

Timescape 901

Chapter 901: At Long Last, Void Returning!

The grand steward was experiencing godly ascension and the three gods were skipping an entire stage of cultivation.

However, there were five portions of authority over the god domain.

Inside the black hole in the god domain, the Captain laughed madly; the opportunity he had been waiting for was finally here now that this god domain was rising to a higher level.

“What do you think about this destined opportunity, little Ah Qing? Believe me, everything in heaven and earth, in fact, everything in the universe, exists for us to use. Even that son-of-a-bitch broken face!

“Back when Crimson Mother’s moon rose to a higher level, I was so jealous it’s impossible to describe. But I wasn’t fully prepared, and also, things happened so suddenly that I couldn’t possibly have predicted how they would turn out.

“But this time...” The Captain’s heart raced with excitement. *“This time, we need to get on board and enjoy the scenery!”*

Xu Qing’s eyes glittered.

“And now, little Junior Brother, the time has come for me to tell you one of Revered Ancient’s biggest secrets! It has to do with you, and with me, and with Master!”

When Xu Qing heard the Captain mention their Master, his heart pounded.

“Given your path of cultivation, you surely realize that in the cultivation realm of the gods, you start with godliness, then move to godfire. After you become a Flawless God in the Godfire level, you reach the Altar God level. But do you know what’s after that?

“Well, I’m going to tell you. It’s something equivalent to the personhood of a Summer Immortal. It’s... a True God!”

The Captain’s words slammed into Xu Qing’s mind like lightning bolts.

“After True God is God Lord. After God Lord is God Paragon. And after God Paragon is Living God! [1]

“It’s a very neat and orderly progression. And whether you talk about Crimson Mother or the three gods, all are walking the same path.

“Li Zihua was first in line. Back in the day, he reached the Imperial Sovereign level of the cultivator path. By converting Crimson Mother’s flesh into karma, he leaped tens of thousands of years from the past to the present and reached the peak of the Altar God level in a single step!”

Some of these things Xu Qing knew already. Some conformed to speculations of his. But most of it was new information. At long last he had an understanding of the cultivation system of the gods.

Having finished his explanation, the Captain took control of the emperor’s head and turned it up to look out of the black hole, past the god domain, and at the broken face.

“See the broken face, little Junior Brother? Do you know why Sunfire’s sacrificial chant included the line: He who commands the Ancient is not empty; he is the Living Desolation. Why did hīs essence cause time to scatter? Why did hīs arrival cause Dark Serenity, the last Summer Immortal in Revered Ancient, to turn tail and run?

“It’s because hīs name is Desolation! And hīs level? He’s half a step into Living God! Put precisely, after failing to break into Living God, hē went to sleep until now!

“Now, why aren’t cultivators able to compete with gods...?”

The Captain stopped talking for a moment.

Xu Qing didn't respond, though he already had an idea of the answer.

"Little Junior Brother, do you know what the first thing the broken face did upon arriving? Hē devoured the number one ancient heavenly dao! That was the most powerful heavenly dao in Revered Ancient, who was originally... the strongest of the Summer Immortals who came from the lower worlds to slaughter the Brilliant Heaven Godfolk in Revered Ancient!"

"After that immortal conquered the local Godfolk, he looked up into the starry sky and wept, saying that fate had abandoned immortals, that gods were on the rise and immortals had fallen."

"Therefore, that immortal closed his eyes and cast off his immortal husk, transforming his immortal soul into the first heavenly dao of Revered Ancient, all in the hopes of changing the universe. That very first ancient heavenly dao had all the information about the cultivation system of cultivators like us. He had the legacy of the immortals!"

"But he ended up being devoured by the broken face. And that's why the path of the immortals ends with Imperial Sovereign!"

The Captain couldn't prevent his tone from turning a bit gloomy.

Meanwhile, Xu Qing felt quite shaken. Based on what he had learned in the Imperial Region about the immortal path being severed, he had always assumed it was just because the Summer Immortals had vanished. But now he knew the real reason: the legacy of the dao of immortals lay with the very first heavenly dao the broken face devoured!

"That's why later generations in Revered Ancient never produced any Grand Emperors, and it's also why everyone wants to restore the path. From that time on, the path of the Smoldering God was also severed, and the cultivation path of forming nine Smoldering God worlds became pointless."

"After Dark Serenity, there weren't any species that could even become a quasi-Grand Emperor, which is a personhood similar to the Altar God level. And of course, there's no need to even mention anyone becoming a Summer Immortal."

"But the truth is that even if the first heavenly dao hadn't been devoured, cultivators wouldn't have been able to make much more progress than now. And that's because... there's nowhere to go. Summer Immortal was always the highest level cultivators could reach."

