

Timescape 801

Chapter 801: A God Domain Arrives

The Grand Emperor's voice shook everything like claps of thunder. Hearts and souls trembled as if vibrating in unison with the voice. That voice surpassed all dharmic decrees. It surpassed all divine abilities. And it surpassed all other wills.

The voice of the Grand Emperor represented the legacy of humanity, the culture and civilization of the human species, and the will of humankind. It was domineering and shocking.

The imperial capital trembled as wild winds swept back and forth. Buildings rocked, and the hearts of the people were filled with alarm. It reached the Imperial University, as the stentorian voice pierced through space. All students felt reverence well up within them, and without even thinking about it, turned and bowed in the direction of the Grand Emperor's statue.

They offered greetings to the only Grand Emperor who remained in Revered Ancient after Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity left. They offered greetings to the one who had protected humankind down to this moment. It didn't matter that he had died in battle and left behind only a clone. He was still Grand Emperor Swordsage, and he still fought to keep humans safe!

At the moment, everyone inside and outside the Imperial University, as long as they were human, instinctively bowed their heads. Even the emperor and his heavenly king subordinates had respectful looks on their faces as they bowed.

Xu Qing did the same. However, there were additional words echoing in his mind.

“Lend me your sword, young friend.”

The moment the words entered his mind, he began to shine with golden light, which spread out rapidly to become a wide sea. The Emperor's Sword within him stirred, almost as if it was seeking his approval.

That sword had once belonged to Grand Emperor Swordsage, but now... it belonged to Xu Qing. Xu Qing was the sword wielder in this generation.

Grand Emperor Swordsage could have forcibly summoned it, but in his wisdom, he wouldn't do something so violating. He wouldn't allow the person he had personally selected to wield that sword to suddenly bear ill will toward him. Thus, he asked politely.

Xu Qing gave his consent, and thus, The Emperor's Sword shot forth.

Driven by the will of the Grand Emperor, it hung high in the sky. The tip of the sword pointed at the god domain. Its might spread out, causing rifts to spread out in the air above the Imperial University and the capital. Sword energy abounded, filling the Imperial Region. At the same time, the swords of all swordsages vibrated, flew up into the sky, and pointed toward the Imperial Region.

In terms of how many there were, it was difficult to estimate. Perhaps the best word was: countless. Killing intent filled the hundred rings of the region, from inside to out, rising up everywhere and locking onto the Imperial University.

The sound of rushing wind echoed out from Planet Ancient Emperor. The sages of humankind manifested, and the planet's cloud cover seethed. The destiny aura of humankind converged, creating a massive face. It was the ancient, dignified face of Grand Emperor Swordsage.

Up in the air above the Imperial University, Bai Xiaozhuo shivered.

The projected image of the god domain that filled the sky suddenly lurched to a halt and ceased expanding. A sense of profound crisis filled everyone.

The bizarre entities in the god domain looked up, filled with both danger as well as a sense of rising cruelty.

The huge black sphere also stopped moving. Then, a gargantuan, vertical eye appeared on it, pulsing with coldness as it peered toward the imperial capital and Grand Emperor Swordsage.

The atmosphere was extremely tense. Fighting could break out at any moment. Countless people instinctively held their breath as a cold voice echoed out from Grand Emperor Swordsage.

“Screw off!”

The expressionless face of Grand Emperor Swordsage spoke in a voice that struck the god domain like a tempest. Everything shook dramatically.

The black sphere in the god domain shivered a few times, and the eye continued to stare deeply at the Grand Emperor. Then the eye slowly started to close. That affected the god domain itself, causing it to also shrink down until it was nothing more than a rift in the air above the Imperial University.

It was choosing to back away.

That, in turn, affected Bai Xiaozhuo below. He looked in the direction of Grand Emperor Swordsage, clasped hands, and bowed. Then he turned into a streak of light that shot into the rift above. He... was planning to make his escape! That was his real purpose for summoning the god domain. It was to provide a way out for himself.

Grand Emperor Swordsage didn't say anything. The Emperor's Sword hanging in the air didn't stop Bai Xiaozhuo.

Just as Bai Xiaozhuo was about to make it into the rift, Xu Qing frowned. However, there was someone else who didn't want Bai Xiaozhuo escaping, and he spoke in a very deep voice.

“You haven't revealed everything yet. There's no need to leave.”

The person who spoke was the emperor. The moment the words left his mouth, he extended his hand toward the sky above the university and closed it into a fist.

That grasping motion caused imperial will to explode. Fluctuations that surpassed Smoldering God spread out everywhere, suppressing everything. The sky above the university went as dark as night as a huge hand appeared. Even the finger and palm prints were visible as it hung over everything like a dark cloud. It covered the rift formed by the god domain, and thus blocked Bai Xiaozhuo's path. It seemed like, if that hand fell, it could crush the Imperial University out of existence.

The thirteen heavenly kings all bowed their heads. Everyone felt shaken deeply. The energy of the emperor was not the same as that of Grand Emperor Swordsage. But it surpassed everything else. This was... the power of an Imperial Sovereign!

In the presence of this hand, all heavenly daos were *his* heavenly daos. All natural laws were *his* natural laws. All transformations and all power could be manipulated with a thought.

If the emperor wanted to, he could cause all cultivators beneath that hand to instantly become mortals. Destiny aura surged with great power in the hand, as scintillating light shone out, causing pressure to weigh down on the capital.

Bai Xiaozhuo stopped in place and hovered silently. Looking up at the emperor's hand blocking his path to the god domain, he sighed.

“Ah, whatever.”

With that, he reached out and made a grasping gesture. Instantly, streaks of black light emerged. They swept around his right hand, forming together... into the shape of a beating heart.

Each beat of the heart was like heavenly thunder, sending mutagen and godsource out everywhere. Black blood oozed out of the heart, and shockingly, its aura was perfectly consistent with the god domain. Clearly, that heart came *from* the god domain.

Bai Xiaozhuo looked briefly at the heart, then pushed it into his chest. The spot there which had previously been missing a heart was now filled in. He shivered from head to toe, and his eyes became so bloodshot they turned bright red. His aura skyrocketed. His battle prowess rose to shocking levels.

Previously, he had been in the great circle of Void Returning, but not anymore. Boundless, immeasurable godsource filled him with every beat of that heart. Where it passed, the patchy nature of his body vanished, and it became whole. His entire appearance was transforming.

He was pitch black, just like the huge sphere, and also covered with countless writhing tentacles that clumped together to form limbs. Sickle-like appendages grew from his back, each one sharp enough to rip open space itself. His head no longer had a neck, but instead, floated out in front of his chest. Where his head had once been was nothing but an enormous eye, its pupil made, shockingly, of flickering sparks. They were not the sparks of an ordinary fire, as they imparted a sense of both holiness and terror. Behind him stretched a long body like that of a centipede. Altogether, he didn't look human at all.

In fact, to anyone who hadn't seen the broken face's true body, Bai Xiaozhuo would seem very unfamiliar now. But to Xu Qing, this form was meaningful in a different way. It looked very similar to the broken face's true visage!

It was profoundly distorted, but the fire in the eyes seemed incomparably harmonious. It was as if... to heaven and earth in Revered Ancient, this form was perfect, true, and normal. The will of heaven and earth felt that way. But that wasn't true of the heavenly daos. As a result, there was a chaotic and gruish juxtaposition.

A heavy price had to be paid to gain battle prowess like this that surpassed Void Returning, and became very close to the terrifying level of a Smoldering God. To immortal cultivators, the

identifying mark of a Smoldering God was a major world. But to god cultivators, the signifying aspect of Smoldering Gods were the sparks of godfire. By completely igniting that fire, one could become a god. For example, Li Zihua's fourth son, the godchild of the Red Moon Cathedral, had been about to climb from the level of sparks. By using a special ceremony, he wanted to light his godfire and become a god.

Sparks glittered as Bai Xiaozhuo in his god state pulsed with the battle prowess of a Smoldering God. To many people, he was blurry, which went to show how he had some of the characteristics of a god. He could not be looked at directly.

The moment Bai Xiaozhuo's god state was revealed, the god domain that had been blocked by the emperor's hand suddenly expanded. At the same time, a howl erupted from within it that shook the university and the capital city. As that howled echoed out, the emperor's hand shivered and was forced backward. The god domain rift was revealed, as well as... the black sphere rushing out from it.

The countless faces on the sphere were singing.

“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.”

As the gruish song filled the Imperial University, many of the students seemed to go into a daze and join in the singing. If you looked you would find that everyone who was singing was from the God-Merging School.

The students were shocked. As for Grand Emperor Swordsage's sword, it turned and shot toward the black sphere.

At exactly the same moment, Bai Xiaozhuo in his god state suddenly burst into motion. His goal was not the emperor's retreating hand. Nor was it to use the god domain to escape. Instead... he headed toward Xu Qing on the white dao altar!

Killing intent swirled in his eyes as he accelerated rapidly. In the time it takes a spark to fly off a piece of flint, he slammed into the Imperial University's defenses. A huge boom rang out as cracks spread out through the defenses. There was no time to repair the shields. They shattered, becoming a host of fragments that rained down, most of them heading toward Xu Qing.

But Bai Xiaozhuo moved faster than the fragments, arriving in front of Xu Qing an instant later. Without a word, he sent countless tentacles sweeping toward Xu Qing with deadly force.

Chapter 802: Emperor, Please Brace Yourself

Xu Qing's pupils constricted, but his facial expression didn't change. In the blink of an eye, he entered his third-level god state, and was even able to summon part of his fourth-level god state.

It was also possible to see a shadowy sundial. The ancient sun rested atop it, glittering as it released terrifying pressure.

Up in the sky, The Emperor's Sword shifted to point in the direction of the black sphere of flesh emerging from the god domain rift. Because of the godly power of the black sphere, the emperor's huge hand began to collapse. Pressure from the god domain spread through the dimension containing the Imperial University. Most cultivators present coughed up mouthfuls of blood, and though their minds reeled, they were unable to move.

Bai Xiaozhuo had crafted a very specific opportunity, and moved with lightning speed to take advantage of it. He appeared right in front of Xu Qing like a heavenly mountain, his tentacles pulsing with the blessing of Smoldering God battle prowess. That, combined with his terrifying godliness, made him extremely deadly. However, even if he had been more specific in creating this opportunity, and even if he had moved faster, and with more deadliness, there was just no possible way that he could kill Xu Qing.

Truth be told, Bai Xiaozhuo knew that. Therefore, even though this seemed like a deadly strike, the reality was that he had a different goal. He wanted to see who would try to save Xu Qing. The Grand Emperor was preoccupied by the lord of the god domain, and had no attention left to spare. As Bai Xiaozhuo's lord and master had suggested, there was likely a third party hidden in the imperial capital ready to take action. Or perhaps someone was present in the university.

Regardless, this attack by Bai Xiaozhuo would hopefully force that person to reveal their identity, and thus give a slight advantage to his lord and master.

Bai Xiaozhuo turned out to be completely right. As he closed in on Xu Qing, the face of a Grand Emperor appeared on Planet Ancient Emperor, eyes blazing. Inside the shrine hall of the Red Dust Emotional Suppression Pavilion, the clay fox started glowing with bizarre, demonic light. Simultaneously, the students surrounding the dao altars in the Imperial University were not all immobilized by the power of the god domain. One of them strode forward with eyes shining coldly.

However, there was one group whose interest in Xu Qing's survival surpassed all others. And as things reached a head, they would do whatever was necessary to make sure no one killed Xu Qing. Therefore, they acted before anyone else could.

An angry voice echoed within the Imperial University, almost like thunder from heaven.

“Stop!

“Retreat!

“Collapse!

“Enfeeble!

“Safeguard!

“Accelerate!

“Forever undying!”

Eight words were spoken, and each one crashed louder than thunder. They contained the will of great daos, making them almost like the words of a heavenly thunder. The natural and magical laws

they contained existed at the most exquisite level, making these words the embodiment of the idiom *once given, the orders will be strictly enforced*.

Bai Xiaozhuo had Smoldering God battle prowess, but even he shivered as he lurched to a *stop*. Then he had no choice but to *retreat* a full step.

As the associated word rang out, a tremor passed through Bai Xiaozhuo, and he suddenly started to *collapse*. That was when his godliness erupted. Though he was being affected by the words spoken, the power of his momentum created an illusory finger in front of him that shot toward Xu Qing, shattering everything in its path.

However, an instant later, Bai Xiaozhuo was *enfeebled*, causing his strength to instantly drain by at least half.

