. In fact, he enjoyed it. And as he got worked up, his oratory skills seemed to improve. He became even more persuasive. As a result, there were already fence-sitting students who felt moved by his words. Even Xu Qing found himself looking twice at the schoolmaster. He never would have guessed that the man could speak so incisively. There were also students from the God-Merging School who, hearing his words, looked reticently at their own schoolmaster.

The God-Merging schoolmaster didn't say anything in response. He just looked at Seventh Prince.

Seventh Prince raised his eyebrows and coolly said, “Your Xeno-Immortal School techniques are too conservative. Too traditional. You people are too stubborn! You hold on the glory of the past and won't let go, treating new things like enemies. And you're clearly prejudiced against our God-Merging School. Well, the students of the Imperial University are no fools. They can look at the facts and make their own decision.

“The reason I chose to join the God-Merging School is the same reason that all the other students in our school did the same.”

His words met with quite a bit of approval among the students of the Imperial University. They were a new generation, and though they respected ancient traditions, they also thought they could be changed.

There were also fence-sitting students who sighed in their hearts. They had to admit that Seventh Prince's status made his arguments even more persuasive. In fact, the prismatic beam shining up from the God-Merging School grew brighter as a result.

The God-Merging schoolmaster looked at the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster. "See that? That's why your Xeno-Immortal School has fallen into decline. Times have changed."

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster sighed softly but had nothing more to say. In the debate of falsehood, the Xeno-Immortal School had not achieved any major advantage. After a long moment of silence passed, the chancellor introduced the second topic.

"What is the dao of a species?"

The first person to speak this time was from the God-Merging School, and in this case, it was their other chief student.

"In the Revered Ancient mainland, there are tens of thousands of species and trillions upon trillions of living beings. As for humans, we have the interests of all species in our hearts. Our goal is to unify Revered Ancient. To merge the daos of all species together into our own dao. We can take the best from everyone else and make it our own. We can learn from the strengths of others to offset our weaknesses. And by doing so, we can achieve unparalleled results.

"Times have changed. There's no need to be stuck wallowing in the past. Embrace change. Embrace it thoroughly! In that way, we can make a bridge between the past and the future. We can leave the past behind and usher in new innovations!

"What's wrong with saying that all humans will be gods? We will once again be the number one species in Revered Ancient. We can be tolerant of everyone. We can be in harmony with everything. And when that happens, then we can call ourselves Godfolk. We will be the unifiers of Revered Ancient. It's not some impossibility! And then the broken face in the sky will bring us, not destruction and hardship, but positive blessings! [1]

"Have any of you ever considered that even after the broken face came and changed everything, there were still living beings everywhere in Revered Ancient? Couldn't it be possible that the coming of the face was a destined opportunity? And if we seize that opportunity, then the broken face can become a weapon for us to wield."

His words struck like lightning bolts into the hearts and minds of the students. His words *violated the classics and departed from the orthodox dao*. However, what he said was actually very logical. It made sense. All of a sudden, the students in the Imperial University were lost in thought. Among

all the groups and organizations were people who looked down on words like this, but there were also people who were now considering them.

The emperor looked closely at the God-Merging School.

The God-Merging schoolmaster looked up and met the emperor's gaze. The reality was that the words which had just been spoken by the chief student were actually not directed at the other students in the audience, or even the Xeno-Immortal School. As far as the God-Merging schoolmaster was concerned, those words were intended for the person he was currently looking at.

Xu Qing noted that.

Meanwhile, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster barked out a harsh laugh. "You ignorant child. You think the dao of a species is as simplistic as that? You couldn't be farther from the truth! The so-called dao of a species relates to that species' soul, traditions, philosophies, civilization, and ideals. All of those things together!"

At this point, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was throwing caution to the wind. Standing up, he pointed at the emperor up in the air. Looking at all the gathered students, he shouted, "Can anyone tell me why Emperor Dark War is referred to as 'human' emperor? Back in the day, Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity was the emperor of *all* species, yet his official title was 'human emperor.' Why?

"Because we're human! Whether in ancient times or in the future, we're all human. It's in our souls, our traditions, our philosophies, our civilization, and our ideals.

"The broken face in the sky brought unending suffering and misery to us humans. We're natural-born enemies. You want to make a compromise? To let down all of the countless humans who have died from mutation over the years? That's not the proper dao. That's outright betrayal!"

His words were full of grief and lamentation. Even hatred. The students in the university heard them and were shaken deeply. That was especially true when it came to his explanation of 'human emperor.'

The university became very quiet. The emperor closed his eyes.

The God-Merging schoolmaster frowned beneath his mask. As he looked at the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster, he once again got the sense that this person who he had previously looked down on as a nobody was actually a lot more difficult to deal with than he imagined.

A long moment passed, and then the chancellor revealed the third topic.

"What is the proper dao?"

Someone else on the God-Merging side prepared to answer, but then the schoolmaster raised his hand. Looking at the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster, he calmly said, "The proper dao is the dao that is orthodox. The dao that is righteous. [2]

"Our God-Merging School has a clear conscience in this world. We have a clear conscience among humankind. We do merge with godly materials, but we also scrupulously abide by the proper dao. It's your Xeno-Immortal School that is cruel,



ruthless, and wicked. You torment fellow humans and absorb the souls of innocent cultivators. Everyone knows about this.

“Just now, you spoke with great confidence, saying ‘humans blah blah blah’ and ‘humankind this-and-that.’ But if you look at such words in context, they’re pure hypocrisy. The Xeno-Immortal School isn’t worthy of the proper dao.”

The words were spoken very calmly, but given everything that had been happening with the Xeno-Immortal School, they were a mortal attack. The thought-provoking words from the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster now seemed weak and ineffective.

Then the God-Merging schoolmaster delivered the final death blow. “When a person doesn’t act properly, how can they possibly speak properly?”

All the students in the Imperial University looked up at the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster. All the onlookers outside the university seemed to be sighing. The Xeno-Immortal dao seeds were just too evil. Because of that, the words spoken by the God-Merging schoolmaster were like a sharp blade.

The Xeno-Immortal School opened his mouth to speak, and yet he wasn’t sure what to say. He wanted to offer a retort. But in the end he couldn’t. Not even he could explain why the Xeno-Immortal dao seeds, which he believed to be a good thing, had led to slaughter and killing. He had no explanation. During the time when he had been confined in the tower, that question had eaten at him.

Only two stages of the dao debate had passed so far, but already, people were reaching the point where they wouldn’t trust anything the Xeno-Immortal School said.

The chancellor of the university sighed inwardly, then looked out and prepared to speak. However, that was when a cold voice echoed out from the crowd.

“It’s only natural that someone who behaves improperly will speak improperly. Similarly, if the techniques are improper, then the school of thought is also improper.”

It was Xu Qing’s voice, and as it echoed out, the other students looked over in surprise. Meanwhile, Xu Qing floated out of the crowd and into the air. Everyone was looking at him, including the students and the spectators outside the university. The emperor also opened his eyes. Numerous streams of divine will locked onto him as he floated up onto the Xeno-Immortal School’s dao altar. He became the second cultivator from the Xeno-Immortal school to present himself publicly.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was struggling to control his breathing when it happened. He looked over at Xu Qing with surprise and confusion. He recognized this student, but at the same time, that recognition was what made him realize there was something very unusual about him. And that sensation was growing stronger by the moment. How could he ever have guessed that the student named Sir Dark-Thunder would step out into the open and say something like that? He was actually somewhat stunned. Then, his daze turned into keen speculation and anticipation.

As Xu Qing settled onto the Xeno-Immortal School’s dao altar, his gaze seemed utterly calm. He was looking at the black dao altar and the God-Merging School cultivators there. After scanning the group, his gaze came to rest on Seventh Prince.

The God-Merging schoolmaster's pupils constricted as he looked at Xu Qing and realized he seemed familiar.

Seventh Prince didn't feel any sense of familiarity. But he did feel a sense of danger. And when Xu Qing's gaze locked onto him, that sensation exploded within him.

Next, Xu Qing spoke again in his cold voice. "This seems like a good time and place to clear up matters regarding the Xeno-Immortal dao seeds. Fellow students, Your Majesty, please bear witness."

Xu Qing waved his hand, revealing a jade slip. He pushed down onto it.

Instantly, beams of light shot out of the jade slip, intersecting in midair to form an image. It was an image of a private chamber, within which a person was practicing cultivation.

That person was none other than Seventh Prince. Astonishingly, he was surrounded by masses of human souls. At a quick glance, there seemed to be millions and millions of them. They included old people and young. Men and women. Most were mortals, and they were screaming in anguish and horror. They were begging for mercy. But Seventh Prince's expression was placid, without any hint of mercy. He inhaled, and the souls of numerous fellow humans entered his mouth.

He started chewing, and at the same time, used the magical techniques of the God-Merging School. As a result, the human souls smashed into the bottleneck in his God-Merging cultivation, and allowed him to absorb more godly materials.

It was obvious that this process was very beneficial, and from his facial expression, he even seemed to be enjoying it. The contrast created between him and the screaming souls... made the scene shocking and ghastly. Anyone who saw it would bristle with anger.