The Captain sighed. Xu Qing stood there in silence.

"That said, there are some stubborn people who believe that Summer Immortal isn't the end of the line with cultivation." The Captain's tone of voice had perked up. *"Do you know why they're called Summer Immortals? Because 'summer' and 'lower' are pronounced the same! [2]"*

"Immortals from the lower worlds were called Lower Immortals! And if there are Lower Immortals, it makes sense that there would be Higher Immortals, right? But from ancient times until now, no cultivator from any species ever reached a Higher Immortal level."

"Eventually, people stopped believing that there was anything after the Lower Immortal level."

"And because the word 'lower' sounds inauspicious, people started calling them Summer Immortals instead. But I've believed all along that if you have Lower Immortal as a level, then there has to be a Higher Immortal level. The peak of that level would be an Immortal Paragon, and after that... there's probably even more!"

"I've been walking that path from one direction, and Master has been walking it from another. And of course, there are people from all sorts of species in the Revered Ancient mainland who are also walking it."

"All of them are probing. Testing! And now you're joining the mix! That's why I told you to hold off on your breakthrough. Because Void Returning is a very important watershed point!"

“Actually, before we left for Firemoon territory, Master actually came to the Imperial Region to meet with me.”

“Master came?” Xu Qing asked, clearly surprised. Of course, he had long since come to the realization that both the Captain and his Master had mysterious histories. Or perhaps it was most accurate to say that they were both pursuing paths unique to them. The Captain’s path had something to do with all the lives he had lived in the past. As for his Master’s path, Xu Qing wasn’t sure, but he got the feeling it had something to do with recovery.

In response to Xu Qing’s question, the Captain said, *“Yeah, he came. And he’s the one who wanted me to tell you to wait a bit when you reached the critical moment. The reason he didn’t want to tell you personally in advance is that he worried it would affect your path.”*

His words seemed to carry deep meaning.

“Next, little Junior Brother, you have to choose whether or not you want to follow a path of your own. If you don’t, then relinquish your authority from the god domain, and continue with your breakthrough.

“But if you do want to explore that unique path, then use the power of the god domain upgrade as wind to propel you forward. The path will be dangerous, from now and into the future. And who knows how far you’ll make it. You... need to think about it and make your own decision.”

Xu Qing said nothing, and the Captain didn’t add anything further. Should he take this destined opportunity to start walking his own path, and reach out in the hopes of finding his own dao?

A path of my own....

Xu Qing closed his eyes to gather his thoughts. There wasn’t really any need for a lot of consideration. It had been years since he knew that he wanted to walk his own path! His time in the Imperial University with the Xeno-Immortal School had made that absolutely clear. His path... was to use gods as kindling. By burning gods, he could strip out their godly authority and turn it into godsource.

Then, he could burn godsource as kindling to form Xeno-Immortal soul threads. Soul threads could be used to create just about any god body imaginable. In fact, the imagination was the only limit to this dao.

What was more, by gathering godly authority, it was possible to become like a god among gods.

Thus, his decision was to use his own ideas to create a path that borrowed elements from both gods and cultivators!

That was what it meant to be a Xeno-Immortal!

In that case, my Void Returning really is going to involve a void... by assimilating gods into nothing! [3]

Xu Qing’s eyes widened.

His five trove gates, which had been immobilized, suddenly came back to life, rumbling loudly and erupting like massive volcanoes. A heaven-rending, earth-crushing rumbling filled Xu Qing as volcanic ash started filling his sea of consciousness.

Though that volcanic ash seemed to be the same as the ash that ordinary cultivators would generate when stepping into Void Returning, the reality was that it was different. Xu Qing had god troves and godsource, therefore, his Void Returning was going to be fundamentally different. The volcanic void ash he was generating had a godly aura. But right now... the godly aura he had wasn’t sufficient for the path he wanted to walk.

Xu Qing didn’t hesitate for an instant. A wail of grief echoed out from D-132 as the god’s finger exploded, turning into nutrients that Xu Qing quickly absorbed and sent into the five volcanic trove

gates. After it was ignited, more volcanic void ash spewed out, filled with an even stronger godly aura.

Next, he used his god domain authority over the emperor's corpse to start absorbing terrifying power from the outside. As it entered the corpse, it was split into two parts, one of which went to Xu Qing and the other to the Captain. Xu Qing's portion went right into the void ash.

It was god world power. And since god worlds corresponded to god altars, it was correct to say that it was... Altar God power! That power turned into void ash, which was a void where it was possible to bury assimilated gods!

RUUUUUUMMMBLE!

Intense rumbling filled every inch of Xu Qing, reaching heaven-shaking, earth-toppling proportions as his entire sea of consciousness filled up with void ash. In fact, his sea of consciousness was no longer a sea. It was so full of void ash that it had become... void soil!