The next word spoken caused an extremely tough suit of armor to appear on Xu Qing to help *safeguard* him against the power of Bai Xiaozhuo's finger attack.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the armor collapsed, taking the damage in Xu Qing's place. It also boosted Xu Qing's speed significantly, allowing him to *accelerate* rapidly as he backed away by about 3,000 meters.

The final spoken word contained godliness. It caused the *forever undying* will of a god to settle over Xu Qing, becoming a golden light that formed a face in front of him. The face bore the brunt of the remainder of the finger attack from Bai Xiaozhuo.

From a distance, it was possible to see the face's forehead slam into Bai Xiaozhuo's finger attack. As the face collapsed, a host of thousands of voices howled in grief. However, Bai Xiaozhuo's finger couldn't remain whole. It fell to pieces.

Xu Qing hovered in midair, completely unharmed. Truth be told, everyone was surprised by this development, not necessarily that Xu Qing was unharmed, but rather, by who it was that intervened....

"Xu Qing... is a godchild of our church!" someone said in a soft and feminine voice that came out of thin air right in front of Xu Qing. A rift opened up in front of him which revealed an astonishing altar.

The altar seemed to be located in a huge, open-air cave. High above the cave was the dome of heaven, within which hung the broken face. As for the altar itself, it was huge, with 999 steps leading up to it. Standing at the highest position on the altar was a cultivator in a black cloak. On the steps were more black-garbed cultivators. And there were even more of them seated cross-legged in the cave surrounding the altar.

There were thousands of people in the cave, all of them had pools of fresh blood in front of them. Shockingly, they had sustained the force of Bai Xiaozhuo's finger attack in Xu Qing's place.

Meanwhile, the black-cloaked figure on the altar took a step forward, thus stepping through the rift and into the Imperial University. The figure stood in front of Xu Qing. All of a sudden, the power of a Smoldering God swept forth with dramatic brilliance, along with a scrap of the aura of the broken

face. When this person stood in front of Xu Qing, it provoked quite a reaction from the various onlookers.

“That’s one of the Words of Truth’s grand sacrificers!”

The group which had intervened to save Xu Qing was the Words of Truth!

Bai Xiaozhuo frowned. Though it might seem like Torchlight and Words of Truth were similar, the reality was that they had completely different ideals, and to the former, members of the latter were insane.

The emperor in the imperial palace looked on with narrowed eyes. He could have interfered earlier as well, but he had also chosen to observe. He also wanted to see who would step forward to save Xu Qing. At the moment, the emperor was even more surprised than Bai Xiaozhuo.

Meanwhile, the grand sacrificer from the Words of Truth stood between Xu Qing and Bai Xiaozhuo, clad in that black cloak, which made it impossible to see any facial features other than two glowing red eyes.

“No one can touch a godchild of ours!” the figure said, and then turned to look at Xu Qing. The red eyes glowed with greed, and it was even possible to hear the sounds of salivating. The figure continued to speak, and by now it was possible to determine that the voice was that of an old woman. “I was late, godchild. Sir, are you hurt? If so, it’ll influence the flavor. Adding in extra energies leads to a disgusting flavor.”

The sound of salivating grew more intense. Meanwhile, a similar sound could be heard coming from the other black-cloaked figures inside the rift. All of them were looking up greedily at Xu Qing.

The creed of Words of Truth involved searching for people who survived the gaze of the broken face. They believed that such people were cherished by the broken face, and thus called them godchildren. Devouring a godchild would help them get closer to the gods. From ancient times until now, that was how they had operated. However, they had only ever been able to consume people who had survived the gaze of the broken face once. Never had they devoured someone who survived twice. There were rumors that in other distant places, Words of Truth had managed to devour such people. But in the congregation here, they never had.

Xu Qing was currently scowling. He could never have imagined that Words of Truth would step out in a moment like this. What was more, he could sense that, while he had used a god magic to look back through time and learn about Words of Truth, it was clear that others had done the same to him. And the result was that this pack of lunatics had shown up.

The black sphere of flesh in the dome of heaven howled. Because of the threat of The Emperor’s Sword, it didn’t dare to go on the offensive. Apparently, all of its actions from before had been mere probing. Now that the probing had produced results, it was ready to retreat. The god domain rift wasn’t growing larger. Instead, it was slowly shrinking and fading.

As for Bai Xiaozhuo, the current developments were completely outside of what he had predicted. He looked up at the emperor. The emperor looked back calmly, as if saying that he was still watching and waiting. As their gazes met, Bai Xiaozhuo suddenly found himself thinking of what Xu Qing had said back in Sea-Sealing County.

“You just don’t deserve to be a follower of the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan.” [1]

Bai Xiaozhuo closed his eyes. “You’re right. Because I’m... not pure.”

Bai Xiaozhuo’s aura seemed to become ancient, but at the same time, livelier. His eyes became clear. Then he reached out and viciously slapped himself on the chest. The heart from the god domain collapsed, and a huge shock wave of godsource power swept out. None of it remained. His body burst into flames. Sparks flew around him like moths as his last bit of glory in life was revealed.

That eruption, that conflagration, pushed him to the peak. His aura erupted, boundless mutagen flowed everywhere, and the sensation of a god grew intense. Because of the mutagen, the canopy of heaven over his head blurred, and within that blurriness, a fiery flower appeared.

It was... a lifespan flower! It started out with one petal. Then two petals appeared, and then three.... In the blink of an eye, the sky over the Imperial University turned into a huge lifespan flower. Looking up, it almost seemed like a massive scroll painting had been unfurled. It was boundless and endless, and also impossible to see clearly. It was made completely of golden fire, each thread of which was exquisitely put together.

Fire flowed down from the flower, spreading out on the land below. That fire was also a flower, but not a lifespan flower. Instead, it was a pāramitā lily. Its color was red.

Boundless. Endless.... As the wind blew, ripples spread through the fire from the pāramitā lily. It was almost like the music of reincarnation played on an ancient zither.

Lifespan above. Pāramitā below. They created a sea of red and golden fire, constantly emerging, erupting, and burning! There were different ceremonies that led to godly ascension, and this was one of them. Once these fires came to exist eternally, that would be the moment godfire was ignited!

Bai Xiaozhuo was blurring. And every time an observer blinked, he would look different to them. With the seas of flowers around him, his battle prowess was soaring. Sadly, igniting godfire wasn’t exactly a simple task. In contrast, it was incredibly difficult.

The red moon godchild failed. And Bai Xiaozhuo... was in too much of a rush for success to be even remotely possible.

The edges of the fiery seas of flowers began to show signs of being extinguished. That much made it clear what was happening. That said, there was no question about how impressive Bai Xiaozhuo’s battle prowess was right now. Everyone looking on was astonished.

It was hard to say if it was because of the fire, but the emperor’s eyes were shining brightly.

That was when Bai Xiaozhuo spoke, and his voice echoed like the chanting of a god through the imperial capital.

“Heaven and earth as the furnace. All living beings as the fuel. Flames of gold and red to activate the fire of a god. Emperor, please brace yourself.”

Bai Xiaozhuo swept up the lifespan flower, the pāramitā lily, and the flames of red and gold. Then, like a burning meteor, he shot toward the emperor! Clouds seethed as the lifespan flower and pāramitā lily combined with the red and gold fire, casting brilliant light for 5,000 kilometers in all directions.

Chapter 803: Flowers Bloom, Flowers Fall

A moth to the flame. That was what came to the minds of many observers.

The emperor was currently the only member of humankind who was in the Imperial Sovereign level. Other than Grand Emperor Swordsage himself, any person who the emperor faced, be they in Void Returning or Smoldering God, were a far cry from being on his level.

Bai Xiaozhuo had ignited the heart from the god domain, burning his God-Merging body in exchange for burning power that surpassed the fiery flowers. Sadly, he was far from achieving eternal indestructibility. And this was definitely not a true igniting of godfire. It was not godly ascension. Without godly ascension... it was going to be very hard for him to defeat an Imperial Sovereign. In other words, the end of this fight was a foregone conclusion.

However, Bai Xiaozhuo didn't just give up. His eyes were clear, and his heart was calm as he accelerated. With the lifespan and pāramitā flowers, as well as the golden-red sea of flames, he could ignore spatial conventions.

The emperor was visible in the Imperial University, but that was a projection originating in the imperial palace. And yet, right now, there seemed to be no difference between illusion and reality as far as Bai Xiaozhuo was concerned. He was like a meteor shooting through the highest heavens, speeding up as he pierced through the air to appear right in front of the emperor. There, he placed his hands together in front of him, with his two index fingers pointed straight out like swords.

Then, he took all of his power, both internal and external, and placed them into that sword of two fingers. That included the golden and red fire, as well as the two flowers. He included his life force and his time. Everything about him. He closed in on the emperor, radiating heat waves in all directions. The world around him rippled, making it seem like the projected image of the imperial palace would be consumed by flames at any moment.

The heavenly kings unleashed their energy and were about to take action. Before they could, the emperor stopped them.

“Very amusing,” the emperor said in a cool voice. He raised his right hand and pointed at the incoming meteor and the surrounding sea of flames. The movement of his finger seemed ordinary in nature, as if it didn't contain any cultivation base power at all. No shadowy projection appeared as a result.

However, the moment his finger touched the dual fingers extended by Bai Xiaozhuo, a deafening boom rang out. It was as if countless stars had all exploded at the same time. The entire world trembled! In fact, the Imperial University shook so violently it seemed like it might collapse.

Outside in the capital, wild winds sprang up everywhere, and the sky turned dark. Black clouds spread out, accompanied by booming thunder and an indescribably terrifying pressure.

The spot where the terrifying power originated was right between the emperor and Bai Xiaozhuo. As for the emperor, he hardly seemed affected by the blast. His garments stirred, and a few strands of hair swayed. That was it.

As for Bai Xiaozhuo, he shivered from head to toe, then began to blur. He was like a dandelion disappearing into the wind. However, his eyes were bright. Being so close to the emperor, he spoke in a voice like a chant.

“Between the lifespan and pāramitā burns the fire of a god.”

The burning lifespan flower seemed to bloom again, reaching its peak. Then it withered, collapsing into ash that gathered in front of Bai Xiaozhuo. The pāramitā lily did the same, becoming incredibly brilliant, then collapsing into nothing. The red and gold seas of flames shrank down until they were right in front of him.

As that happened, a special and unique flower bloomed in front of Bai Xiaozhuo, a flower that contained the characteristics of both the lifespan flower and the pāramitā lily. It was a holy flower, the fire of which burned in incredibly dazzling fashion.

It instantly caught the attention of the emperor.

Bai Xiaozhuo gently exhaled. His breath reached the strange flower, causing petals to swirl forth and surround the emperor. With the emperor in the middle of the flower petals, he looked like he had become a flower.

The emperor’s eyes glittered with profound light.

“Decease.”

The flower petals surrounding him swayed back and forth before exploding into countless fragments that became drifting ash.

Bai Xiaozhuo had apparently completed his mission. He closed his eyes. His body... collapsed into smoke. Countless mirror-like memory fragments shattered and became ash.

Apparently the emperor didn’t want to be tainted by such filthy remains, so he pulled his hand back and swished his sleeve. The gradually disappearing debris in front of him scattered, leaving behind no trace of its existence.

An ancient sigh emerged from the god domain rift up above. Then the rift closed. It seemed everything was over.

In the days of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, Bai Xiaozhuo had been a close follower of the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. He had been appointed as the governor of Sea-Sealing County, but most of his history was lost in the sands of time. Today, he had met his fate. From beginning to end, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan never showed up.

In the outside world, the sky was no longer dark. The afterglow of evening spread out, covering the capital with amber light.

The face of the Grand Emperor on Planet Ancient Emperor looked at the Imperial University with a profound gaze. It was hard to say if he was looking at the emperor or Xu Qing. Or perhaps... he was looking at something in the god domain rift that no one else could sense.

Xu Qing's heart pounded as he looked at the rift disappearing. After everything that happened in Sea-Sealing County, it had been completely unexpected to actually run into Bai Xiaozhuo and the Crown Prince here.

Bai Xiaozhuo is first in line. Next in line is the crow!

The students in the Imperial University were unable to calm down. Some were excited, some conflicted, some anxious, and some confused. All sorts of thoughts were present.

The dao debate was over.

The emperor slowly sat back down on the Dragon Throne. The projection of the imperial palace blurred away. The Emperor's Sword made its way back into Xu Qing. Now that Bai Xiaozhuo was dead, his puppets slumped and fell to the ground.