The jade slip was no ordinary item. It didn't just have an image on it. It also preserved the auras present when the image was captured, which could be used to confirm its authenticity. But that just made the evil scene worse.

All students in the Imperial University felt their minds spinning. Their eyes became bloodshot, and rage built up within them, causing colorful winds to spring up everywhere.

A commotion had erupted in the organizations outside the university. After all, it was bad enough that something like this was happening, but what was more shocking... was that it was being done by an imperial prince. This level of evil was beyond shocking.

The emperor's face looked extremely grim, and frigid coldness emanated off him, filling the imperial capital. The dome of heaven darkened, and the rumbling of thunder could be heard.

Trembling, Seventh Prince shot to his feet. Working hard to control his facial expression, he calmly said, "Father, that image is a fake. Someone is setting me up! I hereby request to use the Immortal Questioning Bell to prove that the person in the image isn't me!"

Seventh Prince's expression was calm, but he was shaking. It was one thing to swagger around doing as he pleased in Sea-Sealing County. But right now, he was in the imperial capital, right in front of the emperor. As a result, he felt terror and alarm building within him.

Of course, Xu Qing was here, and there was no way Xu Qing was going to let Seventh Prince overturn the game board. He waved his hand, and out came the student who had been possessed by Little Shadow.

Before he could open his mouth to speak, Xu Qing slapped his hand down onto his head. Instantly, an image from the student's memories appeared in the air above him. It depicted the image from that secret meeting, and everyone could see it.

The storm began to intensify.

Xu Qing's eyes were as cold as ice as the storm raged. He glared at the God-Merging schoolmaster.

"Who is it exactly that's tormenting fellow humans? Who is it exactly that's devouring human souls? Who is it exactly that's speaking with great confidence?"

Those three sentences seemed to shake heaven and earth.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was deeply shaken. As for the God-Merging schoolmaster, he was looking deeply at Xu Qing.

Seventh Prince was also glaring at Xu Qing. Flying up into the air, he prostrated himself to the emperor.

"Father, someone is targeting me by means of that image. Father, please give me a chance to prove myself. I can clear my name with the Immortal Questioning Bell!"

Within the projected image of the imperial palace, the emperor looked coldly at Seventh Prince.

"Go ahead."

His words counted as an imperial edict. And when the emperor spoke, people obeyed. But today... things were different.

Xu Qing took a step forward. "That won't be necessary. Why question a bell when you can question a sword?" Xu Qing pointed up into the sky. "The Emperor's Sword!"

Chapter 795: The Emperor's Sword Executes an Imperial Prince

The words "Emperor's Sword" echoed out in all directions, shaking even the clouds. The sky above the Imperial University shook violently, and shock waves rolled out continuously. A boundless might appeared from nowhere, becoming like a tempest that crushed down in the university.

The white towers swayed back and forth, and numerous students' hearts pounded in fear. Everyone was completely focused on the person atop the white daoist altar, who at the moment, looked exactly like everyone else.

As of this moment, one person was the focus of a myriad of gazes.

"Did he just say... The Emperor's Sword?"

"Is that guy actually...."

An uproar swept through the students, and a similar reaction occurred among the observers outside the university.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster's eyes were filled with outright disbelief. Back when Sir Dark-Thunder stepped out into the open, the schoolmaster had wondered if he could be the enigmatic master. But things were happening so quickly that he almost couldn't react. This person... wasn't the enigmatic master, and yet, his identity was equally shocking.

It's him! How did I manage to recruit him into the Xeno-Immortal School?

The schoolmaster was starting to feel more happy than shocked. Although this wasn't the person he had been hoping would show up, his status and identity were still astonishing.

Xu Qing stood tall and straight on the dao altar. He wore the white hemp robe of a student, plus the same mask as everyone else. He looked no different from any other ordinary student from the Imperial University.

The Imperial University had special rules requiring everyone to dress exactly the same, specifically for the purpose of concealing everyone's true identities. But sometimes, the same article of clothing could look different when worn by different people. And in some situations, such differences can be blown completely out of proportion. That was what was happening right now.

However, Xu Qing didn't care what other people were thinking. He was thinking about one word: kill. He'd been wanting to kill Seventh Prince for a long time now.

That animosity had been building since years ago in Sea-Sealing County, when Seventh Prince monopolized all the glory and honor, while simultaneously forcing Palace Lord Kong into his death. From that moment on, Xu Qing had been thinking about putting an end to him. Of course, he'd been unable to do it back then. But things were different now.

His eyes contained a might like heaven or the dao. They contained the ideals of humankind, and they were ice-cold as they looked at Seventh Prince. Right now, he had the upper hand. And despite Seventh Prince being higher in the air, he had the opposite.

An interesting thing about time is that, as it flows, it has the power to take people in high places and make them low, or take lowly people and lift them up.

When Xu Qing first laid eyes on Seventh Prince, he was riding a golden dragon through the sky, leading a magnificent army of countless men and horses. He was like a rising sun that illuminated the battlefield on the border of Sea-Sealing County.

The second time he saw Seventh Prince was when a host of cultivators clustered around him as he made his way into the county capital. He was high-spirited and full of mettle that day, as all people bowed to him in worship. Xu Qing had been outside of the city in the army. Comparatively speaking, he had been unnoticed down in the mud, while Seventh Prince was in the clouds in heaven.

The third and fourth occasions were similar.

Then Xu Qing got back from the Moonrite Region to find that things had changed. That led to this day... when everything was turned around.

That was the fascinating power of time. That was why people would thirst for destined opportunities, and it was also why Xu Qing had never given up.

In the past, Xu Qing had never been in the clouds. And today, Guyue Zhang'an was the one in the mud.

Seventh Prince was feeling something similar. It was now getting hard for him to keep calm; as his confidence eroded, his facial expression began to change. From his perspective, the person on the dao altar who had just talked back to the emperor was so high above himself that the difference between the two of them was like the difference between the clouds and the mud. He was shaking harder now than he ever had in the past, and complex feelings were overtaking him.

As Xu Qing looked at him, his anger surged to manic levels.

“You’re Xu Qing!” he growled in a raspy voice.

People had already started to guess who Xu Qing really was from the moment he stepped out in front of everyone. But now, Seventh Prince was stating his identity out loud.

The atmosphere in the Imperial University and the imperial capital suddenly got extremely tense.

And that was because Xu Qing was anything but a simple person. He was the only region lord among humans, and he also bore The Emperor’s Sword! Because of The Emperor’s Sword, Xu Qing did qualify, in some respects, to talk back to the emperor. Having such qualifications, and actually using them, were two different things. Clearly, Xu Qing did dare to use them!

There was no doubt about his status when he uttered the words, “*Why question a bell when you can question a sword?*”

What was more, the might pulsing from his eyes became golden light that spread in all directions. In fact, it wasn’t just his eyes. Golden light spread off every inch of him. In the blink of an eye, hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of streams of golden light surrounded Xu Qing, becoming a sea of light.

As the light became blinding, a huge sword appeared behind Xu Qing, in front of the eyes of everyone present.

From a distance, it was possible to see a sword of ancient bronze, covered with complex designs, and pulsing with a paramount domineering sensation. This was a shocking sword that could sunder the heavens and crush the earth.

The Imperial University trembled. The daoist rite center began to crack. All onlookers were astonished. Boundless destiny aura swirled into the forms of clouds above the imperial capital, and it gave all living beings in the imperial capital the urge to drop down and prostrate.

This was a sword of humankind! This sword represented all the ideals and traditions of the human species.

This was The Emperor’s Sword!

The students in the university inhaled sharply and instinctively bowed to The Emperor’s Sword. Even the leaders on the God-Merging School’s daoist altar were so shaken that they chose to bow to the sword. The emperor looked at Xu Qing wordlessly.

Seventh Prince was fully aware that Xu Qing had always wanted to kill him. That was why he had constantly been taking steps to see Xu Qing dead. But in situation after situation, Seventh Prince

lost the initiative, and eventually, had no choice but to simply wait for the right opportunity to come along.

Now, before that opportunity could come, Xu Qing made a move. A deadly crisis had struck, and it was like thunder smashing into his mind.

“Xu Qing!” he shouted desperately, “how could you possibly use The Emperor’s Sword for personal reasons?”

Then Seventh Prince looked at the emperor, his expression full of admiration, respect, and love.

“Father, I’m an imperial prince. Humankind has been in decline my entire life. Meanwhile, I’ve watched you work yourself to the bone for the sake of the people. Their plight fills you with pain, and that’s why you swore to devote your entire life to reviving our species.

“That’s why I chose to save Sea-Sealing County. We need to expand human borders. I’ve never forgotten all the things you taught me from a young age, sir, and therefore, how could I possibly behave in such an animalistic way? The person in that image is not your son!”

Seventh Prince’s voice thrummed with grief as it echoed out in all directions.

The emperor’s eyes flickered with more intensity than before, but he didn’t speak. Pressure from him rolled out, weighing down on the entire Imperial University. He was the emperor. But he was also a father. Although he suppressed the second identity to the point where it was hardly recognizable, in the end, this was a case of someone threatening to kill his son right in front of him. As a father, how could he remain calm in a situation like that?