It was boundless, never-ending, majestic, and spectacular!

If another Void Returning cultivator could see the void within Xu Qing, they would be astonished, and that was because the extent of Xu Qing's void soil was many tens of times larger than that of ordinary Void Returning cultivators.

And the quality was astounding. When the void ash became soil, it formed a foundation that Xu Qing's heavenly palaces and five trove gates could drop down and occupy. The moment they connected to the void soil, Xu Qing's cultivation base experienced a breakthrough!

He was stepping into Void Returning! Put precisely, his Void Returning featured a completely unique void that conformed to his path. It could even be called Void God!

Terrifying fluctuations rose up from Xu Qing as he reached a higher level, and his battle prowess increased dramatically. That said, his Void Returning wasn't complete. He had void soil, but still didn't have dao lineaments.

Because his void soil was so astonishing, his dao lineaments would be different from those of ordinary cultivators. And the reason for it all was the substructural difference. Whether it was Xu Qing or the Captain, the grand steward going through godly ascension, or the three gods skipping tribulation fire and going right to Flawless God... they were all trying to do something incredibly dramatic.

And when things like that happened, it was a given that something would try to stop them. That was when a powerful force of resistance rumbled outside the black hole!

Chapter 902: Gods Show Up

In the dome of heaven, the eyes of the broken face slowly closed. However, the upgrade to the god domain because of the sacrificial offering didn't just stop. In fact, deafening rumbling sounds continued to rise up. Yet even as the process continued, things started to look unstable in the god domain. Formless sparks raged, slowly engulfing the place. Apparently, they were thoroughly burning away all impurities that existed there.

When a god domain became a god world, it involved a heaven-shaking, earth-toppling change to its substructure. It was no simple event. The broken face's power was incomparably mighty, yet... another critical factor was the god domain's ability to sustain the change. As for this god domain, though the three gods had been preparing for this event for tens of thousands of years, it seemed that it actually wasn't capable of sustaining the upgrade.

The red moon had also been upgraded, but that moon had started out as one of the thirty-six moons of Revered Ancient. It possessed some of Revered Ancient's authority, and beyond that, Crimson Mother was at the peak of the level of tribulation fire, and was halfway to being a Flawless God.

What was more, Li Zihua had also been perpetuating a plan that started in ancient times. Most important of all was Crimson Mother's status. Shē was the first person to reach godly ascension after the broken face arrived in Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity's time. Karma associated with the broken face was intense, and beyond that, as a half-Flawless God who had devoured other gods, shē was the type of person even other gods feared. That was why no other gods had come to help hēr during hēr tribulation, which turned out to be an auspicious development for Li Zihua. It was only due to a combination of many factors that a good opportunity had presented itself. But the situation with the three gods was different. And thus, as the broken face's eyes closed, the resistance began.

In the Ninepeaks Region in Revered Ancient there was a swamp that covered about a third of the entire region. There, a massive golden eye opened up and looked in the direction of the god domain where the three gods were.

In the Paleosaint Region was a massive mountain that was worshiped by all species in the region. Currently, the mountain was changing from being black in color to golden. What was more, it was slowly rising up from the ground, like a gigantic golden horn.

In the Allpeace Region was a vast lake covered with raging waves. A divine likeness was currently emerging from the water. It had six arms and three heads, with those heads being those of a beast, ghost, and god respectively. The six arms commanded reincarnation and death. As the water of the vast lake swirled around to form the statue, it took a step forward.

Bizarre situations like that played out all over the Revered Ancient mainland. The terrifying will of gods appeared everywhere, and then began to converge on the god domain and the three gods. The dome of heaven over the god domain rippled and distorted. Time shattered. Greedy will erupted. It was clear what was happening. They wanted to stop the three gods and rob them of what they had gained. Countless species across the lands trembled in fear from what seemed to be an impending catastrophe.

However... the three gods had prepared for this moment for tens of thousands of years. And those preparations were very thorough. There was no way they wouldn't have considered that something like this would happen. And thus, as the wills of dozens of gods closed in on the god domain, the three gods all opened their eyes simultaneously.

A majestic spell formation glittered into being, spreading out to cover the area with five-colored light and innumerable magical symbols. The symbols conveyed a profoundly ancient feeling, and the formation they made seemed similarly ancient.

This formation had a name. It was the God-Rejecting Mage Formation!

Many years in the past, the antemage of the Darkheaven Archmage people had sacrificed himself to create this formation, all for the purpose of safeguarding his people. Later, it became part of the Ninedawns Forbidden Lands, and became even more powerful. When the three gods came, they acquired it and refined it for tens of thousands of years. They also used it to imprison one of the ancient heavenly daos, not just for later use as a sacrificial offering, but also, for the purpose of using its blood to strengthen the formation.