Seeing that the curtain was falling, the chancellor of the university looked around with a sigh in his eyes, and opened his mouth to announce the official conclusion of the dao debate.

However, that was when some intense emotional fluctuations reached Xu Qing's mind.

"Milord... eat... time soul... about to flee!"

Hearing that, Xu Qing looked up. His eyes turned pitch black as the power of taboo poison erupted in them, giving him the vision of a god. However, looking around, he didn't see anything out of the ordinary.

The sky looked normal. The rift was closing just like before. Everything looked ordinary.

Little Shadow had been following Xu Qing for many years, so it naturally knew what to do. It fused with Xu Qing, converging on his eyes, almost like eyeglasses. The combination of godsource power and the shadow's gruish abilities provided a view that few people could ever witness.

It was blurry, and not very clear. But Xu Qing could still see... that there was a soul drifting toward the closing rift. More precisely, it wasn't a soul. Instead, it was a fragment of time, almost like a mote of dust.

It was a very unique soul, such that, without the help of the shadow, Xu Qing would never have noticed it. It was the very same fragment of time from Bai Xiaozhuo that the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan had extracted years before.

That final swish of the emperor's sleeve seemed like it was scattering the ashes. But now it seems something unusual was actually happening!

Xu Qing's eyes suddenly flashed aggressively. There was no time to sit around contemplating what the emperor's actions might imply. It wasn't a moment for hesitation. Xu Qing suddenly dispersed his god state, whereupon 1,300,000 soul threads appeared and shot into the sky.

“Get back here!” he said coldly. The soul threads shot toward the rift, and in the blink of an eye, had surrounded that soul.

Little Shadow didn't want to be left out, so it shot forth as well. In the past, it wouldn't have mattered how much the shadow wanted to devour Bai Xiaozhuo, it wouldn't have dared. But that hunger had turned incredibly intense, causing Little Shadow to constantly be keeping an eye on Bai Xiaozhuo. Now, it clearly realized that this time fragment soul was vastly weaker than the terrifying Bai Xiaozhuo of before. In other words, there was no danger.

To Little Shadow, it seemed even more fragrant than before. It was as if the catastrophe it had just been through purified the soul, and reverted it to its original state.

The reason was just as he had said: heaven and earth as the furnace, all living beings as the fuel. It was a reforging, and a return to the natural state.

That original state could transmigrate as a person. Or... if the conditions and circumstances were right, it could transmigrate into a natural-born god.

That was why Little Shadow seemed to be going crazy.

The sound of salivating could be heard as Xu Qing's numerous soul threads filled the sky and moved to snatch the time fragment soul. His actions were noticed by the various organizations and people in and out of the university.

All of a sudden, the emperor's gaze emerged from the fading projection of the imperial palace.

Under Xu Qing's control, the 1,300,000 soul threads quickly formed together into a cage.

Meanwhile, Little Shadow wasn't holding anything back. It stretched out, filling the gap in the closing god domain rift, thus blocking any avenues of escape.

With that done, Xu Qing's eyes gleamed with cold light as he extended his right hand into the air and snapped it closed. The soul thread cage shrank down. In the blink of an eye, it became a fist-sized black sphere that shot toward Xu Qing and landed on his palm. Xu Qing didn't even look at it, nor did he give it any chance to send out a stream of thought. He crushed his hand down onto it.

A boom rang out as the 1,300,000 soul threads voraciously devoured the time fragment soul.

The anxious Little Shadow rushed over to take some bites. However, it clearly wasn't capable of devouring things as rapidly as the soul threads. In the blink of an eye, the time fragment soul vanished. It didn't exist anymore. The power within it turned out to be astonishingly nourishing. Xu Qing could sense his soul threads splitting apart and transforming.

1,400,000. 1,600,000. 1,800,000.... In the shortest of moments, the soul threads reached the astonishing level of 2,000,000.

Xu Qing hovered within the 2,000,000 soul threads, his hair whipping around him and his garments flapping. He looked like a fiendish devil, imbued with a spirit that could conquer mountains and rivers.

Bai Xiaozhuo had been destroyed in body and soul!

The emperor looked at Xu Qing as the projection of the imperial palace disappeared.

Around that time in the Star-Plucking Tower, the imperial perceptor, who had been looking in the direction of the Imperial University, closed his eyes.

Chapter 804: Lamp Lit, Flower Blooming

The chaos in the Imperial University was over. The face of the Grand Emperor on Planet Ancient Emperor sank into the clouds and disappeared. The head of the Grand Emperor's statue slowly turned away as the statue returned to its normal position on the rainbow bridge. Light shone off the imperial palace just like before. Inside the shrine hall in the Red Dust Emotional Suppression Pavilion, the clay fox smiled faintly. Eyes closing, the clay fox went back to being a normal statue. The god domain rift in the sky above the university vanished.

The confusion and disorder that the dao debate had descended into were now over. That said, the ramifications were still spreading, among both the organizations outside the university, and the students within it. Innumerable students had been injured to varying degrees.

Silence and mixed emotions became the theme of the day in the university. That was especially true considering that the sky above the university had been severely damaged and was very weak in some spots. Some spots looked like melting ice, or corrosive black holes, or blisters on skin. And the ground was in bad shape too. Although it hadn't been reduced completely to rubble, there were plenty of places that had collapsed. Overall, it was a scene of devastation.

As the chancellor looked out at the situation, the wrinkles on his face seemed to grow more numerous. Sighing, he pointed up to the sky.

“Reconstruct!”

The schoolmasters of the various schools of thought cooperated with the chancellor. That included the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster. All of them raised their hands and called on their privileges as schoolmasters.

In the blink of an eye, beams of light shot out from the white towers, sending out waves of energy as they illuminated the sky. From a distance, the numerous pillars of light were shocking to observe. Next, a host of magical symbols appeared. Each was pure white and octagonal, and there were so many they filled the sky.

The magical symbols themselves assumed the shape of an eight trigrams diagram. There were concentric rings, all of which rotated according to a distinct rhythm. As they rotated, the shattered sky over the university began to recover.

It was the same with the ground. An eight trigrams diagram appeared there as well, also rotating.

Heaven and earth rumbled as, over the course of an incense stick's worth of time... all damage to the sky and land in the Imperial University was fixed. There was no rubble visible any more. Any towers that had collapsed were back to normal. Everything was as it had been before the dao debate.

“The dao debate is hereby over. The Xeno-Immortal School comes out victorious!”

The chancellor's gaze swept the crowd, then reached the Xeno-Immortal School's dao altar, and Xu Qing seated atop it. There was something penetrating about his gaze, almost as if he could read hearts.

Regardless, his words brought an official conclusion to the dao debate. Then he turned to leave. Third Prince, who had been accompanying the chancellor, would normally have done no more than smile to the students and offer some encouraging words before leaving. But now, he solemnly turned to Xu Qing and bowed deeply before leaving.

As they left, the silence which had gripped the Imperial University shattered as the students from the Xeno-Immortal School all started cheering. Before the dao debate, they had been reluctant to identify themselves as students at the Xeno-Immortal School. But now they were very excited. They all knew that after this dao debate... the Xeno-Immortal School had exposed the God-Merging School in a vicious blow, and going forward, there would be nothing stopping them from reaching the highest heights.

The great potential of the Xeno-Immortal School was about to be realized. That much was obvious from the pillar of light rising from the Xeno-Immortal School's dao altar.

After the events of this day, many students who had been on the fence before were now very interested in the Xeno-Immortal School.

In sharp contrast, the defeat of the God-Merging School had ensured its fate. The students from there, whether the chief students, the other leaders, or the ordinary students, all felt anxiety, confusion, and deep regret.

Ultimately, it turned into fury toward Bai Xiaozhuo. Next, they would have to deal with the investigation into Bai Xiaozhuo that would be carried out in the Imperial University and the capital in general. Not one of the leaders of the God-Merging School would be able to escape that. And unless they could prove their innocence, then the end result would be death for them.

The cheering swelled as black-clad university guards and city guards from the capital marched in. As all the students looked on, the leaders of the God-Merging School were arrested and taken away. The rest of the God-Merging students were prevented from leaving, meaning that they would need to stay in the university for the time being, until they were all thoroughly investigated.

Meanwhile, the God-Merging School's white tower became just like the Xeno-Immortal School's tower in the past: it was sealed tight!

Xu Qing stood. Together with the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster and Chen Daoze, he left the dao altar. Xeno-Immortal students then clustered around them as they returned to their white tower. Outside the tower, the schoolmaster took a deep breath, then turned and announced that the Xeno-Immortal School would be open again tomorrow.

Amidst more loud cheering, the schoolmaster turned to Xu Qing and bowed deeply. Chen Daoze did the same.

Xu Qing knew that they must have many questions, so he turned and entered the tower. The other two followed. Once they were inside, the tower doors closed.

The students outside knew that it wouldn't be appropriate to disturb them, so they bowed and hurried away excitedly.

The tower was quiet inside. Lamp light illuminated the interior as Xu Qing stood in front of a shelf of jade slips. As he looked through the various ancient records, the schoolmaster and Chen Daoze stood respectfully behind him.

They had many, many questions. But right now, even as they stood in Xu Qing's presence, they really weren't sure where to start. Considering that the ultimate origin of the Xeno-Immortal School was Xu Qing, they couldn't help but worry about what that meant for the future.

When a word from one person can determine the fate of what is most precious to you, it's only natural to feel anxious and hesitant. That was how things worked with important people. That said, the term 'important person' wasn't necessarily unconditional. Many times, it was subjective.

Xu Qing understood how they felt. His experiences in Seven Blood Eyes and Sea-Sealing County had facilitated his growth from a kid raised in the slums to a grown man. When he spoke, his voice filled the white tower.

"Xeno-Immortal dao seeds are actually formed from my soul seeds. The soul seeds have advantages and disadvantages, which I explained in detail in the first jade slip I sent to the schoolmaster.

"It's true that I can take back the soul seeds with a thought, as well as all the cultivation base transformations they've wrought. But there's only one circumstance in which I would do that. And that is... if human morality is violated."

Xu Qing turned and looked at the schoolmaster and Chen Daoze with fiercely gleaming eyes.

The two of them ducked their heads, clasped hands, and bowed.

Before coming to know who Xu Qing really was, such words would have raised their suspicions, and they would have been cautious and fully on guard. Even if they ultimately submitted to him, it would only have been because of the potential benefits to them.

But... things were different now.

In addition to Xu Qing's ordinary identity, he had an even more important identity, and that was as the bearer of The Emperor's Sword. He was approved of by the Grand Emperor, and had been chosen to bear his sword. The Grand Emperor's opinion was naturally very persuasive.

Because of that, both the Xeno-Immortal schoolmaster and Chen Daoze fully trusted Xu Qing and what he said.

Xu Qing waved his hand, and from his remaining 98 violet soul seeds, three flew out.

"You can select some appropriate candidates to take these violet soul seeds. You can also decide the rules that govern their usage. As for me, I'm going to make some new reference pictures and explanations here. Going forward, students can study them to help them move in the right direction."

“Your orders shall be followed!” the schoolmaster said. After carefully collecting the violet soul seeds, he thought for a moment, then clasped hands. “Region Lord Xu, on the outside, I happen to work in the Administration Palace. If you ever need any help there, just issue the orders.”

Xu Qing hadn't asked about who he really was. But given how important the schoolmaster was to the school of thought, the schoolmaster decided to take the initiative to reveal the information.

After a moment of silence, Chen Daoze said, “Region Lord Xu, I've been here in the Imperial University for 5,000 years. Thankfully, your soul seed restored my mind and gave me control of my body again. In the past, I was an operations elder in the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect. Considering how things have turned out with the Xeno-Immortal School, I plan to finally return to my sect.”

“Star Emperor Preeminence Sect?” Xu Qing murmured. Thinking about his speculation that the Captain was currently a member of one of their branch sects, he nodded.

Now that Xu Qing had started a conversation, the schoolmaster and Chen Daoze started asking him questions about the cultivation method for the Xeno-Immortal School soul threads. Xu Qing actually didn't have much advice to give regarding the cultivation method. However, he did have information to give them about the core elements of the Xeno-Immortal techniques, as well as god states. Chen Daoze and the schoolmaster listened intently, and as they absorbed the deep meaning of his words, they were shaken.

Soul threads are actually an imitation of godsource....

Burning a godly projection can break through barriers!

The so-called Xeno-Immortal means being a god with one thought or an immortal with another....