The heavenly kings in his presence exchanged glances, then focused on Xu Qing.

The university students were shaking, and the organizations out in the city were all taking the situation very seriously.

A major event was playing out this day.

What was more, the words spoken by Seventh Prince actually made sense.

But then a cold voice pierced through all the various thoughts in the minds of the onlookers.

“Pipe down,” Xu Qing said, looking coldly at Seventh Prince.

As the words left his mouth, the clouds seethed, parting to reveal numerous enormous figures that struck shock into the hearts of all, and filled everyone with the urge to drop down and bow. These... were the worthy sages of the past from all the clans and sects that made up humankind. And they were all appearing here and now.

Their arrival was destabilizing and shocking. Everyone inside and outside the university looked on in shock. The doubts Seventh Prince had raised were being crushed.

This was not using an imperial weapon for personal benefit. This was the blessing of the destiny aura of humankind, and the approval of the sages of the past. It was a manifestation of the dao of a species.

Xu Qing looked up and clasped hands to the sages above.

“On this day, I, Xu Qing, call upon the sages of the past to witness this judgment against Guyue Zhang’an, the seventh son of Emperor Dark War!” Xu Qing’s gaze dropped to land on the terrified Seventh Prince. “Guyue Zhang’an, you have committed four crimes.

“Your first crime is that you colluded with Torchlight, as well as with the Holytide species. This crime is punishable by death!”

As the words left Xu Qing’s mouth, The Emperor’s Sword behind him shone with a 30,000-meter light, causing the thrum of a sword to boom like thunder.

“The second crime is that of arranging for the death of Palace Lord Kong of the Swordsage Palace in Sea-Sealing County, all for the sake of earning military credit for yourself. You stood idly by while millions upon millions of Sea-Sealing County cultivators died, all to build yourself the reputation of a hero. This crime is punishable by death!”

The Emperor’s Sword vibrated, and the sword itself trembled as a powerful energy built up within it.

“Your third crime is that of participating in the conspiracy to murder the governor of Sea-Sealing County. This crime is punishable by death!”

The trembling Emperor’s Sword rose up into the air, and then tilted onto its side so its point was directed straight at Seventh Prince. Destiny aura powered into it, causing it to shine brightly and emanate the might of extermination.

“Your fourth crime is that, for the furtherance of the God-Merging techniques you cultivate, you devoured the souls of countless human commoners. This heinous crime is punishable by death!”

By the time Xu Qing finished explaining the fourth crime, the killing intent in his eyes shone brightly. Pointing his finger at the trembling Seventh Prince, he calmly continued, “Emperor’s Sword, please execute this traitor against humanity!”

The Emperor’s Sword pulsed with such astonishing mightiness that the sky turned golden. Illusory palaces rose up everywhere, and within them were projections of Grand Emperor Swordsage. The sword moved, slashing toward Seventh Prince. It was backed with powers that could devour mountains and rivers, and could shatter the air. It was backed by the souls of countless fallen humans. It contained something profoundly ancient that could not be blocked or evaded.

Seventh Prince was struck with terror. Rushing toward the emperor, he despairingly screamed, “Father—”

His words were cut short.

The Emperor's Sword slashed forth with the might to sever the heavens. Seventh Prince didn't stand a chance of fighting back. Before he could flee, his arms exploded, his legs shattered, and his torso blew up. His eyes contained terror and defiance in the moment before his head was ripped to shreds. He had been reduced to ashes. His soul wasn't in the position to escape calamity. It was wiped out of existence. He had been killed in body and soul. His spiritual souls were gone, and his physical souls had dispersed. The dao that he had cultivated for his entire life had gone up in smoke. The imperial bloodline would not be continuing with him.

The Emperor's Sword could even execute the emperor. In that case, what could it do to an imperial prince?

#### Chapter 796: Display Item

The dome of heaven was quiet. The lands were still. The entire world had become tranquil.

All students in the university, and everyone outside of it, were feeling shaken by a tempest of emotion. All streams of divine will and all eyes had been focused on The Emperor's Sword in the sky above the Imperial University... and the spot where Seventh Prince had disappeared.

Seventh Prince had been killed in body and soul. His physical form was no more, and his dao had dispersed. His spiritual souls were gone, and his physical souls had dissipated. He was deprived of any chance to enter the cycle of reincarnation. A mighty imperial prince had perished.

This was the second time an imperial prince had died during the reign of Emperor Dark War. The first time was when Eleventh Prince had died. Back then, the emperor had been furious. The investigation of the matter led to a widespread rain of blood. Many people died. In fact, the entire matter took a whole year to die down.

Today... another imperial prince died. This time, it happened right in front of the emperor as well as countless other witnesses, as he was executed with The Emperor's Sword.

What was especially noteworthy was that the emperor had approved Seventh Prince's request to use the Immortal Questioning Bell to clear his name, only to have Xu Qing interrupt and countermand the decision.

The shock in the hearts of the onlookers turned into an oppressive aura. As they breathed heavily, the atmosphere grew tense, and the gazes became as weighty as mountains.

It converged on the imperial capital, and then the Imperial University, and finally on Xu Qing. Beneath his mask, Xu Qing's expression hadn't changed at all. His eyes were calm. Floating down, he landed on the white daoist altar, then turned to the sages above and bowed deeply. Next, he bowed to the students in the university. Then he bowed to the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster.

Finally, he reached up, put his hand on his mask, and slowly removed it, thus voluntarily abandoning the rules of the university. He was revealing his face for everyone to see.

It was a spectacularly beautiful, absolutely flawless face. It was like the first rays of morning sun shining onto the Imperial University. Sword-like eyebrows framed eyes that seemed like bottomless lakes. They were like stars glittering in the dead of night, filled with a calmness that surpassed the mortal world. He had long hair that cascaded down his back like a waterfall, each strand of which brimmed with life force, strength, and the determination to kill.



As Xu Qing stood on the dao altar, he shone like stars in the night. His student garment swayed in the breeze, like the streaming clouds that might be mentioned in poetry. Golden light shone off him, like the reflection of the moon in a pond during autumn.

The Emperor's Sword was already fading from view, but its mere existence was a symbol of Xu Qing's identity. He finally looked at the emperor in the imperial palace. He bowed at the waist.

As a student of the university, he had bowed to the Xeno-Immortal School. After taking off his mask, he was a region lord bowing to the emperor.

The emperor sat there silently. It was impossible to determine what he was thinking. But after a long moment of silence, he closed his eyes. The thirteen heavenly kings all seemed somewhat embarrassed. With eyes full of various emotions, they looked closely at Xu Qing.

Xu Qing said nothing further. After bowing, he walked back to the visibly astonished Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster and sat down next to him. He closed his eyes.

The previous night when he grabbed the jade slip, he had already called out to The Emperor's Sword in his heart. And... The Emperor's Sword had stirred.

That was how Xu Qing knew that Seventh Prince was going to die.

When Seventh Prince opened his mouth and asked to clear his name with the Immortal Questioning Bell, Xu Qing wasn't interested in hearing the result. It didn't matter whether the image was real or not.

They weren't important. The fact that The Emperor's Sword had stirred proved everything.

When Xu Qing closed his eyes, there was a long moment of silence in the Imperial University. Then people began to breathe again. For all of these people, it was the first time in their life personally witnessing the death of an imperial prince. It was incomparable.

There was one group of people who felt even more deeply shaken than the students in the university or the cultivators on the outside. And they were... the other imperial princes.

Third Prince was currently in the Imperial University, and he was shaking uncontrollably. As he looked at Xu Qing, his gaze was one of fear and trepidation. He wasn't completely pure and innocent either, and thus, he was afraid.

Outside the university, Grand Prince, Second Prince, Fourth Prince, Sixth Prince, and Tenth Prince were also shaking. To them, this action by Xu Qing was like something that only the tutor of imperial princes could do. In fact, though such a tutor would have the power to punish, he definitely would not qualify to impose the death penalty. How could the imperial princes *not* be afraid? After all... when executing judgment, The Emperor's Sword represented the righteousness and virtue of humankind. The emperor couldn't interfere with that, much less anyone else.

*He's... way too powerful!* That was what all the imperial princes were thinking, with the exception of Ningyan.

What was more, it was very significant that, after everything played out, Xu Qing sat down next to the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster.

In the shortest of moments, the viewpoint of the students and the other cultivators regarding the Xeno-Immortal School changed.

That was the school of thought that Xu Qing had selected. And in order to prove that the Xeno-Immortal School wasn't evil, he had executed Seventh Prince. He had used blood to clarify any misunderstandings people had, as well as to clear away the reproach heaped forth by the God-Merging School. Everything that had played out had caused shock to build upon shock in the hearts of everyone.

The prismatic beam of light from the Xeno-Immortal School's dao altar shot higher into the air. It went from 300 meters to 3,000 meters. All students who had previously joined the Xeno-Immortal School were now feeling immeasurably excited.