It was all for this moment!

When the God-Rejecting Mage Formation activated, the other gods were stuck on the other side. Of course, though the formation was amazing, and had been bolstered over the years, it could only be a temporary obstacle to so many attacking gods. It was a given that the three gods would have prepared something besides this formation.

But a temporary obstacle was all the three gods needed. After this, the three gods' godliness skyrocketed. A sun, moon, and star appeared above the heads of the three gods, pulsing with immense majesty. Then they combined, turning into a huge dagger-axe. It was 300,000 meters long, and was made from over 100,000 crafting elements. In addition, it was full of innumerable deceased souls. It was a precious weapon that the three gods had forged over tens upon tens of thousands of years, using the souls slain by the Firemoon Darkheaven people during their countless war campaigns. [1]

By adding in the destiny aura of the Firemoon Darkheavens, it was shaped into its current form. It was something that surpassed a domain treasure, and could even be called 'everlasting.' It could easily be used to wipe out an entire species, and could also be used to slay gods. This was the true reserve power of the three gods!

The Everlasting Dagger-Axe seemed like it could cleave apart heaven and earth. The might it radiated caused the approaching gods to react with shock as sensations of danger filled them. The three gods exercised a thought, and the terrifying dagger-axe slashed through the dome of heaven toward the incoming host of gods. The mere presence of its destructive power caused the souls of the gods to become unstable, and caused more than half of Revered Ancient to tremble violently.

The advancing gods fell back, covering the distance of an entire region before coming to a stop. At the same time, the voices of the three gods rang out like thunder.

"Screw off!"

In the regions where these gods hailed from, they were matchlessly lofty. But now, all they could do was look silently at the dagger-axe, and ultimately try to slink away. The combination of the God-Rejecting Mage Formation, the terrifying dagger-axe, and the fact that they had no real karma connecting them to the three gods, ensured that, though they would interfere if it benefited them, they wouldn't interfere if it involved immense risk. After all, if they had been watching the three gods from the shadows, it was a given there were other entities watching them from the shadows. And thus, they went back into hiding.

The three gods watched expressionlessly as they left, but inside, they were staying vigilant. They were at a critical point in breaking through, and creating a destined opportunity like this wasn't something that could be easily repeated. Slip-ups couldn't be tolerated.

But there was no stopping what was to come. And, as expected, there were entities with karma connected to the three gods.

At the edge of the Revered Ancient mainland was a region with no name. It was covered with silver fog, and didn't have lands made of soil. Instead, it was a massive, ancient mirror.

The mirror itself formed the lands. This region had no mountains in it, nor any species inhabiting it. All such things had been wiped away, leaving the mirror untainted by even a speck of dust. Within the mirror was silver moonlight. And if there had been someone present to look, they would be shocked to find that there was no moon in the sky there, only a golden sun. There was a golden sun in the dome of heaven and a silver moon in the mirror.

They blurred, then vanished, and when they reappeared... they were right above the god domain and the three gods.

Gold-Silver Sun-Moon had arrived!

Then a deep voice shook heaven and earth. "I wasn't planning on stopping you. But a struggle for godly authority is inevitable."

Terrifying godly might erupted from Gold-Silver Sun-Moon. Cracking sounds emerged from the God-Rejecting Mage Formation as rifts opened up all over it. Gold-Silver Sun-Moon alone was far more terrifying than the host of gods from earlier.

Looking very dignified, the three gods exercised a thought, and the dagger-axe swiveled to face Gold-Silver Sun-Moon. However, thēy didn't use it to attack. As the weapon pointed at Gold-Silver Sun-Moon, the three gods' eyes glittered with determination. Thēir tens of thousands of years of preparation wasn't limited to what had played out so far. Thēy also had domain treasures from numerous species in Revered Ancient.

Thēy also had treasures from the time of Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity. And the god domain itself had treasures from North Emperor.

All of that constituted the three gods' second reserve power. At this decisive moment, thēy unleashed all of them.

From a distance, it was possible to see 108 domain treasures glittering with many colors.... They floated up as their might was unleashed, not in a devastating explosion, but in the form of numerous planets. The front of the planets had soil made of starlight, while the backs had agonized faces on them. Each face was slightly different and conformed to the species the domain treasure had come from! They were all species that the three gods had wiped out.

This scene looked very similar to the starry sky in the emperor's mausoleum. Their might combined with the crumbling God-Rejecting Mage Formation and the terrifying dagger-axe to form something profoundly resplendent. The devastating formation formed starlight. The dagger-axe created a river of stars. The 108 planets shone with dazzling light. Together, they made a starry sky that swept over Gold-Silver Sun-Moon!