So many thousands of thoughts were running through their heads that time seemed to slow down. Eventually, Xu Qing went back to the imperial capital. By that point, it was late at night. The sky was dark, and everything was quiet and peaceful. The stars glittered in the night sky, like mysterious eyes staring down at the world. As the wind blew down the empty street, the leaves on the trees rustled.

Xu Qing suddenly stopped in place. “The last group of people who secretly followed me around in the imperial capital ended up dead, down to the last one.”

A woman appeared behind him in the moonlight. She was wearing a mask, and her gaze was a mix of suspicion and provocation.

“You can try,” she said. It was the very same mysterious girl he had met that night outside the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect's branch sect!

Xu Qing turned, and the moonlight grew brighter, turning violet as it filled the street.

At the same time, something very gruish happened on Planet Ancient Emperor. The cloud cover there began to move.

In the depths of the imperial palace, there was a pentagonal altar with five golden coffins on it, all of which emanated a terrifying imperial aura. The aura was pitch black and could decay anything it touched. It was like a host of black dragons, pulsing with death as they howled. There was a lamp in the middle of the altar.

It was the color violet. It had previously been extinguished, but right now, there was a flame dancing on its wick. The flame was golden, but it was so weak it looked like the slightest breeze might extinguish it. Just barely visible in the flame was something that seemed to have the characteristics of both a lifespan flower and a pāramitā lily.

It was the very same flower that had appeared in the end for Bai Xiaozhuo. And it was the very last thing in his life... that he had completed.

Chapter 805: Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao

The night sky was like ink. The stars twinkled. The moon hung high, spilling moonlight down. However, it was only on that one street in the imperial capital that the moonlight became violet. It was like a gauzy veil.

Outside that violet veil, a cold wind blew, causing dry leaves to rustle and distant trees to sway. It was as if they were telling secrets to the darkness of night. Inside the violet veil, a freezing wind screamed toward a retreating figure, as if it were infected with the momentum of superiority, and wanted to challenge the night to battle.

Dirt exploded as the retreating figure landed on the street. Then, two long furrows appeared as the figure slid backward about 30 meters before gaining a stable footing.

The violet moonlight made it clear that this figure was the mysterious young woman. She didn't look like she had before. Her mask was cracked, and her eyes glowed as she looked up at Xu Qing approaching her.

“People say that you stole some of Crimson Mother's godsource. You haven't done much in the Imperial University, so I couldn't tell for sure. But considering how the moonlight changes color for you, I'd say the rumors are true.”

Xu Qing's expression remained neutral. He seemed to be in his element in the moonlight. As he approached the young woman, the violet color grew more intense, filling heaven and earth, invading everything. It turned into a terrifying godly projection that could devour anything and everything, leaving behind only moonlight on the ground.

“However, that just makes me more interested in you. Last time, I didn't want to cause unnecessary trouble in the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect, so I held back my secret magics. But this time....”

Unfathomable light flickered in the young woman's eyes, whereupon something bizarre and demonic happened. Within her left eye was a baby in the fetal position, while in her right eye was a stooped old woman. Both emanated a different type of energy that combined into something very bizarre. It contained both life and death as it surrounded her. Behind the woman, the colors black

and white appeared. Each was semi-circular, one on the left, the other on the right, and as they spun, they affected the magical laws of heaven and earth, and the natural laws of the world.

For the first time in this clash, Xu Qing's eyes glittered. Back in the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect, he had sensed that this person had a gruish aura. It was like a god, but not. Like a cultivator, but not. He had taken note of it back then, but now, it was even more evident.

"You talk a lot of nonsense," he said calmly. He waved his right hand, and the violet moonlight shone brightly as it became material, transforming into long spears of light that shot toward the mysterious young woman. From a distance, it looked like tens of thousands of spears of moonlight closing in on her from all directions and moving as quickly as lightning. It seemed there was no way she could avoid it.

In the final moment of crisis, the young woman's pupils constricted and she performed a double-handed incantation gesture. All of a sudden, the two semicircles of black and white behind her enveloped her like wings. Rumbling sounds echoed out as the moonlight spears closed in with deadly, destructive force. The black-and-white wings shifted to block the attack, yet the force still caused blood to spray from the woman's mouth. But she still managed to block the brunt of the attack.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered with fierce light as he shot forward. His third-level god state appeared behind him, its vicious form rising high into the sky as it closed in with him.

However, it was right then that the young woman's voice drifted out from the black-and-white wings.

"One bloodline, transformed into three souls. Three souls tempered into nine divinities. Nine divinities refined into my true self. I am... Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao!" [1]

The moment the woman's words echoed out, three illusory mountains appeared in midair. They were no ordinary mountains, as they hung upside down, with their tips pointing down. One mountain was completely formed of ice and frost, making it light blue. It contained boundless coldness. One mountain was crimson red like blood, making it look like an immense pile of corpses. One mountain was made of molten rock, like fire, that brimmed with the most supreme dignity. [2]

The moment they appeared, the three mountains dropped down toward Xu Qing, pulsing with a most ancient aura.

What divine ability is this? It seems so ancient....

Expression grim, Xu Qing exercised a thought, and more soul threads emerged from him as he summoned his first- and second-level god states to stand next to his third.

It was an unprecedented scene as Xu Qing and his three god states appeared within the violet moonlight. Before killing Bai Xiaozhuo, there was no way Xu Qing could have done this. His soul

threads wouldn't have been able to support it. But now he had 2,000,000 soul threads, and as a result, he could sustain all three god states at the same time.

It was as if there were three gods standing in a triangular formation around Xu Qing. As they did, his hands flashed in an incantation gesture, he pointed at the three descending mountains. Mutagen spread out, causing everything to blur, but intensifying the violet color.

Xu Qing's first-level god state slammed a fist into the mountain of ice and frost. As the boom rang out, the second-level god state neared the second mountain. Pitch black poison erupted from it, and as it turned into a gigantic monster, it opened its mouth to devour the mountain. The third-level god state hefted the violet moon, transformed into a planet, and slammed into the mountain of molten rock. Wild colors flashed in heaven and earth. Winds screamed. And the three mountains trembled. Cracks spread across them, filling them, and then a boom rang out as they collapsed.

They were illusory to begin with, so when they collapsed, they disappeared into nothing, leaving behind no traces of their existence. However, if you looked closely... you would see that when they disappeared, a seven-colored light flickered on all of the resulting pieces of rubble.

The breaking of the divine ability caused a backlash. Blood sprayed out of the mysterious woman's mouth, and her aura became much weaker as she staggered backward.

This fight should be noticed, whether by the spell formations in the capital, or by people from various organizations. There's no way people haven't noticed.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered with cold light.

But right now, things seem just as quiet as before.... Unless things are similar to the night of the assassination attempt, it means there's only one other possibility. This woman... has an extraordinary background!

With that thought in mind, Xu Qing burst into motion, and his three god states emitted godly might as he shot toward the woman.

Though blood was oozing out of the mysterious woman's mouth, she obviously wasn't ready to give up. Her eyes still shone provocatively as she stared at Xu Qing. Then, she shut her right eye and kept her left eye open. The infant in her left eye stirred. That motion caused the white wing behind her to unfurl, revealing an image within it. The painting was simple. It showed a boundless, watery swamp.

The moment it appeared, the woman growled, "Waterswamp... Kingdom!"

All of a sudden, heaven and earth seemed to change. The imperial capital seemingly disappeared. Xu Qing and the woman were no longer on a street, but instead, were surrounded by a vast, watery swamp. [3]

An incredible sense of danger filled Xu Qing at that moment. Then, deep within the swamp, the roar of a beast echoed out. A huge spike appeared, rising up from the swamp like a mountain, and shooting diagonally toward Xu Qing. Swamp water sprayed everywhere as it viciously thrust toward him.

At that moment of crisis, Xu Qing didn't hesitate at all. Shooting up into the air, he threw his hands out and put his palms together as if in prayer. Instantly, his three god states shot toward him and merged into him.

In the blink of an eye, the combination of all three god states appeared. Bones of crystal. Flesh of soul threads. Armor of poison. Stamped with a heavenly dao. Three furnaces burning in its chest. It was all completely terrifying! The violet moon hung behind it, and even more shocking, behind the moon was an enormous sundial.

At the same time, Xu Qing's shadow spread out, forming something like a forbidden region. In its depths was a dead tree upon which hung a coffin, swaying back and forth and emitting chanting sounds. This was the greatest level of strength Xu Qing could muster.

He lifted his right hand, pushed down on the swamp, and then spoke in a voice that thrummed with holiness.

“Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao!”

The moment the words left his mouth, seven-colored daybreak light erupted, swirling around him to form the same three inverted mountains from before.

The mysterious woman's face fell, and her eyes shone with disbelief. “You—”

Before she could finish speaking, seven-colored light glittered in Xu Qing's eyes, and he waved his right index finger. The icy mountain fell with unstoppable force toward the spike coming out of the swamp.

A deafening boom shook the swampy lands. Next came the second mountain, followed by the third. The quick succession of three mountains, and the crushing pressure they brought, caused the swamp and the dimension that contained it to become unstable.

The final attack came as Xu Qing himself shot down like a meteor to land a fist strike onto the surface of the swamp. A defiant growl echoed out from the depths of the swamp. Whatever lurked beneath wanted to unleash a full attack, yet was seemingly blocked by something, and temporarily couldn't. The dimension collapsed, and everything went back to normal.

The white wing behind the woman shattered. Looking even more incredulous than before, she stared at the fiendish-looking Xu Qing and prepared to unleash the secret magic from her right eye.

“Fate, Lives and—”

However, the backlash from before ensured that, just as the old woman in her right eye started moving, the black wing behind her faded from existence. [4]

Blood sprayed out of the woman's mouth, and as a sense of mortal danger rose up in her, she prepared to speak again.

In the blink of an eye, Xu Qing vanished. Next, she sensed an immense force rocketing toward her. By going all out, she managed to avoid sustaining a fatal blow, but she still couldn't evade Xu Qing's fist-turned-palm attack.

The palm hit her right on the side of the face. Her mask shattered, revealing a beautiful face. However, the blood and mud covering her marred her beauty as she was sent tumbling to the side.

Before she could land on the ground, Xu Qing lunged after her. He appeared right behind her, pulled out a dagger, and slashed it toward her throat. It didn't matter who she was. She had attacked him, and Xu Qing wasn't used to letting attackers escape with their lives.

Blood sprayed. A head flew. At the same time, a host of soul threads flew out toward the woman's severed head to devour it. The woman's fleshly body collapsed into ash.

And yet, Xu Qing was frowning. His soul threads had not devoured any soul at all. This body... didn't have a soul.

Xu Qing then noticed that, in the spot where the woman had collapsed into ashes, countless motes of dust had formed into a scintillating butterfly. [5]

The butterfly was illusory and dazzling, as well as extremely beautiful. As it flapped its wings, countless stars swirled down. Then it spoke in a clear voice.

“You—”

The soul threads slammed into it, and the butterfly collapsed. But only a moment later, it formed anew.

Xu Qing's eyes turned cold.

The woman spoke again. “Kill if you must. Have you calmed down yet?”

Countless soul threads once again wiped the butterfly out of existence, but unsurprisingly, it returned a moment later.

“That's enough!”

RUMBLE!

After enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, Xu Qing was walking away, his face expressionless. The butterfly was following him.

“You've got quite the temper. Still mad? I was just playing around with you earlier. If you want to keep fighting, you can destroy me another hundred and eighty times if you'd like. Aiya, calm down! I'm very curious about the techniques you used against me. And you're probably curious about my background.

“I'm from the Summer Immortal Palace. The palace lord ordered me to invite you to come check out the Summer Immortal Palace.”

Xu Qing stopped in place.

Chapter 806: Summer Immortal Palace

Not a sound could be heard in heaven and earth. A few clouds floated past the bright moon in the sky, creating an ethereal atmosphere. The color of the moonlight on one particular street grew increasingly violet, thanks to Xu Qing. At the moment, he had stopped walking and was looking at the butterfly.

The Summer Immortal Palace. It wasn't Xu Qing's first time hearing about the place. Back when he came to the imperial capital, Princess Anhai had mentioned it. [1]

He remembered her saying that humans weren't the only ones who had a Summer Immortal Palace. There were other species in the Revered Ancient mainland who also had the same organization. The palace was an ancient place with a history that stretched back to the very beginning of Revered Ancient.

In fact, the 99 ancient heavenly daos of Revered Ancient were actually creations of the Summer Immortal Palace. They were the ones who gave natural laws to the world, and who maintained a boundary against gods. They originated in a place called Deep Earth, which was also sometimes referred to as the lower worlds.