There were still students from other schools of thought who didn't approve of the Xeno-Immortal School. And there were also people who had never had any dealings with Xu Qing or even seen him. But now, they had seen with their own eyes that he wasn't afraid to call on the might of The Emperor's Sword in front of the emperor. The development had a monumental effect on the younger generation.

"No wonder he's the lord of an entire region!"

"I heard that years ago in Sea-Sealing County, Xu Qing stepped out alone and blew the top off a huge conspiracy!"

"I heard that during the swordsage assessment of the heart, he got a 30,000-meter pillar of light. That proves that he has good character and is trustworthy. I used to think those were just exaggerations and rumors. But now I can see why The Emperor's Sword chose him!"

"The Grand Emperor approved of him, and The Emperor's Sword picked him. Then he chose the Xeno-Immortal School. That means that this school of thought... is definitely extraordinary!"

Meanwhile, on the white dao altar, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster's heart raced, and the daze that had enveloped him seemed to intensify. He felt like all the blood in his body was racing to his head, filling him with pulses of excitement. What had played out today so far completely surpassed anything he could have predicted. Even now, he almost couldn't believe it was real. Turning to look at Xu Qing, he opened his mouth to speak, yet couldn't think of anything to say. Finally, he took a deep breath and looked over proudly at the God-Merging School on the black dao altar.

All gazes from the God-Merging School were fixed on Xu Qing. They contained a variety of emotions. Some seemed regretful, others antagonistic. But when people looked from Xu Qing to the spot where Seventh Prince had perished, all they could do was sigh inwardly.

The schoolmaster of the God-Merging School was having trouble organizing his thoughts. *What an impressive show put on for the emperor.... Seventh Prince was a game piece that I hadn't yet deployed properly. Nor was it time to get rid of him. But now he's gone. It seems to me that Xu Qing... probably realizes who I really am. Twice.... This time, I miscalculated twice.*

The God-Merging schoolmaster sighed and looked off in the direction of Star-Plucking Tower. He suddenly felt ashamed, and at the same time, very cold.

At that point, the chancellor of the university sighed. He could never have predicted that this dao debate would turn out like this. What was more, the dao debate... wasn't over yet. After taking a moment to collect his thoughts, he looked at the emperor.

“Continue,” the emperor said. It was his first time speaking, and his voice was deep and grim.

The chancellor hesitated briefly, as it seemed there was an additional meaning in the emperor's words. Then he looked out at the university.

“In the third stage of the dao debate, you will debate the hereafter.

“The ‘hereafter’ refers to the future. The Xeno-Immortal School and the God-Merging School have both made their way of thinking clear. But the fact remains that, as cultivators, we must see which of these two paths will lead to a great dao.

“We have the students here to bear witness. So, both sides of the debate will now reveal the dao of your techniques!”

The moment the chancellor finished speaking, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster took a breath and stood. Unleashing his cultivation base, he sent more than 100,000 soul threads out, creating a rumbling vortex that turned into a godly earthchild. That was his personal limit. However, the Xeno-Immortal School... also had a patriarch around.

An instant later, a howl erupted from the Xeno-Immortal School's white tower. A rumbling like thunder filled the university as the tower's secluded meditation facilities opened, and a white-haired old man emerged, clad in a daoist robe. He wore no mask, and his eyes gleamed with great spirit. He pulsed with a terrifying pressure as he strode through the air until he reached the dao altar.

In the blink of an eye, he was on the altar. His arrival provoked a lot of hushed conversation among the onlookers.

The chancellor looked at the new arrival and quietly said, “Chen Daoze.”

This person was the Xeno-Immortal School's patriarch, Chen Daoze. As he stepped onto the Xeno-Immortal School's dao altar, he didn't look at the schoolmaster, but rather, at Xu Qing. He nodded. Then he turned to the chancellor and bowed.

“Chancellor, I've come out of seclusion a bit late. In this round of debating the hereafter, I will be the first to reveal what I'm capable of.”

Rumbling sounds echoed out of Chen Daoze as soul threads spread rapidly from his sea of consciousness. 100,000. 200,000. 300,000. 400,000.... In the very end, 600,000 soul threads filled the sky over the Imperial University.

Then, he waved them together into a shocking figure that pulsed with god power. Heaven and earth went dim, and mutagen proliferated.

This image was that of a god! It was a god of black bones that had long ago been slaughtered by Grand Emperor Swordsage. The god wore a long black robe and had the body of a pitch-black deer, covered with scales. It had four eyes, all of which glittered like suns and moons. Its mere presence struck fear in the hearts of everyone.

The students gasped in shock, and the cultivators outside the university were deeply shaken.

To anyone who understood anything about the Xeno-Immortal School, 600,000 soul threads was a pure impossibility. It was almost like a fairy tale. Shock abounded.

“A god weaved from 600,000 soul threads...?”

“Th-this... this is the Xeno-Immortal School?”

Gasps and exclamations ensured that the scene surrounding the dao altars was one of pure chaos.

Hearing the uproar, the God-Merging schoolmaster growled, “It’s just the form, not the spirit. When you use 600,000 soul threads with Xeno-Immortal techniques, this is the only thing you’ll get.”

He knew that he was reaching the end of the line. But at the moment, he didn’t care whether or not he died. He just wanted to put on a good show.

Unfortunately, his display item had been destroyed before he could show off how valuable it was. Therefore... he would have to use himself as the display item. Having reached the conclusion that this was definitely the best idea, the God-Merging schoolmaster rose to his feet.

At that moment, Xu Qing’s eyes opened. He looked at the God-Merging schoolmaster, doing nothing to hide the killing intent in his eyes, which became like an invisible, razor-sharp sword.

Chapter 797: 1,000,000 Soul Threads Fill the Dome of Heaven

The God-Merging schoolmaster’s voice echoed through heaven and earth as he rose to his feet, took a step forward, and then floated off the dao altar and into the air. As he hovered there, he looked at Xu Qing briefly, then turned his attention to the image of the emperor. He bowed deeply at the waist, and a terrifying energy erupted from him. The energy streamed around him, spinning to create a visible vortex that spread out through the Imperial University. Fierce winds shook the dao altar, and everyone edged backward with serious looks in their eyes. There was no doubt that this energy was extraordinary.

Xu Qing’s gaze hardened. He was familiar with Torchlight, and he had personally seen the experimental god bodies of Master Shengyun and his father, Chu Tianqun. What was more, his god troves could be used to enter god states. Because of that, he could see that the God-Merging schoolmaster’s energy was a mixture of mutagen and godsource.

As the God-Merging schoolmaster hovered there, the sensation of godly entities grew even stronger. It almost seemed like the presence of a god.

“In this debate of the hereafter, I will show the true meaning of our school of thought. The God-Merging School might not be perfect in every respect, but no techniques are closer to the gods than ours.”

The schoolmaster extended his left hand and pushed it toward the dome of heaven. Suddenly, the flesh of his left hand burst into black flame. The skin collapsed into smoke, which rose up to reveal his true left hand. It was pitch black, and crystalline, as if it were completely formed from gemstones. And it pulsed with fluctuations of godliness streaked with godsource.

All onlookers were astonished. Numerous thoughts ran through the minds of the observers outside the university.

The emperor looked neither happy nor angry. In fact, it was impossible to gauge what he was thinking; his eyes were as dark as an abyss. The thirteen heavenly kings all sat there quietly.

The only sound to be heard was the voice of the God-Merging schoolmaster. "This, my left hand, is the left hand of a god. It's an amalgamation of the crystallized cores of 1,798 godly entities.

"This merging technique is the result of 3,175 experiments by students of the God-Merging School, each of which involved different sequencing attempts. Ultimately, I tested out this version, and can confirm that the sequencing is correct. By using this technique, a low-level cultivator could produce a hand just like this in only a hundred years.

"For high-level cultivators, it's much easier and faster."

The schoolmaster then lifted his right and did the same thing. The skin fell off it, revealing another hand, also the hand of a god, but different from the other hand.

This one was pure magenta. And it seemed to be wriggling. If one looked closely, they would see that the hand was made of numerous magenta threadworms. Every threadworm pulsed with fluctuations of godliness. Those fluctuations were so intense that they shook the Imperial University, causing everything to blur. The dome of heaven dimmed, and streaks of lightning appeared, sending out thunderous rumblings like the cry of gods.

Whether it was the university students or the outside forces, all were visibly moved.

Xu Qing's gaze hardened further. From that hand, he could instantly tell that Torchlight's experimentation had already led them far past the point they had reached with Master Shengyun and Chu Tianqun.

"This, my right hand, is also the right hand of a god. It comes from an unknown god that perished in mutual destruction when fighting the emperor of the Flynill species.

"The techniques of the God-Merging School cannot be directly used to absorb anything from the corpse of a god. The body couldn't sustain that. Therefore, an equilibrium needs to be created. The first step is the left hand, after which, work on the right hand can proceed. The specific details of the method are recorded in the writings of the God-Merging School."

The God-Merging schoolmaster was speaking very precisely, almost as if his own body wasn't his own, but rather, was a display item. He was like a shopkeeper explaining his wares.

"And then there's the torso...."