Then, Sunfire and Moonfire shot toward Starfire. The three gods merged together, and then thēy unleashed a secret magic that was tens of thousands of years in the making!

Nobleplexus starry sky! [2]

By using a starry sky to seal an outside sun and moon, time could be bought.

In the blink of an eye, the terrifying Gold-Silver Sun-Moon and the Nobleplexus starry sky vanished from above the god domain. However, before the three gods could relax, a cold voice echoed out from nowhere.

"Zhu Ling and I have some karma, therefore, I'll interfere this once."

In the endless Forbidden Sea beyond Revered Ancient, there was a deep sea chasm filled with endless darkness. But then, a spark of red light appeared there. Shockingly, within that light, it was possible to see a host of countless paper people made from red paper. One of those paper people floated out of the chasm, appeared in the god domain, and shot toward the three gods like a sealing mark.

Intense fear rose up in the hearts of the three gods, as well as in the grand steward. Inside the black hole, Xu Qing and the Captain shivered.

"I can't believe hē's still alive!" the Captain said hoarsely.

"Hē? Hē who?" asked Xu Qing. He had no idea who this 'hē' was that the Captain was referring to, but he could sense that this simple paper person was vastly more terrifying than Crimson Mother. Before the Captain could answer, the three gods' faces fell. Even the normally placid Sunfire looked very serious. Then, godfire erupted from all three gods. Thēy... were actually burning their own godsource!

That fire came in three colors: red, blue, and black! As the three colors erupted, the red paper person closed in and contacted the fire!

The three gods chose that moment to merge their power and unleash the might of their past life. Fire raged, unleashing a sensation like that of reincarnation. As it covered the three gods, it suddenly became possible to see a figure that seemed to be stepping out from ancient time....

Chapter 903: Mysterious Cultivator

In order to achieve success, the three gods were pulling out all the stops. Whether it was the God-Rejecting Mage Formation, the dagger-axe made from tens of thousands of years of stockpiled materials, the 108 domain treasures and the destiny aura of many species, or the Nobleplexus starry sky. Any of them could be considered extremely precious treasures. That was especially true of the Nobleplexus starry sky, which was absolutely terrifying, and surpassed the level of domain treasures to the point of being everlasting. All of that made it very clear how determined the three gods were to succeed in bypassing the tribulation fire level.

And yet all of that didn't seem quite enough. The resistance they were facing... was shocking to the extreme. This mysterious red paper person was so astonishing that even the Captain seemed terrified of him.

That being said, the three gods weren't out of options yet. As they burned their godsource to create a fire of god fate, they fused, reaching into time to bring their past life into the world. From their souls, from their memories, and from the fires of reincarnation emerged a dramatic and majestic figure.

He wore imperial robes and an imperial crown. His facial features weren't possible to see clearly, but there was something noble and imperial about him that could shake the cosmos.

He was none other than... North Emperor!

As he emerged from the fire, he lifted his right index finger in the direction of the red paper person. When the red paper person made contact with the finger, no sound came out. There was no wild tempest. But a white-colored hole appeared! It came out of nowhere and imparted a spine-chilling sensation to everyone present. That white-colored hole did not conform to any natural or magical laws. It was not something that the omniscience of gods could perceive. It was not part of any known dao or magic.

Then, like something that shouldn't even exist, it vanished from reincarnation, from time, and even from the memories of everyone who had witnessed it. Along with it went the red paper person! None of them existed any longer.

Outside the god domain, the gods in hiding all shivered and looked at the figure that had emerged from the fire as if he were an extremely dangerous enemy.

North Emperor was still blurry and impossible to see clearly. As he hovered in the air, he looked down at the three gods and sighed. Suddenly, he chopped his hand down to sever, not the dome of heaven, but his connection to the three gods.

The three gods shivered as the flames once again turned into three different versions with three colors that swept back to the respective gods. The three of them opened their eyes and looked at North Emperor with complicated expressions.

"From this point on, our karma is severed." North Emperor sighed and looked up at the dome of heaven over Revered Ancient. "I have three breaths of time left, so I might as well lend a helping hand."

North Emperor stepped out of the god domain. His footfall caused intense rumbling to echo out along with endless lightning. All of the gods who were hiding in the area grunted and fled. The surroundings were now completely empty! The resistance had been cleared away!

Then, North Emperor took another step, entering the void to pursue the red paper person. It was impossible to say how that would end. After he was gone, the aura of the three gods once again began to climb. The resistance was gone, but they weren't in very good shape. Their faces were ashen, and their god souls seemed extremely weak.

And then... another dramatic event unfolded.