Xu Qing's eyes gleamed with profound light. "Every thousand years, the human Summer Immortal Palace sends out a disciple to wander the lands. Are you that disciple for this generation?"

The butterfly's wings flapped, causing dusty starlight to drift down from it, then fade into nothing.

"I can't tell you," came the crisp, clear reply. "If you want to know, you'll have to —"

Without the slightest change to his facial expression, Xu Qing sent soul threads stabbing into the butterfly. The butterfly collapsed with a thump, but reappeared only a moment later. Xu Qing repeated the process a few dozen times. When the butterfly reformed after the final time, the designs on its wings looked like eyes. And they looked angry.

"Still not calmed down? You're out of control! Stop! Fine, I'll answer your question. I do want to wander the lands, but... the palace lord said that I'm not strong enough yet. Ai. I guess that makes sense. Even you can beat me...." The butterfly sighed. "So are you coming or not? If not, then I'll just keep following you around. I really have no choice. The palace lord told me to invite you, and failing the mission isn't an option.

"Don't be afraid. I'm not going to hurt you. Haven't you noticed yet that, despite our fighting, the spell formations didn't activate and nobody showed up...? Want to know why?"

"It's because I represent the Summer Immortal Palace, and the Summer Immortal Palace... doesn't participate in the mundane affairs of any species. We record history, that's all. We don't have any enemies.

"That being said, I don't really know why the palace lord wants to see you. So, are you going, or not?"

Xu Qing was actually feeling a bit annoyed. After the mysterious young woman turned into a butterfly, she became something of a chatterbox. Every sentence she spoke seemed to be followed by another sentence.

That said, he was very curious about the Summer Immortal Palace. Considering how many prying eyes there were in the imperial capital, he wasn't really worried about the place posing some sort of

lethal threat. After mulling the matter over, he looked at the ancient sun hanging at his waist. That made him feel even better.

“Lead the way!” he said calmly.

The butterfly squealed excitedly and started flying, leaving behind a beautiful, multicolored stream of light that served as a path through the starry sky. Xu Qing followed. After proceeding for a short time, they reached the north section of the imperial capital.

The capital took up the entire inner ring of Planet Ancient Emperor, which meant it was a very large place. There were a variety of terrain features scattered about, from mountains to plains. The north had more open space than average. There weren't a lot of buildings, and considering it was nighttime, it felt empty and desolate.

Eventually, the butterfly stopped over a vast plain that was illuminated only by glittering moonlight.

Within that faint light it was just possible to see a temple. There were no other buildings present, just the temple. It was somewhat run-down, and imparted the sensation of countless years of time. What was more, it was constructed in an unusual way that made it seem like it existed in the space between reality and illusion.

Xu Qing remembered having passed through this spot once, and there hadn't been any sign of this temple.

Is it like the Immortal Questioning Bell?

“There's no need for you to speculate,” the butterfly said. “The Summer Immortal Palaces all look like this, regardless of the species. They exist, but at the same time, they don't exist. And if you come looking for this place, you'll never find it. The only way you'll ever see it is if the palace lord invites you.”

The butterfly then shot toward the temple and disappeared inside. A moment later, the temple's main door slowly opened. The door was mottled with age, and seemed ancient. The interior of the temple seemed to emanate a sense of antiquity. Just looking at it made Xu Qing feel like he was glimpsing history.

He closed his eyes and slowly tapped into his sundials. When he opened his eyes again, he could see a river of time flowing within the temple. That made the temple seem even more mysterious.

After a time, he took a deep breath, straightened his clothing, and then bowed to the temple. Then, not pausing for even a moment, he walked inside.

Looking around, he found that the temple seemed just as run-down on the inside as it did on the outside. It looked like nothing more than a run-of-the-mill temple. It was mostly empty, and very quiet, with the only sound coming from the dancing flames on the candles.

Specifically, there was an altar up front with nine candles on it. Three of them were extinguished, while six of them were lit. When the door opened, the candles flickered slightly. In front of the altar were three prayer mats of woven rush. They were quite worn, seemingly indicating that they were frequently used for meditation and worship. There were no divine likenesses enshrined in the temple. Instead, there were nine ancient paintings, one behind each candle. The paintings were

blurry, making it impossible to see clearly who they depicted. Other than that, the walls of the temple featured frescoes illuminated by the dim, flickering candle light.

As Xu Qing's gaze shifted from the altar to the walls, his heart started pounding.

The frescoes contained historical images!

In one of them, Xu Qing saw Emperor Dark War ascending the throne! The image was very detailed, and did a great job of imparting the majesty and grandeur of the occasion. It was easy to get sucked into it and feel like you were actually there.

Eventually, Xu Qing looked at some of the other frescoes. One of them depicted another of the human emperors ascending the throne. That emperor's facial features were unfamiliar to Xu Qing, but there was a text inscription explaining who it was. Dao Life.

Xu Qing walked a bit closer to the wall, and as he looked around, he saw the emperor who had come before Dao Life. It was Emperor Mirrorcloud!

Xu Qing stopped in front of the Mirrorcloud fresco, and suddenly found himself thinking of the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. As he knew, Emperor Mirrorcloud and the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan were from the same generation. That time period was considered the golden age of humankind.

Xu Qing walked around some more and found Emperor Sageheaven, as well as Emperor Eastglory, who, in his thirst to accomplish extraordinary things, ended up losing almost half of all human territory.

The various images of the human emperors ascending the throne depicted different levels of majesty and grandeur. Most astonishing of all was the fresco of Emperor Eastglory. He had a whole host of heavenly kings with him, as well as numerous Imperial Sovereigns. The prestige on display, and the destiny aura, seemed impossible to top. At that time, humankind had terrifying reserve powers, as well as the might of the Ancient Emperors.

But when it came to Dark War's ascension... humans were clearly in decline.

The images created something like a river of history flowing in front of Xu Qing. Thanks to the frescoes, he got a clear view of what happened to humankind after Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity left.

Speaking of which, what about Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity? He was before Emperor Eastglory, right...?

Xu Qing continued following the frescoes until he encountered an image that surpassed anything from the later emperors.

He saw... Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity ascending the throne. Planet Ancient Emperor shone with dazzling, auspicious light. Heaven and earth were dim in comparison. The 99 ancient heavenly daos were clearly prominent, and were bowing their heads to the imperial palace. A lone person stood in that palace, mightier than heaven. Beneath him were all the species of Revered Ancient, including their emperors, and they were prostrating respectfully. One person had conquered Revered Ancient. One person had campaigned across all heaven and earth.

Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity!

Xu Qing examined the fresco for a long time. Eventually, he settled his thoughts and decided to keep looking back. He wanted to see what humans were like before Dark Serenity.

Humans had emperors before Dark Serenity. Some of them ruled for long periods of time. Others didn't reign for very long. The same went for the levels of glory they achieved. Eventually, after passing thirty-one emperors, Xu Qing found a fresco that depicted a ceremony that seemed to equal that of Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity.

It was... another Ancient Emperor.

Dark Serenity was not the first Ancient Emperor among humankind to conquer Revered Ancient. The name of that Ancient Emperor was 'Banished Immortal.'

She was actually an empress. She had a magnificent style that was unmatched in later generations, and was an object of veneration among all people.

Xu Qing's heart was racing. This was history he had never learned about, and was careful to look closely at all the images. He moved on, and saw frescoes depicting an additional fifty emperors.

Eventually, he found a fresco depicting... the very first Ancient Emperor of humankind.

He was a young man standing in front of a very ancient imperial palace. Instead of wearing imperial garments, he actually wore a daoist robe. He was not looking down as countless species bowed to him. Instead, he was looking up into a starry sky. His expression was melancholy, conflicted, and thoughtful.

There was an inscription naming him. Ancient Emperor Heavenly Peace.

"Ancient Emperor Heavenly Peace was the first human emperor. He was also the first Ancient Emperor."

The words were eloquently spoken from behind Xu Qing.

He looked over his shoulder and saw that there was a woman on one of the prayer mats, facing away from him.

She wore a white, homespun garment and had long black hair. Because of the dim candlelight, Xu Qing felt like he was looking at an old painting. The person depicted in that painting seemed to exist within time itself. As Xu Qing looked at her, he wasn't sure if she was in the past or the present. Her aura was like that of a god, yet wasn't. It was like that of a cultivator, yet wasn't.

"Immortal...!" said the trembling voice of the god's finger from within Xu Qing. *"I was only asleep for a bit! Why did you... bring me to see an immortal...?"*

The god's finger was trembling, and instinctively shut its eyes and tried to go back asleep. If it was asleep, it couldn't be afraid.

Xu Qing ignored the finger and instead focused on the woman in the homespun garment.

An ancient temple. A homespun garment. Underworld fire.

The butterfly appeared next to her, fluttering around her before landing on her shoulder. The patterns on the butterfly's wings formed an eye that looked at Xu Qing.

“Xu Qing, this is my Master, who is also the palace lord.”

Xu Qing solemnly bowed. “Well met, Palace Lord.”

The ancient temple was quiet for a very long moment...

Then the figure in the homespun garment spoke in a voice like water droplets falling onto limestone tiles. “You have the aura of a Summer Immortal on you.”

Her voice lingered in the ancient temple.[2]

Chapter 807: Nine Summer Immortals!

The ethereal voice echoed back and forth in the temple. The person who had spoken was clearly right in front of Xu Qing, yet for some reason, it seemed to him like they were separated by countless years. It was like a person in the past, plucking a zither, the sound of which carried with it the sensation of the timescape.

The god's finger wasn't capable of sleeping, and could only lay there trembling.

As for Xu Qing, his heart was pounding as he looked at the palace lord of the Summer Immortal Palace, whose cultivation base he couldn't read. In fact, he couldn't sense anything about her. She seemed both illusory and looming at the same time. The older Xu Qing got, the less often things like this happened. He had dealt with beings as lofty as Imperial Sovereigns and as lowly as grues. He had seen just about everything. He even had multiple experiences dealing with gods. In other words, he had a lot of reference points to call on when assessing someone's aura. But right now... this palace lord was impossible to read. As a result, it didn't matter what reference points he had.

In fact, the sensation of the mixture between past and present, and the combination of illusory and material, was growing stronger. All of these things created even more mystery within Xu Qing's heart. Because of that mysterious sensation, the palace lord's words seemed deeply meaningful. It was as if she spoke with the voice of all living beings.

Summer Immortal....

Xu Qing collected his thoughts, then waved his right hand, causing Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior to fly out. The iron skewer, which now looked more like a fiendish club, landed on Xu Qing's palm.

“Is this what you're sensing, Senior?” he asked softly.

Silence reigned in the temple.

The patriarch trembled on Xu Qing's palm, terror raging uncontrollably within him. He felt like he was in the presence of a god. Little Shadow was also trembling, though it managed to contain all of its emotional fluctuations. That actually gave Xu Qing a better idea of this palace lord's cultivation base.

Again, she spoke in her ethereal voice.

“Yes. And no.” The woman in the homespun garments sat with her back to Xu Qing, speaking as if from ancient times. “Do you know what a Summer Immortal is?”

Xu Qing didn't answer immediately. Instead, he thought back to everything he knew about Summer Immortals.

Finally, he said, “Summer Immortal is a cultivation level.”

The woman in the homespun garments slowly shook her head. “Correct. But also incorrect. See for yourself.”

She reached up and pointed to the first of the nine paintings behind the candles. The blurriness of the painting turned into clarity, and the person depicted became visible.

He was an old man, tall and burly, with white hair and a white beard. He seemed straightforward and even boorish, and in his hand he held a walking stick that was golden in color, except made from... a bone. It was not an ordinary bone. It was the bone of a god. Even though it was only a painting, the shocking energy that Xu Qing could sense seemed to surpass Crimson Mother! Though it was clearly an unmoving artistic depiction, the old man was so lifelike he looked like he might step out of the painting at any moment. The shabby clothing he wore didn't do anything to diminish his character. In fact, it made him seem more profound and ancient. His eyes seemed to contain stars, as if he could understand anything and everything.

As Xu Qing looked at the painting, he tried to commit the details to memory, except that even that simple act wasn't possible. It was as if... the person in the painting could not be remembered by another.

Once again, the voice of the woman in the homespun garment filled the temple. “Gods cannot be looked at directly. Immortals cannot be remembered. You're looking at the first of the nine Summer Immortals of the Revered Ancient mainland. He wasn't human, and no one actually knows what he looks like. That image is a depiction of the venerable master's mortal husk.”