The God-Merging schoolmaster floated high into the sky. Then he reached down with both hands, grabbed his robe, and ripped it off, revealing the ferocious torso underneath.

His entire torso was pieced together using different godly materials. In some places, skulls stuck out. In other places there were patches. It was possible to see reptilian scales, crystallized sections, parts that were earthworms, threadworms, and other types of bugs. Every single part of the torso pulsed with godly fluctuations.

From a distance, it looked like someone had just overturned a palette of paint onto a canvas, then violently struck the canvas. It was a chaos of colors, with some areas clearly demarcated, and some areas clearly integrated. Yet if you looked at it for long enough, the chaos would seem to become orderly, and impart a sense of perfect completeness. It was as if it were the master work of a genius creator.

The energy being released caused the onlookers to react with astonishment. Heaven and earth changed color, winds screamed, and mutagen erupted.

It almost looked like the Imperial University was about to be turned into a forbidden region. Everyone was shaken.

A tremor passed through the emperor as he looked more closely. The heavenly kings were all visibly surprised.

To Xu Qing, the situation only seemed to become graver as he realized Little Shadow was sending him emotional fluctuations of longing.

“Fragrant... eat... don’t dare.”

The strangest thing about the torso was in the chest... which was sunken in and clearly had no heart.

“This torso uses 9,785 types of godly materials. The sequence of use must be adhered to exactly, otherwise it will collapse. After years of experimentation, I discovered the correct sequencing method, as well as substitute materials for lower-level individuals. All of the information is recorded in our school’s writings.

“As for the heart, well as all of you can see... that part is missing.”

The God-Merging schoolmaster reached up to rub the spot with the missing heart.

“That’s the last step in our God-Merging School’s techniques. It’s also our biggest weakness. For a full merging, the heart of a powerful expert is required. With it in place—” The schoolmaster looked around calmly. “—I’ll have the foundation of a god.

“At that time, someone in Void Returning who uses this technique will break through the limits of their qualifications, altering their dao to become a god cultivator.”

Countless individuals in the imperial capital were shaken.

“Smoldering Gods can also use the technique to break the shackles of their bloodline, and switch to the dao of gods.”

Those words caused the eyes of many of the heavenly kings to glitter.

“As for Imperial Sovereigns... well, by working in cooperation with some other special ceremonies capable of igniting anything and everything, they can continue on the path toward their goal, and when the critical moment of godly ascension comes, they can have one-colored godfire!

“In reality, god cultivators don’t even have the Imperial Sovereign level, only different accumulations of godfire. Before godfire, you have godliness, which though it can be strong or weak, is ultimately insufficient. Only by igniting godfire can you be like *the carp who jumped over the dragon gate*. Only then can you *change heaven from earth*, and improve yourself in all aspects. Then, you can be what all the living species call a god. In past eras, cultivators on that level were called Imperial Sovereigns, or sometimes, Demi-Immortals.

“Therefore, though it might seem that an Imperial Sovereign who converts to cultivating godfire might not be changing to a different level, the reality is that the future path of all Imperial Sovereigns has been severed. Once you become an Imperial Sovereign, you’re stuck. And of course, you can never break through to become a Quasi-Immortal. However, after converting to godfire, then once you surpass the level of seven colors, you become a High God. That’s similar to the peak of Imperial Sovereign.

“And if you can push your godfire past the level of nine colors, then you can be an entity which surpasses High Gods, just like the Quasi-Immortals of humankind, who were called Grand Emperors.

“This is how the God-Merging School debates the hereafter. And this is the gift our school of thought has prepared for humankind.”

Having finished with his speech, he bowed to the emperor.

Silence gripped the Imperial University. The spectators said nothing. The emperor’s eyes were closed.

Everyone was pondering the words of the God-Merging schoolmaster. The Xeno-Immortal School had summoned the projection of a god, but fundamentally speaking, that wasn’t on the same level as the God-Merging School.

The Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was starting to feel a bit anxious. He looked at his school’s patriarch, and noted his calm demeanor. The patriarch then reached up and made a gesture with his hand that dispersed the god projection. 600,000 soul threads returned to within him. Then, he turned to Xu Qing, ducked his head, and bowed at the waist.

That bow caused an instant stir in the crowd.

The schoolmaster’s heart skipped a beat, and the thoughts he had dismissed earlier suddenly rushed back. He looked at Xu Qing.

Don’t tell me....

The chancellor of the Imperial University, Third Prince, and all the students present were thinking roughly the same thing. It was an outrageous and seemingly preposterous premonition.

Could it be...?

All onlookers suppressed thoughts of the God-Merging School, and instead focused on Xu Qing.

Xu Qing slowly stood.

That motion struck fear into the hearts of many, especially the imperial princes. But then they noticed that neither his eyes nor his surroundings showed any of the golden light that indicated The Emperor's Sword might come. That calmed them down a bit.

Xu Qing had no intention of using The Emperor's Sword right now. That said, he also had no intention of hiding the truth about the Xeno-Immortal School soul seeds. If he was going to make a killing move, he would be thorough. If the Xeno-Immortal School was going to rise to prominence, it would rise all the way.

With that thought in mind, Xu Qing took a few steps forward. As he did, soul threads whipped out of him and rose into the sky.

100,000. 300,000. 500,000. 800,000. 1,000,000....

Things weren't over yet. 1,100,000. 1,200,000. 1,300,000!

Fully 1,300,000 soul threads created a tempestuous storm in the dome of heaven, whipping about in all directions, causing dark pressure to weigh down from above. It was almost as if the end of days had come. It didn't take long for the soul threads to form a huge vortex that filled the sky. In fact, it overtook the sky! It was the sky!

Everyone was deeply shaken. The students at the daoist rite center looked on with complete shock. At the same time, members of the Xeno-Immortal School started cheering.

"That's... how many soul threads is that?"

"That's at least double the amount of Patriarch Chen Daoze!"

Everyone outside of the university was battered by waves of shock.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing floated up into the air, his hair whipping around him. He stopped in front of the more than 1,000,000 soul threads. He looked down, then waved his hand. The soul threads swirled behind him and began to weave together. In the blink of an eye, his first-level god state formed right in front of everyone.

Xu Qing stood in front of the god, his eyes glittering like heavenly bodies.

Chapter 798: The Peak of Xeno-Immortal

In the canopy of heaven above the Imperial University, 1,300,000 soul threads swirled, converged, and crisscrossed like snakes as they created a shocking body some several thousand meters high.

It looked like the Ghost Emperor and emanated shocking pressure on the world around it. Atop its head was an imperial crown that resembled D-132, making it seem like an emperor or monarch. In fact, its aura turned into numerous golden dragons that roared in all directions. The soul threads even seemed to be like imitations of daybreak light, surrounding the body like a living halo. The echoing roar of a bluegreen dragon could be heard from inside the body, like heavenly thunder that shook all onlookers in both heart and mind. The heavenly dao sensation was incredibly strong, making the body like a burning furnace.



The flames of the furnace became like a seething sea of flames spreading out for 50 kilometers in all directions. The body stood tall in the middle of that fire. It reached out with one hand, and a long golden crow spear appeared. It pointed the spear out and down toward the God-Merging schoolmaster.

At the tip of the spear was the image of a golden crow, very clear to see. It had sharp eyes, it breathed fire, and with the sea of flames in it, seemed as powerful as a god.

This was Xu Qing's complete first-level god state!

It was different compared to before. This time, it wasn't fused with Xu Qing, but instead, stood behind him, pulsing with godly might.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, stood in front of the first-level god state, above the flames. The contrast of the body behind him was dramatic, and looked very much like a person controlling an actual god. It was almost as if this god served as a foil to highlight the person.

Everyone in the Imperial University was shaken and astonished. Even the emperor was watching very closely.

The schoolmaster of the Xeno-Immortal School was extremely excited. Next to him, Chen Daoze struggled to control his breathing. The students of the Xeno-Immortal School were no longer trying to conceal their identities. Their eyes gleamed with anticipation for the moment Xu Qing would actually take action.

This dao debate between these two schools of thought had unconsciously become a pedestal for Xu Qing himself. He had executed an imperial prince and revealed astonishing Xeno-Immortal powers. What was more, Xu Qing's current course of action made it self-evident that he had another identity.

He was... the Xeno-Immortal School's enigmatic master!

That master, who had obviously achieved a high level of mastery with Xeno-Immortal School techniques, had been the subject of much discussion recently. He was known as the most powerful patriarch of the Xeno-Immortal School, and also the reason the school had risen to new heights recently.

Therefore, Xu Qing's revelation right now filled the Xeno-Immortal students with keen anticipation. The conclave students had been shaken just by the fact that Xu Qing was a region lord. But now that he was proving himself to be the foundation of the Xeno-Immortal School, their astonishment turned into an explosive tempest.

The conclave student who had glowered at Xu Qing suddenly went pale in the face, and the chief student who had clashed with him started to get very anxious.

The three conclave students who had joined before Xu Qing were now looking at him with eyes as wide as saucers.

"The patriarch... worked with us on the *Xeno-Immortal Enquirer*?"

One of the students in the crowd was the mysterious young woman from outside the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect. She looked up at Xu Qing, her eyes full of confidence, her heart pounding.