Fire sprang up in the dome of heaven, raging wildly, becoming like a huge spear that stabbed toward the three gods with sky-obfuscating, land-enshrouding force! It seemed shocking and unstoppable, like a force that could destroy anything and everything. In the blink of an eye, it was right above the three gods.

It was just barely possible to see an illusory figure behind the spear, pulsing with astonishing fluctuations. The figure looked at the three gods and then spoke in a godly voice.

"By the authority of Netherworld, Northfate, and Redland Nobleplexus, I hereby notify Sunfire, Moonfire, and Starfire that the Firemoon people are not permitted to produce a fourth god!"

Moonfire's eyes glittered mysteriously. Starfire said nothing. As for the grand steward, he sighed inwardly.

Meanwhile, in the emperor's corpse in the abyss, Xu Qing, who was in the middle of forming his dao lineaments, heard the Captain speaking to him.

"The Netherworld Chasmcorpses. The Northfate Kings. The Redland Nobleplexuses. Those three species are all in the top five most powerful species in the Revered Ancient mainland!"

Almost at the same time that the Captain offered that explanation, Sunfire spoke.

"Grand Steward, as you can see, we have done everything we possibly can to live up to our promise from years ago. Back then, we told you that unexpected circumstances might arrive, and they have. They don't want a fourth god among the Firemoon Darkheaven people.

"On the one hand, you could exterminate your species but become a glorious god like us. Or you could perish, and entrust us to safeguard the Firemoons for as long as we exist. Do you choose the species? Or do you choose godly ascension? It's up to you."

The grand steward closed his eyes. None of this was a surprise to him. Just as Sunfire had said, when they made their deal years ago, this possibility had been discussed.

Three top species had determined that he wasn't allowed to experience godly ascension. They didn't want the Firemoons to have a fourth god. Were he not the grand steward, he could have chosen to sever his connections to the Firemoons and become a god. But he couldn't just abandon his identity. The truth was... he had already made his choice, long ago. It didn't matter what words he spoke. He knew in his heart that his act of betrayal years ago had been for the sake of his people, but also for himself.

But now, for some reason, he was having trouble making the decision. It was hard to say if the three gods had planned for things to work out this way, but in the end, it didn't matter. In the end, the three gods were letting him decide what he wanted to do.

"Ah, whatever..." Sighing, he thought back to the look in Ninedawns' eyes when he died. It was an expression of pain, bitterness, and regret. He remembered what he had said to Ninedawns at that moment. *"The end of your line will bring hope to the species."*

Numerous scenes from back then were playing out in his mind. He saw himself in ancient times, inside the God-Rejecting Mage Formation, rising to the position of grand steward step by step. Eventually, he took over as ruler of his species and gradually lifted them from despair to glory. Eventually, he saw Ninedawns' return. This time, the words he had spoken back then seemed to come out of Ninedawns' mouth.

"Like reincarnation..."

A few breaths of time passed, and he bowed his head. "There are some things," he murmured with a faint smile, "that if you say them enough, you actually start to believe...."

The grand steward closed his eyes and completed the godfire within him. It erupted, spreading out to cover him, burning his flesh, his soul, and everything else about him. At the same time, all members of the Firemoon Darkheaven species felt the connection to their ancient bloodline stirring, and realized that they were about to burst into flames and die. But then, the fire within the Firemoons went out.

The grand steward's fire raged, engulfing him until... he turned into ashes. He had ceased to exist. It didn't matter what he had thought in the past. When the moment came to make that difficult decision, he ultimately decided... to give up on godly ascension!

What was more, he took his authority over the god domain and turned it into a god talisman that glittered brightly as it shot toward Sunfire. That god talisman was something that was even more precious than the most precious treasure, as it contained the godhood power of a god domain!

He also left behind a few words. "I hope... that you keep your promise."

"We always keep our word," Sunfire replied. "That's the foundation of being a god."

When Xu Qing perceived all of these things, he felt mixed emotions. However, there wasn't time to analyze the situation right now. The void soil within him was seething as a critical moment had arrived in forming his dao lineaments. When the dao lineaments formed, that was true Void Returning.

Meanwhile, as the ashes of the grand steward faded away, the huge, flaming spear over the three gods also vanished. So did the godly figure that had come with it. Heaven and earth went back to normal. It was as if nothing had happened to begin with.

The three gods closed their eyes. They were just about to skip past tribulation fire and become Flawless Gods. The eyes of the broken face were now almost completely closed as well.

But then... the dome of heaven suddenly went dark!

A huge black hand appeared, taking advantage of the moment to lunge viciously toward the three gods. It was attempting to snatch the three gods' destined opportunity, and seize their god karma!

The arrival of the hand caused all three gods to react with shock.