The woman's voice suddenly seemed to thrum with an even greater sensation of time. She reached out with her delicate hand and pointed at the second painting. It became clear.

It also depicted an old man, but he was very different from the first. He was not domineering. Instead, he was scholarly and refined. He wore the garment of an academic, and had a long, flowing beard. His face was ruddy, and his eyes were profound, as if they contained heavenly daos. His hair was neatly bound with a wooden hairpin, and his garment was covered with complex scholarly designs. Every stitch and thread seemed full of an aura that surpassed anything mortal. It was the aura of a god. Shockingly, every stitch and thread contained a sealed god!

“You said that Summer Immortal is a cultivation level. That's correct. But that's more like a definition applied to the past by people in the present. The people in the present are the cultivators of Revered Ancient. They believe that after Smoldering God comes Imperial Sovereign, and that after Imperial Sovereign comes Quasi-Immortal, also known as Grand Emperor. Break through from Quasi-Immortal, and you'll reach Summer Immortal.”

The palace lord waved her hand, and the third and fourth paintings became clear to Xu Qing. They depicted a woman and a man respectively.

She was graceful and elegant, with a face as beautiful as an immortal. Beautiful hair cascaded down her like a waterfall, and her eyes seemed like ponds during spring. She was the type of person whose every frown and smile could entrance anyone who looked at her. She was surrounded by countless glowing spheres. If you looked closely at them, you would realize that the spheres were actually stars.

The man in the fourth painting was middle-aged. He seemed awe-inspiring, with raven-black hair hanging down behind him. His eyes were profound, as dark as the night sky, and glittering with wisdom and insight. He had a prominent nose, thin lips, and seemed calm and thoughtful.

Astonishingly, he stood atop a mountain of god corpses! Golden blood flowed into a stupefying sea at the base of the mountain. Just looking at the image caused Xu Qing's heart to race. Even though it was just a painting, he could still sense the terror imparted by those gods. Some of them seemed no weaker than Crimson Mother, and there were some that were clearly stronger. And yet... every single god in this man's presence was nothing more than a corpse.

The palace lord's voice once again echoed in the temple. "The truth is that, in the early days, Summer Immortals weren't called that. In the Brilliant Heaven god world, the most famous people from Deep Earth were called Lower Immortals. Later, as time went on, Lower Immortals came to be called Summer Immortals." [1]

Xu Qing took a deep breath. This was information he hadn't heard before.

The palace lord pointed at the fifth painting.

As it became clear, Xu Qing saw a young man. He wore a white robe that swayed in the breeze, and he overflowed with immortal energy. His garment was embroidered with beautiful designs that emphasized how honorable he was. He had long, slender fingers that held a fly-whisk, the strands of which also drifted in the wind. And at the tip of every single strand, there was apparently an entire star system, each of which contained countless worlds and unending life. The young man didn't seem to be very old, yet his eyes contained something profoundly ancient, as if he had seen many things in life, and had experienced countless things. Despite that, he hadn't changed much. He had a smile as warm and gentle as a spring breeze, the type that would cause anyone who saw him to admire him greatly.

"There were nine of them in total, all from different species. During the heyday of humankind, there were five. And that's why humans in Revered Ancient produced three Ancient Emperors."

The palace lord pointed at the sixth painting. It depicted a woman with a smile as kind and gentle as a blooming white lotus. Her daoist robe swayed in the breeze, making her look like an immortal walking in the mortal world. She had long hair that flowed freely behind her, shapely eyebrows, almond eyes, and skin as fair as snow. Her eyes glittered like deep springs of clear water. Behind her floated a sword as black as ink that pulsed with a sensation of destruction and death.

"The other three perished in the ancient war. Their immortal will transformed into 54 of the 99 ancient heavenly daos."

The palace lord sighed. She waved her delicate hand again, and the final three paintings became clear to Xu Qing. All of them seemed faded and old.

One depicted a woman with streaming black hair and fair skin. She seemed graceful and otherworldly, with crimson lips that accentuated a beautiful face. She had the most attractive smile of all the people in the paintings. It was obvious that, when she was alive, her good looks were as refreshing as the warm spring sunlight. Sadly, she had long since died.

Next was a young man with ordinary facial features but profound eyes. His face seemed full of the passage of time, and he wore a simple daoist robe that rippled freely in the wind.

The final painting, despite having been revealed by the palace lord, depicted a figure that wasn't fully clear. It seemed to portray an old man. Though his features weren't possible to make out fully, the painting made him seem like the kind of person who could prevent the dome of heaven from collapsing by holding it up with his hands. He was like an unshakable mountain.

“The last one had no time to form a mortal husk. He could only leave behind a scrap of his aura before he perished.”

The palace lord looked up at all the paintings.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, bowed deeply and solemnly to all of them. Then he looked back at the palace lord. “Senior, might I ask why you summoned me here today?”

“Most people know of the Summer Immortal Palace's mission to record the history of Revered Ancient. But the truth is that the Summer Immortal Palace has another mission. And that is to keep a record of the techniques that changed the immortal essence of the Summer Immortal Palace.

“Your soul seeds created ripples in the immortal essence, and therefore, I would like to ask... if you would be willing to leave one behind here, to be stored for all eternity in the immortal essence of the Summer Immortal Palace? Consider it a contribution. And in return, you can seek enlightenment of any technique you find in the immortal essence.”

The eyes on the little butterfly's wings suddenly glittered.

“What?” the butterfly said. “That's what this is about? Master, it was his crappy technique that caused a stir in the immortal essence? This is immortal essence we're talking about!”

The butterfly seemed both disbelieving and also envious.

Xu Qing thought about it for a moment. He honestly could never have guessed that the Summer Immortal Palace was interested in his soul seeds. The reality was that none of this mattered much to him. That said, he was interested to learn some more about this 'immortal essence.'

“Senior, what is this immortal essence you mentioned?”

The person to answer him wasn't the palace lord, but rather, the butterfly. “It's something created by the nine Summer Immortals after they elevated Revered Ancient. It's the only thing that surpasses the heavenly daos.

“In the never-ending worlds of Deep Earth, it serves as the source of all techniques and divine abilities. All magical techniques in Deep Earth actually come from immortal essence, although they’re all propagated in different ways. At the same time, the immortal essence is also responsible for collecting all rare and unique daos, then organizing them for later distribution. In that way, people from our homeland can practice cultivation for all eternity.

“This is outright preposterous! How could your soul seeds provoke a reaction from immortal essence?”

Chapter 808: Gains from Immortal Essence

Xu Qing’s heart was racing. How could he ever have imagined that something as fantastic as immortal essence could exist in the world? Immortal essence surpassed heavenly daos, which itself seemed almost unbelievable.

It’s the source of all techniques in Deep Earth....

Xu Qing took a deep breath and instinctively looked down. He knew that whatever was sealed beneath the surface of Revered Ancient had once been part of Brilliant Heaven. He also knew that the starry sky beyond Revered Ancient was actually a part of Brilliant Heaven. And what was sealed by Revered Ancient was only one of many god worlds of Brilliant Heaven.

Meanwhile, Deep Earth, which was even further down, was the homeland of the Summer Immortals, and was also the true origin of all of the countless species that lived on Revered Ancient. It was a boundless, majestic place, filled with unending life.

And now he knew that all of the divine abilities and magical techniques there actually came from the immortal essence created by the Summer Immortals. It analyzed, collected, organized, and disseminated. As a result, the flower of cultivation bloomed constantly in the countless worlds of Deep Earth. There were all sorts of techniques, and though most people acquired them by means of destined opportunities, the reality was that they all originated with immortal essence.

Xu Qing was shaken just thinking about how something like that could be used. It defied description to the point that he could only think to call it amazing. All of a sudden, Xu Qing found himself thinking about the methods used by the butterfly while she was in human form. Whether it was the Withering Flame Demon Magic True Self Dao or the Waterswamp Kingdom, both obviously came from immortal essence.

It’s easy to imagine how people who use divine abilities like that at their highest level would be outstanding figures in Deep Earth. Does that mean that the Revered Ancient mainland has something similar to immortal essence...?

As Xu Qing was lost in thought, the butterfly, apparently having guessed what he was thinking, said, “I bet you’re wondering if Revered Ancient has something akin to immortal essence. Well, I can explain. Because of the will of Brilliant Heaven, the reality is that immortal essence is of limited use in Revered Ancient. All it can do is collect. It can’t evolve or disseminate.

“What’s more, only the disciples of the Summer Immortal Palace from the various species have the authority to use it and seek enlightenment from it.

Outsiders aren't ever given that chance. In fact, even I have to provide something of value to get a chance like that. All rules regarding immortal essence are fair and balanced!

“Back when we clashed in the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect, I put everything on the line just to get a scrap of a treasure from the immortal essence. But you're getting the chance so easily!”

From the butterfly's tone, she was clearly not quite convinced that Xu Qing was worthy. Somehow, that made the temple seem a bit livelier.

Xu Qing looked at the palace lord. He looked at the butterfly. And then he started wondering if... the butterfly's liveliness was one of the reasons why the palace lord had accepted her as an apprentice.

This place was immersed in a river of time. It had sunk deep into the past. It was extremely plain and simple, and at the same time, lonely and profound. Anyone who spent a long time in an environment like this would naturally develop a sense of ancientness. But with the mission in place, the successive generations of the Summer Immortal Palace had no choice but to continue on.

Maybe one day when this butterfly is the palace lord... she'll become like the current palace lord, living in the present and existing in the past, traversing the ancient as part of her mission.

Xu Qing looked away from the butterfly. He wasn't interested in bickering with her. Looking at the palace lord, he clasped hands and said, “I understand what you mean, Senior. I think... I can agree to that. But I would like to respectfully ask to see the immortal essence first.”

The palace lord didn't say anything in response. She just waved her hand gracefully in the direction of the candles on the altar. Instantly, the flames on the six lit candles grew larger. Though they were only flames from candles, as they expanded, they turned into a spinning sea of flames. Rumbling sounds echoed out as they grew far brighter than before, driving away the darkness in the temple and illuminating everything brightly. The emperors in the frescoes seemed more lifelike than before, and emanated true imperial majesty. That majesty combined with the sea of flames, ultimately creating an image therein. It was hard to say where that image truly existed. It was almost as if it was visible through a window that gave a view into a resplendent void.

Growing there was an enormous plant. It was... a dandelion.

The stalk of the dandelion was covered with innumerable symbols, each of which emanated terrifying might. All of it combined to make the dandelion miraculous and one-of-a-kind.

There was soil beneath it, which provided it with nutrients. If you looked closely, you would see that the soil was actually made of flesh and blood. Astonishingly, it was actually formed from the corpses of countless gods. Apparently... those nine ancient and powerful Summer Immortals had overthrown one of the god worlds of Brilliant Heaven, then killed and buried all the gods there. They had been turned into a dandelion that provided eternal power. The god souls of these gods were trapped, forced to bow, with no choice but to howl in terror and agony. Their godly voices just helped the dandelion to grow.

This was immortal essence. Nine Summer Immortals had buried a god world to create it. Immortal essence!

The soil made of the flesh and blood of gods still had well over a hundred corpses in it that had not fully decomposed. Apparently, they were such astonishing entities that it wasn't even possible to calculate how much time they needed to break down. There was one corpse that caught Xu Qing's attention. When he saw it, his mind spun, and his body shook so hard it felt like he might collapse. The godsource in him vibrated violently. He even gasped.

It was the largest of the corpses stuck in the soil of flesh and blood. Unfortunately, because there was no frame of reference to gauge the size of what he was seeing, Xu Qing wasn't really sure how big the corpse was.

But its aura was the strongest Xu Qing had ever encountered. Compared to it, Crimson Mother was like a firefly. In fact, even Grand Emperor Swordsage was like a firefly in comparison. That god had imperial energy!

"That was the former god emperor of this god world," the palace lord said in her ephemeral voice.

Mind spinning, Xu Qing looked back at the dandelion. It was in full bloom, with countless fluffy seeds growing out of it. They weren't white. Rather, the dandelion seeds were a mixture of red, yellow, and blue. And there were currently seeds detaching from the dandelion and drifting away into the distance. Presumably, those seeds were techniques and abilities that were being disseminated throughout the countless worlds in Deep Earth. Meanwhile, there were other seeds drifting from the void and merging with the dandelion. There, they would be absorbed, transformed, and then sent out again. It was an endless cycle.

As Xu Qing observed it all, his respect for immortal essence grew even deeper. Taking out one of his soul seeds, he sent it drifting in front of him.