So, it was you all along!

She gritted her teeth.

As everyone looked on, Xu Qing stood in front of his first-level god state. Staring straight at the God-Merging schoolmaster, he calmly continued, "The Xeno-Immortal School weaves soul threads to form godliness and make a godly projection.

"All of this is all just the surface. The Xeno-Immortal School's most useful technique is that of taking godsource and converting it into a power to break through cultivation levels!

"By burning the projection at the right time, and thus converting it into raw force, you can break through obstacles and barriers. It can also open up a new path. It uses the godly to create the immortal. That's what a xeno-immortal is.

"In the past, the Xeno-Immortal School fell into decline because people focused on the slow rate of progress. And the truth is that nobody ever managed to produce 1,000,000 soul threads. When you have 1,000,000 soul threads, you can make dao seeds. When students absorb those dao seeds, they can achieve rapid progress.

"Right now, you can see a god projection behind me. That's formed from only 300,000 Xeno-Immortal soul threads, and its equivalent to first-stage Void Returning. By burning it, I can break through to a higher cultivation base level."

Xu Qing looked over at Chen Daoze.

Chen Daoze understood the look. Taking a deep breath, he clasped hands respectfully, then looked very deeply and closely at the god projection behind Xu Qing.

Considering he had been stuck in the Xeno-Immortal School for about 5,000 years, it made sense that his powers of observation had reached the point of perfection. Although Xu Qing's god projection was complicated, Chen Daoze only needed to look at it for a moment to gain enlightenment. He extended his right hand.

Instantly, 600,000 soul threads emerged, dancing about, weaving together behind him to form an outline. Ultimately... a god state body somewhat smaller than Xu Qing's appeared behind him. It looked exactly the same physically, and had the same aura. The difference was that Xu Qing's was more lifelike. They were obviously different on a substructural level. However, because of the use of the dao seed, they were very similar. And they were clearly both on the track to the same destination.

Everyone was even more shaken. After all, observing and doing brought two different sensations.

And the Xeno-Immortal students were getting excited because, if Patriarch Chen Daoze could imitate Xu Qing's god projection, then it meant that others who followed the same path could possibly do the same.

Most excited of all was the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster, as his understanding of the techniques surpassed any of the students. The moment he saw what was happening, things clicked into place, and he gained a much deeper understanding of what was happening.

This was new ground for Xeno-Immortal School techniques, and obviously, existed on a much higher level. In the past, totem visualization in the Xeno-Immortal School was limited to 200,000. This was a step past that.

Most ordinary students wouldn't have any way of grasping the significance of that. But in the organizations outside the university were almighty individuals who did understand. And they had very mixed feelings. After all, it seemed clear that the Xeno-Immortal School... would belong to Xu Qing going forward.

Whether it was his status as the ultimate source of their power, or his service of building on the techniques of the school, they all pointed to him as the one who should have this school of thought as his own. Although a lot of people were thinking deeply about what was happening, Xu Qing wasn't finished with his debate of the hereafter.

"100,000 soul threads can weave an earthchild. 200,000 can make a heavenly hobgoblin. At 300,000 you have what's called the emperor god.... But there's more. Now we'll see what 500,000 can make!"

Xu Qing closed his eyes, and the first-level god state behind him unraveled, once again causing 1,300,000 soul threads to fill the sky.

As the evening light shone down, the soul threads converged, weaving together into a dark cloud of poison that was the body of a fiendish god. It was covered in armor from head to toe, and poison became a flowing cape behind it that connected to the dome of heaven. Rot and poison erupted from it, black and awe-inspiring as it spread out.

Xu Qing opened his eyes, and at the same time, the eyes of the god projection inside its helmet lit up with underworld fire as it looked out at heaven and earth.

"This is a fiendish god," Xu Qing said in a hoarse, cold voice.

Everyone looked at the fiendish god, and the mere sensation of its poison provoked looks of astonishment.

The first god projection was tolerable. But the second imparted a sense of pure death. Before the sensation could get more intense, Xu Qing threw both of his hands out in front of him, and the second-level god state suddenly expanded and experienced a very grisly transformation.

Violet appeared within the black. It became hair, which spread out, reaching the ground, like a terrifying violet waterfall. The armor disappeared, revealing Xu Qing's features. The body was nefarious, with bones of crystal covered with flesh filled with countless blood vessels. There were also blood-red tentacles that spread out from the skin, swaying in all directions. Sprouting from his back were two huge wings covered with violet feathers of flesh that rippled in the wind.

What was more, slowly rising up behind him was... a violet moon! As this state formed, mutagen erupted in the Imperial University, causing everything to blur. However, Xu Qing kept the mutagen under tight control, so that people could sense it, nothing more. This was the aura of a god.

"This god is a violet moon, and can be controlled with 1,000,000 soul threads. Everything you have seen is a Xeno-Immortal."

Xu Qing, standing in front of the third-level god state, looked out at the scene in front of him.

As the surrounding cultivators were shaken to the core by Xu Qing's violet moon body, he spoke again.

“These are the techniques of the Xeno-Immortal School. You don't need to use godly materials to replace your own body. This way doesn't involve turning yourself into a hybrid monster. With one Xeno-Immortal School thought, heaven and earth can be transposed, and an immortal body can be formed. Weave gods to break through one's shackles, and become 'xeno.' Use thoughts to control a god, fight for oneself. That is immortal. This is the Xeno-Immortal School.

“That said, the God-Merging School does have one concept that I approve of: gods are tools. But we don't need to become gods. In the dao of immortals, they can be used as tools.”

Xu Qing's words echoed into the hearts of all present. As of this moment, whether it was in the eyes of the people or their hearts, Xu Qing's identity and status were rising. He was a region lord. He had The Emperor's Sword. He was the ultimate source of the Xeno-Immortal School. He had executed an imperial prince. He had revealed three terrifying gods. All of that, combined with the words he had just spoken, were pushing him to the ultimate heights.

That was what Xu Qing had been hoping to do. If he could add enough weight to his words, then he could execute... people The Emperor's Sword couldn't touch.

The Emperor's Sword wasn't all-powerful.

For example, if Xu Qing summoned The Emperor's Sword and tried to use it on the God-Merging schoolmaster, nothing would happen.

That realization left Xu Qing with mixed feelings. He had full trust in The Emperor's Sword. However, he knew that the sword would only execute people who were actively harming humankind. The sword wouldn't be helpful when dealing with personal grievances.

However, Xu Qing himself was not The Emperor's Sword. He didn't have such lofty ideals. What he cared about were family, friends, and Sea-Sealing County. He felt no sense of belonging in the imperial capital. And thus, though the God-Merging schoolmaster hadn't done anything to justify execution by The Emperor's Sword, that didn't mean that Xu Qing couldn't do it himself.

Therefore, his gaze shifted to the emperor off in the distance. Then he looked toward the God-Merging schoolmaster, killing intent bubbling within him.

“As the former governor of Sea-Sealing County in the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, what do you think, Bai Xiaozhuo??”

Chapter 799: Point Out Any Errors I've Made, Exalted Lieutenant Governor

Perhaps there were some people who knew the true identity of the God-Merging schoolmaster. But ninety-nine percent of people in the imperial capital had no clue who he was. After all, the rules of the Imperial University were specifically designed to hide the identity of its students.

What was more, Torchlight wasn't something people in the Imperial Region discussed a lot, at least until the events in Sea-Sealing County swept through humankind like a storm. After that, the

emperor issued a decree listing all members of Torchlight as wanted. From then on, just about everyone knew who Torchlight was.

To the vast majority of cultivators, Torchlight represented chaos, evil, and destruction. What was more, their Blood-Soaked Performances were viewed as appalling and horrid. The main character in Sea-Sealing County's big coup was Bai Xiaozhuo. A lot of stories had spread about him. Thanks to everything he had done, people had come to think of him as the poster child for Torchlight.

As a result, when Xu Qing's words echoed out, they crashed like thunder, shaking the entire imperial capital.

"Torchlight?"

"That's not possible!"

"The God-Merging schoolmaster is that Bai Xiaozhuo fellow?"

The astonished students in the university couldn't help but chatter. And the students from the God-Merging School were all shaken to the core.

In fact, they didn't believe what they were hearing. Their first reaction was to judge Xu Qing's words as absolutely absurd. If it weren't for everything he had just done, including executing an imperial prince with The Emperor's Sword, then someone would already have stood up to start berating him viciously.

But in the end, there was nothing the God-Merging students could do to prevent Xu Qing's words from striking them to the core. The leaders of their school of thought were all arrayed on the black dao altar, and beneath their masks, their expressions were flickering wildly. Even as they reeled in disbelief, countless gazes from the numerous organizations in the imperial capital all came to focus on the God-Merging schoolmaster.

The schoolmaster looked calmly at Xu Qing.

Xu Qing stood in place looking back at him. "Years ago in Sea-Sealing County, I bowed in gratitude to you, Exalted Lieutenant Governor, for the grace you showed in teaching one of my classes, and dispelling certain doubts I had. For that, I'm grateful." Xu Qing was describing a scene in which he was a very different person with a very different status. "The situation back then was the same as this situation, Exalted Lieutenant Governor. Here, we meet again.