The hand had arrived at precisely the right moment, which was when the three gods were just about to achieve success. After all the resistance that had cropped up, the three gods were left feeling completely drained. As the hand dropped toward them, though, a mysterious figure suddenly stepped out of nowhere to appear right in front of the black hand.

This person did not have the aura of a god. It was a cultivator!

It was impossible to see which species the cultivator was from. And in a shocking development, nine major worlds appeared! After the nine worlds appeared, they turned into nine planets! Scattered amongst the planets were a host of twinkling stars. It was a planetary system!

This was what came after a Smoldering God formed nine worlds. It was the Imperial Sovereign level!

This was the current limit of the cultivation system in Revered Ancient, and was something similar to a god. If someone reached the peak of Imperial Sovereign, they could battle with a god in the tribulation fire level.

The arrival of this cultivator caused all onlookers to be shaken to the core. That was because, as far as all the onlookers knew, in the Revered Ancient mainland, Imperial Sovereigns were extremely rare. What was more, any who did exist weren't very far into that level.

In the current cultivation system, the path after the Smoldering God nine-world level had been severed. The only way to become an Imperial Sovereign now was to make use of bloodline legacies, destiny aura, or some other forms of heaven-defying destined opportunity.

But this mysterious cultivator already had the beginnings of a planetary system, which wasn't the beginning of the Imperial Sovereign level. No, that was the hallmark of being halfway into the peak of Imperial Sovereign!

Even in ancient times, cultivators like that would be considered profoundly domineering. In fact, the historical records of most species didn't even mention people like that! The only possibility seemed to be... that some powerful person in ancient times had faked their death and remained in hiding until this moment.

As for this cultivator's identity... everyone was already starting to come up with speculations.

When the cultivator appeared, their planetary system rumbled, and the incoming hand shivered. At the same time, the auras of the three gods climbed rapidly higher.

Chapter 904: Now THAT is a Super Big Job

In the shortest of moments, countless gazes and countless streams of divine sense locked onto the half-peak Imperial Sovereign above the three gods, who was currently blocking the enormous black hand. The cultivator arrived at exactly the right moment, just before the three gods were about to achieve success.

In fact, it was no exaggeration to say that, without the mysterious cultivator, the three gods' efforts, despite all of the work they put into preparation, would have resulted in their success being *as unrealistic as flowers in a mirror or the moon in the water*. Even if they still had some tricks up their sleeves, using them would have been counterproductive and probably would not have resulted in an overall success. In the end, they would have been forced to abandon their destined opportunity.

Clearly, the arrival of this mysterious cultivator must have been part of the three gods' plan! What was more, it was very thought-provoking to consider the ramifications of a cultivator providing assistance to gods. Perhaps if it had been a low-level cultivator, it would have made sense. But given the high levels involved, it seemed to indicate that there was some very profound karma at play.

Whether it was the countless species looking on or the other gods, no one had any idea who this cultivator was. That was especially true because the cultivator's clothing had the miraculous capacity to prevent anyone from deducing clues about the wearer's identity. The best explanation that anyone could come up with was that this was a cultivator from ancient times.

And the cultivator's arrival bought exactly the amount of time the three gods needed. The three gods' auras skyrocketed as their tribulation fire began to turn flawless. Everything was coming together!

Meanwhile, in the black hole in the god domain, Xu Qing was just on the verge of being able to carve his dao lineaments. To do that required a deep understanding of one's personal dao, not just a cursory bit of knowledge.

That was why Xu Qing had needed time after the forming of his void soil. He needed to be clear about his dao to be able to understand his lineaments. That was the way to walk his path. But to actually carve them, he needed to make use of the power of the god domain's upgrade.

The power released by the god domain's rise to a god world had formed his void soil, so it only made sense that it would help him carve the lineaments. Xu Qing was fully aware that the first stage of Void Returning for ordinary cultivators was called Space-Shattering 1,000 Daos.

When a cultivator broke through from Spirit Trove to Void Returning, all of the techniques they had cultivated would affect that cultivator's dao. They would materialize and form dao lineaments in the void soil. On the outside, they would look like shooting stars. That was the case with all first-stage Void Returning cultivators Xu Qing had encountered. There were no exceptions.

One needed 1,000 magical laws to be considered in the great circle and then break out of first-stage Void Returning. That was why that stage was called Space-Shattering 1,000 Daos.

As Xu Qing considered that, he remained calm both inside and out. He knew that the path of cultivators conformed to his own dao, but also didn't. The reason it did conform was that his first lineament was formed with a thought in his void soil.

A heaven-rending, earth-crushing sound rang out as the lineament appeared in his sea of consciousness. It contained traces of the dao of mages, the dao of emperors, and all of the cultivation techniques Xu Qing had used. The Xeno-Immortal School techniques were the most dominant.