The soul seed glittered with violet light. Under the command of Xu Qing's divine will, it floated through the 'window' and into the void that contained the dandelion. Once it was through the window, its appearance became that of a dandelion seed. Moments later, it was absorbed by the dandelion.

Xu Qing's divine sense in the soul seed was immediately blotted out, causing the soul seed to become blank. But then the palace lord waved her hand, and the candle light flared, interfering with the process and slowing it down.

"Outsiders can't directly seek enlightenment from the immortal essence. But when you make a contribution, you have a chance, albeit a fleeting one. Given the scope of my authority, I can make the will from your soul seed last for ten breaths of time. Everything is in your hands. Whatever divine ability you acquire will be up to your personal good fortune."

Xu Qing could hear the palace lord talking to him, but he couldn't respond. That was because his mind was currently in chaos. It sounded like endless thunderbolts crashing in his mind. He had entered a state that he didn't even know how to describe clearly.

He felt like he was in the void with the dandelion, with the soil of flesh beneath him. Compared to the dandelion, he was like one of the seeds: insignificant. He was surrounded by an infinitude of

dandelion seeds, each of which contained a host of blurry images that were divine abilities and magical techniques being used.

It seemed that every one was available for him to study. However, there were simply too many, and what was more, all the different levels of techniques were mixed together. Looking through them one by one was obviously not a realistic option. There was just no way that he would be able to identify an appropriate selection in the time at hand. Therefore... Xu Qing had no intention of looking through each one.

Instead, he would survey them as a whole. Both those nearby and those far away were within the range of his divine sense, and thus, he scanned the dandelion seeds hoping to find what he was looking for.

After a few breaths of time passed, his eyes narrowed. He had found one dandelion seed that was different from the others. Instead of flying out into the void, it was returning.

There were figures inside, but unlike the other dandelion seeds which contained many figures, this only contained two. They were sitting cross-legged next to each other.

Furthermore, when Xu Qing looked closely at the dandelion seed, the violet moon power within him reacted. Time was limited, so there was no time to sit around thinking. Thus, Xu Qing decisively sent his divine sense toward that specific dandelion seed.

Unfortunately, things didn't go smoothly. The seed was some distance away. Most importantly, it was floating along near the corpse of the god emperor. Though it wasn't right next to the corpse, the corpse still exerted a huge influence in that area. If he waited for the seed to go along its natural course, he would run out of time. By means of his divine will, he could sense that time was running out.

Time to go for broke!

He accelerated rapidly, slipping past all the other seeds. As he got closer, the corpse of the god emperor became clearer. Now that he had a frame of reference, he realized that compared to the corpse, he was like one tiny hair! The might emanating from the god emperor corpse was terrifying. Despite Xu Qing being a good distance away, it still struck his mind like lightning, and caused his body of divine will to nearly collapse.

Before that could happen, he ignited himself, and used the destruction of his own divine will body to get even closer.

He touched the floating dandelion seed. The moment he did, an ancient voice echoed in his mind.

“This world of heaven and earth can be considered a well....”

Chapter 809: So, You Studied It For Nothing?

Xu Qing's mind spun, and his senses collapsed. Everything went blank. His divine will faded from the location of the immortal essence.

The dandelion seed vibrated, then backed up slightly. Then it continued moving back in the direction of the dandelion. However, this time... it had three figures inside instead of two! The third figure was blurry, and occasionally disappeared entirely, as if it was having trouble forming fully.

Xu Qing's true body stood in the ancient temple, amidst the sea of flames, right in front of the 'window' leading to the immortal essence. His eyes were closed, and he wasn't moving.

Off to the side, the palace lord sighed softly.

The little butterfly heard it and knew what it meant. "That Xu Qing is so greedy! He picked a returning seed that the immortal essence hadn't purified yet, which will make it a lot harder to gain enlightenment of. It would be much simpler to let the immortal essence purify it."

The butterfly actually seemed pleased and even happy. Inside, she was thinking that if Xu Qing hadn't killed her over and over again before, she might have told him this secret earlier.

"Master, you already gave him ten breaths of time that he normally wouldn't have. Yet he just didn't know how to take advantage of that. This is his destined opportunity, so there's no need for you to sigh. Don't worry, my powers of understanding are definitely better than his, so I won't have trouble surpassing him.

"The figure Xu Qing left in the seed will probably just dissipate on its own, which will prove that he failed at enlightenment. Even if his powers of understanding were on the same level as my own, he just doesn't have enough time.

"Besides, once that seed returns to the dandelion, any figures inside that aren't there permanently will be purified away. Therefore, Master, you really don't need to sigh with regret!"

The palace lord shook her head. "I wasn't sighing about Xu Qing. What I regret is picking an apprentice too soon and choosing you."

The palace lord's gaze came to rest on the dandelion seed that Xu Qing had chosen for his enlightenment.

The butterfly was stunned, and initially didn't understand. Then her gaze followed her Master's to the immortal essence seed. She was about to ask for some clarification when the eyes on her wings suddenly widened.

The seed Xu Qing had picked was on its way back to the immortal essence dandelion. It wasn't very far. In fact, it looked like it would only take a few dozen breaths of time to reach its destination.

But then, on the way back, the third figure inside suddenly began to become very clear! It became increasingly stable, until, in the end, it clearly resembled Xu Qing.

The butterfly simply couldn't comprehend such enlightenment speed. All of the seeds she had sought enlightenment from had been purified and were on their way back out. As a result, she always had plenty of time to work with. Normally speaking, it would take a day or two to figure out how to take control of it. That was the reason why she'd said all the things she just had. Based on her own frame of reference, she didn't see how Xu Qing could succeed. Therefore, what she was seeing now blew her mind.

“This....”

Meanwhile, an astonishing tempest was erupting in Xu Qing’s sea of consciousness.

He was looking at a starry sky full of ripples. It looked like the surface of some body of water. Compared to the universe as a whole, that starry sky was like a well.

He suddenly heard an ancient voice speaking. “Everything is inside the well. All divine abilities, magical treasure, all states exist in the well....”

Xu Qing immersed himself in the voice and the well water.

The sensations he had experienced in the location of the immortal essence were long gone. His divine will had already disappeared from there. But that brief contact created a sensation that still lingered within him.

Although there wasn’t a lot, it was there. And of course, Xu Qing had incredible powers of understanding that had amazed both Master Seventh and the Heir Apparent on multiple occasions. Just a little scrap of something in his sea of consciousness was enough for him.

Xu Qing looked at the starry sky. The ripples were fading, and everything was turning calm, creating a much clearer reflection of what was above. Gradually, Xu Qing was able to glimpse himself within the starry sky reflected in the well.

Within the water, he saw all of his god states, his heavenly dao, his magical devices, and everything from his Gold Core days. The god’s finger. The Ghost Emperor mountain. D-132. Daybreak light.... But that wasn’t it. All of the martial techniques, magical techniques, and divine abilities that he had practiced from the beginning of his cultivation journey were there. Golden Crow Assimilates Myriad Spirits, Within the Nine Springs, and everything else.... As for his reflection, it was incomparably clear. At a glance, it was impossible to tell which was the reflection and which was real!

That’s also me....

Xu Qing was experiencing a sensation that blended profundity and reality. As that sensation overtook him, Xu Qing felt like he had lost his ability to even move, as if he were fixed in place, his soul transfixed by the water. Most noteworthy of all... was that the reflections in the water did not contain the violet crystal! That discovery struck Xu Qing to the core. Next, he heard that same ancient and domineering voice speaking to him.

“This divine ability of mine is... Fishing the Moon in the Well!”

The moment the words rang out, something like an enormous, blurry hand appeared in the void. It reached down into the well, causing the water, and Xu Qing’s reflection, to ripple. Then the hand fished something out from inside.

“The moonlight in the well is beautiful, and I wanted some. Now, I have some.”

Within the illusory hand was an image of Xu Qing. The hand squeezed down, forcing the image of Xu Qing to remain in the palm.

“He is you! Did you master it?”

As the words echoed out, the hand which held Xu Qing extended, revealing an entire person attached to it. It was a pale-faced middle-aged man clad in a gray suit of armor, with eyes as peaceful as tranquil water! The armor was vicious, as if it had grown out of the man's flesh, and was part of it. Based on what Xu Qing could sense, it abounded with nefarious energy. Within that nefarious energy was something very domineering. The two things conflicted and yet were harmonious at the same time. And he was looking directly at the Xu Qing in the palm.

Xu Qing wasn't capable of moving, nor could he use any magical technique. Apparently, even his god states had been taken away. The only thing he could do was think, and that meant he had no trouble seeking enlightenment.

So, the name of this divine ability is Fishing the Moon in the Well! What an amazing divine ability. If there is no moon in the well, one will appear, except it's a reflection of the moon in the sky. But in the hands of this person, it's a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering magic! The process of using it involves finding the gaps between reality and illusion, then using the power of time to reach into the mirror image and create something from nothing! It's about having supreme self-confidence, a domineering will, and superb willpower. [1]

As Xu Qing came to that understanding, his image in the dandelion seed grew even clearer, until it was almost complete. Soon, there would be a tripartite balance of power with the other two figures there. As of this moment, it was definitely correct to say that Xu Qing had gained enlightenment of Fishing the Moon in the Well.

But then, Xu Qing's heart flip-flopped. "Wait. No!"

Immortal essence legacies can't be this simple. Everything from just now was probably just a generalization. My thinking is a bit too one-sided. The Heir Apparent and Princess Brightblossom once told me that the only thing limiting a person's advancement is imagination.

In other words, Fishing the Moon in the Well might not be exactly as I just experienced.... It's probably a lot more profound. A lot more useful! It's only my lack of perception and ability that prevents me from seeing it more clearly.

As these thoughts went through Xu Qing's mind, the image in the dandelion seed collapsed and started fading away. When the little butterfly noticed that, she was stunned. She had assumed that Xu Qing already succeeded, which was quite a blow to her. But now it looked like his image was collapsing....

"Master, w-what's... what's going on?"

The palace lord sighed again, this time more deeply. "What a pity the rules of the Summer Immortal Palace clearly state that the palace can only have one successor at a time."

The butterfly was completely astonished.

"He wasn't happy with the divine ability," the palace lord explained, "so he decided to delve into its substructure."

"Substructure?" The butterfly's eyes went wide.

The palace lord was right. Xu Qing was now probing the ability on a substructural level. He had started thinking about how his initial contact with the seed had provoked a reaction from his violet moon. Given that, and considering the name of the divine ability, a very outrageous possibility had occurred to him.

What's being fished out of the well isn't just a person's soul. Perhaps it's a whole bunch of souls. And floating within the well aren't just things like divine abilities, magical techniques, and magical devices. Those things are too simplistic. If the well has a moon in it, what if that moon isn't the actual moon in the sky? Who said that this ability has to be used on an enemy. It seems perfectly possible... to use it to fish the moon out of my own heart!

Xu Qing's mind spun as he came to the conclusion that this new way of thinking was absolutely correct.

I get it now! That's why the cultivator in the gray armor said the moon was beautiful, and that he wanted some. He was warning me! What's more, he asked me if I'd mastered it. That was also a warning! In fact, when he said 'he is you,' he was spelling things out for me as clearly as could be. He was basically asking me if I had mastered the substructure of the ability!

As this understanding filled Xu Qing, and the concept became clearer, the figure within the palm of the middle-aged man suddenly erupted with blinding, violet light. As the light spread out, the figure vanished, turning into... a boundless violet moon! It rested in the palm emanating astonishing mightiness. Then the palm started vibrating until it collapsed. The man in the gray armor was also shredded into ash by the violet light. The entire well came to be filled with a violet moon, slowly rising up. This moon wasn't illusory. It was true and real! [2]

It wasn't the moon that Li Zihua had taken out into the starry sky. Xu Qing had created it. It was the second violet moon to form in the Revered Ancient mainland! The source was the same as Li Zihua's violet moon, but it belonged to Xu Qing!

Xu Qing appeared on the violet moon and looked in the direction where the cultivator in the gray armor had disappeared. Outside, the seed was nearly at the dandelion. Just before it merged into it, the two figures inside collapsed and disappeared, to be replaced by another one-of-a-kind figure.

It was none other than Xu Qing!

Chapter 810: Erniu's Determination

In the ancient temple that was the Summer Immortal Palace, the palace lord looked into the 'window' formed by the candlelight, and the dandelion seed connected to Xu Qing. Eventually the dandelion seed reached the dandelion and disappeared from sight.