"Torchlight cultivators disdain lying. They value rationality. I said something similar back in Sea-Sealing County, but back then, you were untrue to your convictions." [1]

Xu Qing seemed completely and utterly calm as he spoke.

Meanwhile, a complicated look could be seen in the eyes of the God-Merging schoolmaster. Inside, he was sighing. Outside, he held his tongue.

Xu Qing shook his head. "Do you remember what I said to you back then, Exalted Lieutenant Governor? If this God-Merging situation is your Blood-Soaked Performance, then I feel the same as before. Sadly, this whole thing has been quite disappointing.

"To be specific, what's disappointing isn't the performance. It's you. Someone who violates their own standards like you doesn't deserve to be a member of Torchlight.

And so I ask: are you going to be untrue to your convictions on this day as well? Please point out any errors I've made, Exalted Lieutenant Governor."

Xu Qing's words echoed out for everyone to hear.

The God-Merging schoolmaster closed his eyes, reached up, and put his hand on his mask. He paused for a second, then removed the mask to reveal his facial features. He was the same Bai Xiaozhuo that Xu Qing remembered.

Numerous gazes were locked onto him. The entire Imperial University was silent.

When it came to cultivators, physical appearance often wasn't enough to prove anything. One's aura was the most important. And Bai Xiaozhuo's aura was completely different than it had been back in Sea-Sealing County.

Because of that, he could have tried to deny Xu Qing's accusation. But, just like back then, Xu Qing's words were a death sentence.

"We meet again, Xu Qing," Bai Xiaozhuo said, his voice calm and his facial expression placid. "I won't disappoint you this time around. Yes, I am indeed the governor of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan's Sea-Sealing County! I am Bai Xiaozhuo!"

His voice seemed to contain utmost confidence, and his words led to an immediate tempest in the university. A frenzy of discussion broke out among the shocked students. The members of the God-Merging School were now starting to tremble. All of their trust crumbled as a result of the open confession they had just heard. They were now confused, shaken, and angry.

The God-Merging schoolmaster was actually a despicable Torchlight rat that was universally hated. He was Bai Xiaozhuo, who had instigated the coup in Sea-Sealing County, and had led countless humans to their deaths!

The monumentally shocking news struck all Imperial University students deeply. The leaders of the God-Merging School on the black dao altar felt like their hearts and minds were being completely overturned. They couldn't believe it. They didn't want to believe it. Yet the facts were right there in front of them.

Meanwhile, an even bigger tempest was brewing outside in the imperial capital. Many organizations were starting to stir anxiously. After all, Torchlight and Bai Xiaozhuo were things that shouldn't be allowed to exist in the world.

Numerous streams of energy locked onto the dao altar. The Imperial University began to tremble. Countless gazes and streams of divine will locked onto the canopy of heaven. Killing intent abounded.

The chancellor of the university stood there just like before. But his gaze had sharpened. As the university trembled, defensive formations activated, covering the dao altars to protect the students.

Bai Xiaozhuo didn't care about any of that. Looking at Xu Qing, he spoke in a hoarse voice.

"Back in Sea-Sealing County, you stepped out alone to face me. And today, you're also stepping out alone. Doesn't that grieve you, Xu Qing? Do you really need a

humankind like this? I bet you can't use The Emperor's Sword on me. What does that say? Do you understand what it implies?"

Xu Qing shook his head. "It's too complicated. And I don't feel like thinking about it. What I do know is that the reason I stepped forward in Sea-Sealing County is because of an old man who I respected a lot. He might have died, but he still lives in my heart. Also, you clearly misunderstand what's happening today, Exalted Lieutenant Governor. I stepped out because I want to see you dead. Nothing more."

Bai Xiaozhuo chuckled and said the same thing he'd said back then. "That's it?"

"What else did you expect?" Xu Qing's face remained expressionless as he also repeated his own words from that fateful day. [2]

"I guess I assumed you would have more to say this time." The lieutenant governor chuckled again.

"I didn't last time. And I don't this time either." Xu Qing dropped back down to the surface of the white dao altar, where he sat cross-legged. He paid no further attention to Bai Xiaozhuo. He'd already done all he needed to. He had revealed the true identity of the God-Merging schoolmaster. And thus... there wasn't anything else left to do. When justice was on the line, it didn't matter what your personal feelings were, you had to take action. What happened going forward was the emperor's call. After all, this was the imperial capital, not Sea-Sealing County.

Looking over at Bai Xiaozhuo, the emperor spoke in a majestic voice that embodied law and order.

"Imperial Chancellor, arrest this fugitive Bai Xiaozhuo!"

The chancellor of the university slowly straightened his wizened frame. His white hair turned black, and the wrinkles on his face disappeared as he transformed from an old man to a middle-aged man. Cracking sounds rang out from within him as he became tall and burly. His aura erupted like a furnace, sending out powerful fluctuations in all directions. His eyes seemed to contain a thousand lineaments, and countless projections existed behind him. The sky changed colors as an illusory world appeared on his left shoulder.

This was the great circle of Void Returning!

Imperial blood coursed through his veins as a golden dragon appeared in the illusory world. Then it screamed out into the open, swirling around several times before charging toward Bai Xiaozhuo with a roar.

The chancellor strode forward, and the fall of his foot seemed to invert heaven and earth. Countless natural and magical laws swept around him. Suns, moons, stars, and heavenly bodies became visible, as if an astral redirection were taking place.

Bai Xiaozhuo's gaze left Xu Qing and turned to the dome of heaven. There was no way anyone could tell what he was thinking, or what he was looking at. But at that moment, his aura climbed high. Mutagen spread out. Godsource raged. His battle prowess fluctuations were on the same level

as that of the chancellor. That said, this battle prowess didn't come from his cultivation base, but rather, the godliness of his body.

His left hand pushed toward the golden dragon, while his right hand swept through the air, causing mutagen to turn into the projection of a god. That projection then sent crushing pressure toward the chancellor.

A rumbling boom exploded out. In the blink of an eye, the two of them began to fight. The air in the Imperial University vibrated and the sky went dark, making it seem like the end of days had come. Each clash was like the boom of heavenly thunder. It was a conflict between natural laws and godliness. Of magical laws and godsource. Of an immortal cultivator and a god cultivator.

Xu Qing looked up and calmly observed.

Bai Xiaozhuo was stronger than he had been in Sea-Sealing County.

But he should be even stronger. I guess he hasn't used his puppet arts yet. Nor has he revealed the core of God-Merging.

The sky shook as a majestic figure took shape and reached out with the hand of a god toward the chancellor of the university.

The chancellor's face was expressionless as the world on his left shoulder began shining with dazzling light that combined with the countless projections.

Rumbling booms rang out. Bai Xiaozhuo's face remained expressionless as he waved his hand, causing five vortexes to appear in the air behind him. Five puppets stepped out from them.

They didn't look human, as their bodies were pieced together from all sorts of godly materials. They pulsed with godsource power that caused the mutagen levels to rise rapidly. Each one that emerged pulsed with fourth-stage Void Returning battle prowess. They also had illusory worlds. However, the worlds were all dead, and if you looked closely at them, you would see statues of gods inside. After they appeared, they turned toward the chancellor with astounding killing intent.

Of course, the Imperial University was located in the stronghold that was the imperial capital. The chancellor wasn't the only powerful expert around. In the blink of an eye, eight individuals rushed forth to flank him. Shockingly, they were various schoolmasters from other schools of thought. For them to join the battlefield went to show how chaotic things were in the Imperial University right now.

Thankfully, the air in the university was stable, and the defensive spell formations were fully activated. As a result, the students weren't injured, although in some cases, blood oozed out of the corners of their mouths beneath their masks.

Meanwhile, in the imperial palace, one of the heavenly kings looked up at the emperor. The emperor said nothing. That heavenly king looked back at the battle unfolding, and did nothing.

Xu Qing also just watched.

Chapter 800: Demarcating the World for the Gods

Xu Qing knew that, given his current level of strength, he obviously wasn't a match for Bai Xiaozhuo, who was in the great circle of Void Returning.



That was, unless he used his ancient sun. But doing that would have far-reaching ramifications. It could possibly destroy the entire dimension in which the Imperial University existed. And it could even bring catastrophe to the imperial capital. Furthermore... Xu Qing didn't feel that Bai Xiaozhuo deserved to be killed by an ancient sun. It was better to have that sun around as a threat and deterrent.

It would be a lot simpler if I could use The Emperor's Sword.

Xu Qing sighed inwardly. Unfortunately, the sword wasn't stirring at all. The best thing he could do was employ the method of *using four ounces to move a thousand pounds*. By exposing Bai Xiaozhuo's true identity, he could rely on the justice of humankind to exterminate him.

It wasn't time to deal with the crow yet. Given Xu Qing's current power and influence, he didn't dare to try to make a move on the imperial preceptor.

Therefore, he sat on the white dao altar inside the spell formation, next to the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster and Chen Daoze. Along with all of the students below, he simply watched the fighting play out. Xu Qing looked very calm. In contrast, the God-Merging forces had mixed emotions, and by now were unable to suppress the terror and anxiety they felt.

Even the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster was completely shocked. Not even he could ever have guessed that the God-Merging schoolmaster was actually Torchlight's Bai Xiaozhuo. And that enabled him to see a brilliant future. He knew that after this battle was over, no one would be able to stop the Xeno-Immortal School from rising to prominence. The God-Merging School would probably be disbanded, and the high-level members would all be investigated to see if they were Torchlight conspirators. All of it was happening because of this Patriarch Xu Qing. As countless thoughts ran through his head, the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster looked at Chen Daoze, who nodded back at him.

The schoolmaster's eyes shone with determination as he looked at Xu Qing, his gaze one of deep respect.

However, Xu Qing wasn't paying attention to the schoolmaster. His senses were focused completely on the battle. It wasn't often one got to witness fights like this. It could obviously provide deep insights into the Void Returning level. To Xu Qing specifically, though, the fight was even more meaningful than that. After all, it was also a fight between an immortal cultivator and a god cultivator.

Although they weren't on the same level as Smoldering Gods, even just fourth-stage Void Returning experts were enough to cause the canopy of heaven to blur. People with cultivation bases too low wouldn't be able to see what was happening. They would only hear rumbling and see flashes of light.

Spirit Trove cultivators, on the other hand, would be able to see a lot more. They could sense the transformations to the natural and magical laws. They could sense the natural laws turning corporeal, and the magical laws turning into ancient, shadowy figures. And all of that was shaking the Torchlight godliness.

This was observing the dao. Depending on one's experience and focus on cultivation, they would perceive the natural and magical laws differently, and thus, the fight would look different. Some people could see clearly, others couldn't see very clearly at all.

The students in the university held their breaths as they came to varying levels of enlightenment. Only people who were in Void Returning would be able to perceive the true significance of the fight. They would be able to see all of the natural and magical laws, as well as the flow of the great daos.

To Void Returning eyes, it was like watching a battle from the ancient past. Every single boom contained the magic of great daos.

At the same time, numerous rifts opened up in the air over the university. Close examination revealed that the rifts contained natural law transformations, which could shake observers deeply and provoke deep thought on their part. Only those in the same level or higher would be able to perceive the true nature of what was happening.

But Xu Qing's cultivation base was different from anyone around him. He was an immortal cultivator. But he was also a god cultivator. As a result, this fight looked different to him. He saw the numerous colors interlocked in the canopy of heaven, almost like an abstract painting.

In that image, Bai Xiaozhuo was like a god, sometimes clear, sometimes blurry. Every flicker of light revealed something different.

Meanwhile, the chancellor of the university had a terrifying cultivation base. That was especially true since he had the blessing of the imperial clan's bloodline, which made him about thirty percent stronger than an ordinary person in the great circle of Void Returning.

Every attack he unleashed contained millions upon millions of great daos that worked in concert with the golden dragons. He could change any natural laws with ease. Occasionally, dazzling sunlight would erupt out. Occasionally, ancient war chariots would rush forth. Occasionally, ancient beasts would form. All sorts of attacks were pressing Bai Xiaozhuo.

Even though the schoolmasters from the other schools of thought weren't very far behind these two in cultivation, they were still astonished by what they were seeing.

The five nonhuman God-Merging puppets fought with such vigor that heaven and earth dimmed. All of them were injured in some way. In any species, the great circle of Void Returning counted as one of the highest levels possible.

In fact, there were many species without Smoldering Gods who viewed such people like actual gods. Therefore, it was only natural that there were some very unique things about cultivators in the great circle of Void Returning.

For example, when they bled, it turned into crimson lakes. Just the sound reverberations from the fighting could shatter the land. Thankfully, this area was protected by spell formations, which meant that all the students were kept safe and allowed to seek enlightenment without interruption.

Xu Qing was doing that. He was staring straight at the fighting, numerous thoughts running through his mind. And he was starting to get a deeper understanding of immortal cultivators versus god cultivators.

God cultivators... don't use magical techniques. It seems more like they just act on instinct. It's as if heaven and earth were both born for their sake. In this heaven and earth, they have freedom and independence. They are unrestrained and unfettered.

But immortal cultivators are different. They use the energy of heaven and earth, but in a different way than god cultivators. They turn natural and magical laws into threads that can be used to harness the energy of heaven and earth. It's like... they're enslaving heaven and earth! And what about heavenly daos?

Xu Qing's eyes shone brightly as numerous thoughts raced through his head. There was deep meaning in what he was observing.

When heavenly daos come into play, they create fetters that bind heaven and earth, and demarcate the world for the gods!

Xu Qing shivered inwardly as he wondered if his speculation was correct. It made sense based on what he knew, and it seemed logical. If it was correct, then it made sense that the earliest cultivators to become immortals in ancient times would give rise to heavenly daos after they conquered Revered Ancient. Heavenly daos would be the best way for their descendants to further their cultivation.

And that also explained why the technique system of cultivators involved producing heavenly daos in Spirit Trove.

By constantly bolstering the heavenly dao, the cultivator can keep that world under their control. If it's as I'm speculating, then this is a really unprecedented situation. It's taking world-controlling methods and merging them with the cultivation system of cultivators. What a daring concept....

Xu Qing inhaled deeply. Now more than ever, he felt deep respect for those early immortals. With that, he looked up into the canopy of heaven.

The sky above the Imperial University didn't contain the broken face, but that didn't have a negative effect on Xu Qing's analysis.

Every time the broken face's eyes open, heavenly daos perish. And with every heavenly dao that perishes, the Revered Ancient mainland comes closer to being a world of gods. What's more, no matter how strong Revered Ancient gets, it will only be a tiny part of the starry sky. I wonder... what does it look like outside of Revered Ancient?

This was the first time Xu Qing felt truly curious about what lay beyond Revered Ancient.

I know the holy lands are out there. And beyond that... is the place where Li Zihua went to, which is also the location of the violet moon.

Xu Qing closed his eyes and cast his senses toward the violet moon. It was far, far away. As Xu Qing sensed that, there was a development in the fighting. And it came from Bai Xiaozhuo. As flickering light surrounded him from his position in the sky, and as the chancellor launched deadly attacks at him, Bai Xiaozhuo threw both of his hands over his head and then bowed to the highest point in the sky.

*"The energy of the ultimate yang of the two polarities merges into the ancient eyes of the gods, becoming the glittering light of the starry sky over Revered Ancient. Let the projection fall and incarnate into the domain of a god. Respected lord of the sun and many heavens of the universe, the holy Torchlight. Let the door descend!"*

As the words left his mouth, heaven and earth in the imperial capital shook violently. A terrifying, indescribably mighty force weighed down, not only on the capital, but on the Imperial University.

All of a sudden, a blurry image appeared in the sky over the university. It overtook heaven and overtook all daos. It overtook anything and everything.

The image depicted a host of freakish, immense trees that emanated fluctuations of godliness. Godly, gruish beasts abounded. Ancient, unique temples appeared, emanating a sense of profound age. It was possible to see frozen seas and mountains that existed in gaseous states. There were freakish, humanoid clouds, spirits resembling octopuses that had lived for innumerable years. And there were huge birds with plumed wings that could obscure the sky and cover the lands. They were gargantuan and strange in appearance. Tentacles writhed. It was a completely gruish and mysterious world.

In the depths of that bizarre scene was a shocking figure that was a terrifying, 5,000-kilometer sphere. It was black and covered with both writhing tentacles and gruish, blinking eyes that seemed capable of peering through both time and space. Deep, resonant voices spoke from within the sphere, like thunder that caused the clouds to seethe. As the sphere stirred, the world trembled, the lands shook, the seas went wild, and the air burst into flames. The black sphere's surface was covered with innumerable faces, all of which were singing the same words just uttered by Bai Xiaozhuo. Godly might abounded.

It was just an image, but it caused all the students in the Imperial University to cough up blood. Some even started to show signs of mutation. It was the same in the imperial capital. An intense, domineering mutagen was spreading everywhere. Countless people shouted out in alarm.

As people from numerous organizations reacted with visible surprise, the emperor shot to his feet. The thirteen heavenly kings' facial expressions flickered dramatically, and their energy surged.

Xu Qing's face turned incredibly grave as he stared at the projected world of Bai Xiaozhuo. It looked very similar, and felt very similar, to something he had sense before.

"God domain..." he murmured.

In the shrine hall of the Red Dust Emotional Suppression Pavilion, there was a statue of a clay fox. The fox shivered, then suddenly came to life. Eyes opening, it looked in the direction of the Imperial University.

An unfamiliar god domain! A god is being born there... wait. No, this god... something's off here!

A shocking aura rose up at the front of the rainbow bridge leading to the imperial palace, where the statue of Grand Emperor Swordsage stood. The Grand Emperor's eyes opened slowly, revealing something profound and ancient. Cracking sounds rang out as the Grand Emperor looked up in the direction of the Imperial University. Then a voice spoke that echoed like heavenly thunder.

"The sword hangs in the blue sky. Thou canst try it out."