The little butterfly watched in a daze, her mind full of chaos. When she spoke, her words were no less chaotic.

"What? The only... I mean, come on! Master! He... he cheated!"

"For countless years in Deep Earth," the palace lord said softly, "exceptionally talented people have come to the conclusion that all techniques have an origin. And if someone occupies that origin, cultivating the technique to the limit will be very difficult. Of course, they're not aware of the existence of the immortal

essence. That's just the result of their own personal speculation and analysis. Their speculations are correct. But also incorrect.

“The techniques of Deep Earth really do have an origin. And rarely are they solely connected to a single person. But if that does happen, and if they're connected deeply enough, the immortal essence will respect that, and will leave that mark in place for later generations of cultivators to study.

“That's what Xu Qing has done.”

The palace lord's voice seemed less empty than before, and instead had a touch of admiration in it. With a gentle wave of her hand, she sent the candle flame spinning back to the candles. She also sent the imperial energy back into the frescoes. The only thing left remaining was the faint echo of her words.

The butterfly had regained her composure. After the explanation from her Master, she also felt admiration. Feeling slightly flustered, she prepared to give voice to her feelings.

That was when Xu Qing's eyes slowly opened. There was no blankness or confusion in them. They were bright and clear, with a hint of violet still present, and something in his pupils that was reminiscent of starlight. Or perhaps it really was starlight.

“Many thanks, Palace Lord!” Xu Qing said, clasping his hands and bowing with deep respect.

“There's no need for that,” the palace lord responded. “Placing your soul seed in the immortal essence was a virtuous deed for Deep Earth. Going forward, your soul seed will be stripped of its will and turned into a technique to be disseminated in the countless worlds in Deep Earth. Hopefully it will add a bit of colorful variety to the Deep Earth techniques.

“This virtuous deed of yours resulted in you gaining enlightenment of a divine ability from the immortal essence. As the saying goes, *every sip and bite is pre-ordained*. Consider it karma. Now, do you have any questions for me?”

The palace lord was speaking more directly than before, a direct result of her admiration for Xu Qing.

Xu Qing thought for a moment, then looked at the nine paintings above the altar. “Palace Lord, I would very much like to know about the time when the Revered Ancient mainland was founded. The venerable Summer Immortals who created the heavenly daos... where did they go? Given how much time the broken face of the god has been around, why haven't they returned?”

The palace lord sighed. “No one knows exactly where the six surviving Summer Immortals are. There's only some cursory information in the records of the Summer Immortal Palace. Some of them went into the depths of Brilliant Heaven. Some are in Deep Earth, recovering and healing. I don't know anything more than that. Too much time has passed at this point.”

The palace lord's voice seemed particularly emotional at that point. After she finished speaking, she started fading from view. The butterfly, sensing her Master's dip in mood, also began to fade from view.

After a moment of thought, Xu Qing realized that it was time to go.

After bowing again, he turned and walked to the entrance. Before walking out, he looked over his shoulder one last time at the ancient temple.

What caught his attention wasn't the fading palace lord, nor was it the altar. Instead, it was the fresco depicting the first emperor, who was also the first Ancient Emperor. It was the young man looking up at the starry sky.

After taking one final look, Xu Qing left the ancient temple. The moment he was outside, five-colored light swirled around the temple, and then it popped like a bubble. After it was gone, it seemed as if it had never even been there to begin with.

Looking back, Xu Qing saw nothing but empty space. It was as if the entire thing had been a dream.

The sun was just about to peek over the horizon. The dome of heaven was about to awaken, turning from dark to light. The scarlet glow of morning was incomparably beautiful. A faint mist clung to the lands, like fine gauze that made everything seem mysterious and unknowable.

When the sun rose and light spilled onto the lands, the mist evaporated. Sunlight reached Xu Qing. The night had passed. He looked at the red sun. As he exhaled, his breath turned into steam, and he thought about that fresco that he had examined twice. That very first Ancient Emperor of humankind, that young man... had seemed somehow familiar when he looked at him for the first time. Upon leaving, the feeling felt even stronger.

It's like I've seen him before....

With such thoughts on his mind, Xu Qing walked through the morning sun to Ningyan's mansion.

About two hours later, the sky was bright, and Xu Qing reached the lake outside the mansion. Xu Qing absentmindedly stopped walking and looked at the water, and suddenly realized why that person seemed familiar.

He sort of looks like Master.

Xu Qing slowly walked across the lake and into the mansion. He wasn't sure what his Master looked like as a young person. But the young man in the fresco had eyes that looked very similar to his Master's eyes.

Even as he pondered that, the Sea-Sealing County cultivators who had all been waiting for him in the courtyard burst into cheering. Ningyan was there, as was Kong Xianglong and Wu Jianwu. So was Palace Lord Li Yunshan, who had led the group here from Sea-Sealing County. Plumdark was back, a smile on her face. The Captain was even there. He had his arm thrown over Wu Jianwu's shoulders and was whispering something in his ear when he saw Xu Qing and smiled.

They were cheering because of the revelation of Xu Qing's status in the Xeno-Immortal School, and the victory in the dao debate. They were also cheering because of how Xu Qing had executed Seventh Prince and ensured that Bai Xiaozhuo was dead.

There were no greater villains to Sea-Sealing County cultivators than Seventh Prince and Bai Xiaozhuo.

Xu Qing was a bit taken aback to see so many familiar faces all cheering. A lot had happened over the course of the last day. In fact, he was only just now realizing that... only one night had passed since the dao debate. His experience in the Summer Immortal Palace, and the sensation of the passage of ancient time inside the temple, had affected his perceptions. As a result, he had lost track of the actual passage of time. He quickly suppressed the sensation. Smiling, he bowed at the waist to the cheering crowd.

Kong Xianglong was the first to rush forward, his eyes red and puffy. Stopping in front of Xu Qing, he prepared to drop to his knees. Xu Qing prevented him.

Kong Xianglong hesitated, then threw his arms around Xu Qing and embraced him. “Thank you, thank you, thank you...”

Li Yunshan seemed just as emotional as he walked up to Xu Qing and bowed deeply. “Thank you, Region Lord Xu. By executing that Bai traitor and killing Seventh Prince, you wreaked bloody vengeance on behalf of Sea-Sealing County. Palace Lord Kong is definitely watching from the netherworld. Finally, he can rest in peace!”

All of the swordsmen bowed. Ningyan bowed more deeply than anyone else, although his excitement came for different reasons. Seventh Prince’s death, and Xu Qing’s awe-inspiring performance, also brought glory and honor to Ningyan.

Xu Qing returned all of the salutes. Then, as the Sea-Sealing County cultivators continued to revel in excitement, he walked over to Plumdark.

In the morning light, Plumdark’s face was like a hibiscus, her eyes were like glistening water, and her lips were like vermilion. She was as gentle and refined as flower blossoms drifting onto a stream. Her plum-colored gown made her seem graceful and gentle, like an immortal strolling through the mundane world. She was truly as beautiful as a blooming violet.

“Where were you last night?” she asked with an enigmatic smile. Looking him up and down, she continued, “I sense the dust of antiquity on you. And also the faint aroma of pollen.”

Xu Qing opened his mouth to reply, but before he could, the Captain, who had been listening in, loudly said, “Get over here, little Junior Brother! I have some big news for you. *Really* big news!”

He rushed over and, before Xu Qing could say anything, grabbed Xu Qing’s arm. Pulling him away, he looked at Plumdark and said, “My dear Arch-Immortal sister-in-law, the two of you will have plenty of time to catch up later. It wasn’t easy for me to get back here, so allow me to share this very important news with little Ah Qing!”

With that, he dragged Xu Qing away.

Xu Qing wasn’t sure what to do other than let the Captain pull him off. It didn’t take long for them to reach a private chamber, where the Captain performed an incantation gesture to seal the area. Then he looked excitedly at Xu Qing.

“What do you think, little Ah Qing? Do I react quickly or what? Let me tell you, I could smell that pollen on you from the moment you arrived. Oh, you! You’re just too young and inexperienced. Remember, next time you have a snack on the side, remember to clean up afterward! Luckily, I was here to help out, but I won’t necessarily come running every time this happens, right?”

Xu Qing really wasn’t sure what to say in response to that. Looking at the immeasurably smug Captain, he asked, “Where have you been all this time?”

“Doing something big, what else?” The Captain sat down, stretched out his legs, and took out a peach. After tossing an apple to Xu Qing, he started eating. “You listen to me, little Ah Qing, although you did something pretty impressive, it only affects the imperial capital, nothing else. You just wait until this big job of mine is finished. I guarantee your jaw will hit the ground.”

Xu Qing was used to this sort of situation, and knew exactly what the Captain wanted to hear. Plastering a very curious look onto his face, he said, “What’s the job?”

The Captain immediately perked up and leaned a bit closer to Xu Qing. Lowering his voice, he said, “I’ve been in that branch of the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect. You know, the one where I went in and stole something? Well, the night we went there, I actually didn’t manage to get my hands on what I wanted. But I couldn’t just give up. So I came up with a method of infiltrating the sect.

“As of now, I’m an outer sect disciple. My assessment is coming up very soon, and I’m very confident that, once I pass it, I’ll become an inner sect disciple! At that point, I can work things out to get close to my target!”

Hearing all of that sparked some actual curiosity in Xu Qing. Whatever the Captain was after, he had obviously done a lot of work to get to it, which seemed to indicate it was something very special.

“Eldest Brother, what exactly are you trying to steal?”

“The Wordless Book of Stone!” the Captain said, his eyes gleaming with longing. “That mysterious young woman I was working with wanted the same thing. And though it seemed like she succeeded, the reality is that she’s an idiot. What she stole was nothing but an empty shell. A piece-of-crap rock. What I want are the words in it!”

“Wordless Book of Stone?” Xu Qing looked at the Captain.

“Yeah, that’s right. The Wordless Book of Stone.” The Captain smiled enigmatically.

Xu Qing thought about it for a moment and then nodded.

Staring at Xu Qing with keen anticipation, the Captain said, “Aren’t you going to ask me why something called the Wordless Book of Stone has words in it?”

Xu Qing already knew the answer, but seeing the look on the Captain's face, he decided it was best to play along. "I was just about to ask that."

The Captain laughed heartily.

"The title of the Wordless Book of Stone," he said mysteriously, "is made up of four words. That dumb girl just stole the shell, so she has no idea that the four words already gained intelligence and escaped. They're hiding in the top level of the Magic Legacy Pavilion, in some random jade slip. Only by becoming an inner sect disciple can I go to the top floor of the Magic Legacy Pavilion to find them!

"Those four words are related to god domains. It doesn't matter what god domain you're talking about, they work there. And according to what I heard, it won't be long now before the Firemoon Darkheavens open a god domain for their Great Hunt!"

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed.

Looking even more smug, the Captain continued, "So what do you think? Amazing, right? Otherwise, why would your Eldest Brother work so hard and spend so much time wracking my brains to figure out a way to infiltrate the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect? I really put a lot of blood, sweat, and tears into this whole thing.

"That said, it's not a big deal. It'll all be worth it in the end. My assessment is in one month. At that point, I'll definitely get into the inner sect. Afterward, I'll take a trip to the Firemoon Darkheavens and use their Great Hunt to get into that god domain!"

In both wording and expression, the Captain was clearly full of determination.

"God domain? Great Hunt?" Xu Qing asked. Although he knew a bit about the Firemoon Darkheaven people, he didn't know much about how god domains connected to their Great Hunt.

"Just wait until I succeed, then I'll tell you all the details." The Captain took a bite of his peach, then stood and wiped the dust from his rear end. "Well, time to leave. I just came back to tell you to get nice and ready. Going forward... wish me luck!"

The Captain took a deep breath and prepared to leave.

As for Xu Qing, he hesitated briefly, then asked, "Is it really that hard to just get a jade slip from the Magic Legacy Pavilion?"

The Captain didn't seem pleased to hear a question like that. "You're really off your game right now, little Ah Qing. This is the Star Emperor Preeminence Sect we're talking about! Granted, it's a branch division. But the Magic Legacy Pavilion is a core element of their sect. They have a real monster there guarding the place. Outsiders are absolutely not allowed inside. Otherwise, I would already have completed the heist, and wouldn't need to go to all this trouble."

Thinking of Chen Daoze, Xu Qing took out a jade slip and sent a message via divine will....

“What are you doing?” the Captain asked curiously.

“Just wait a second, Eldest Brother,” Xu Qing said calmly. “Let me see if I can help you get this done a bit more quickly.”

The Captain looked stunned.