As the carving proceeded, it went around all of the void soil, eventually returning to its starting point to create a huge circle. This was Xu Qing's first dao lineament, and it was his life essence lineament. Having been carved, it created the border of the void soil world, and could also be considered a Xeno-Immortal lineament!

Meanwhile, to say that ordinary Void Returning *didn't* conform to Xu Qing's dao was because this lineament already contained everything. That was because he didn't plan to form his second lineament in the same way as ordinary cultivators. He was going to use godly authority!

All of a sudden, his void soil emitted loud rumbling sounds as well as blinding violet light. In fact, it was that violet light that began to carve a moon-shaped lineament. And it emanated terrifying fluctuations. This lineament was formed from his violet moon godly authority!

"Next..." he murmured. The void soil in his sea of consciousness started rumbling again.

After the violet moon, he unleashed his taboo poison on the void soil. It created a poison miasma that spread out and radiated terrifying might. Ultimately, the poison miasma gathered together,

entered the void soil, and formed a vicious face. This was his third lineament, a lineament of a godly curse!

Next, the power of misfortune spread into the void soil, taking all the remnants of the god's finger. That was his fourth lineament, created by the godly authority of misfortune.

He started with a life essence lineament, then created three more based on godly authority. From ancient times until now, there had never been a cultivator who used godly authority on void soil. That was because their void soil couldn't sustain something like that, nor could their daos.

From this point forward, Xu Qing couldn't be considered like them.

The moment the fourth god lineament appeared, Xu Qing's eyes snapped open, and it was possible to see the lineaments within them like shooting stars. Though he only had four lineaments, they were completely beyond the comparison of the lineaments of ordinary cultivators.

Next, Xu Qing exercised a thought, and the four lineaments rumbled loudly as a massive amount of soul threads shot out from them.

In total... there were 40,000,000! The soul threads spread out through the void soil, unleashing a terrifyingly powerful aura.

Despite being mentally prepared, Xu Qing was still visibly taken aback.

One god lineament can form millions upon millions of soul threads! In the past, I only had a few million soul threads, and it got harder and harder to get more, until I eventually thought I had reached my limit. But now I've completely blown past that limit!

Xu Qing breathed heavily as he felt unprecedented strength flowing through him.

Soul threads could be used to make any and all things, therefore, his divine sense, fleshly body, his magical techniques, and everything else about him was rising to a higher level.

I guess that means my god states... will no longer have the same limitations.

His eyes shone with bright light, and his heart surged with passion as he studied his void soil. However, that was when a sudden sensation of hunger exploded within him. He shivered as he suddenly felt like he was completely empty. Madness began to build within him. His eyes became bloodshot and he struggled to control his breathing as he looked left and right. He wanted to devour gods, godsource, and *everything!*

If an ordinary Void Returning cultivator could look into his eyes right now, they would be shaken to the core, and their cultivation would instantly destabilize. There wouldn't even be a need to wonder if a person like that could stand up to him in a fight. In fact, not even someone in the great circle of Void Returning could match up to Xu Qing right now.

Before, Sir Firedark had such terrifying battle prowess that Xu Qing and the Captain had to work together to have a chance at surviving. But right now, Xu Qing would simply devour Sir Firedark. The same would happen if he faced a Smoldering God opponent.

The source of the hunger within him was the void soil. The godly void soil in his sea of consciousness was writhing with indescribable longing.

Hungry!

Hungry!!

Hungry!!!

The sensation only grew increasingly intense.

In his youth, Xu Qing had experienced situations in which he was so hungry he would eat just about anything, even dirt. And then there was what he had experienced in the Greenhair Badlands. Thanks to those experiences, he was able to take a deep breath and violently suppress the hunger. However, the hunger also gave him clear insight into his path.

My void soil needs gods for food, godsource for nutrients, and godly authority for the lineaments. I wonder how much godly authority, exactly....

He wasn't sure. However, the hunger within him made it clear that his path was going to be about... slaying gods!

That is my personal dao!

Of course, the power of the upgraded god domain didn't bring only these benefits. As Xu Qing's void soil seethed, a god talisman was forming, filled with the terrifying power of the upgrade.

That was the upgrade power that he hadn't used. It was the same as how the grand steward formed a talisman upon dying. Although Xu Qing's wasn't as dazzling, to the gods in Revered Ancient, it would be considered a precious treasure!

When he reached the right time, he could fuse with it to do the same thing the three god's had done, and gain a destined opportunity to pass by the tribulation fire level.

Xu Qing took a deep breath as he examined the god talisman with his divine will. Around then, he heard the Captain.

"Hungry, little Ah Qing? I've got something good to eat. Want it?"

Xu Qing looked up. Thanks to the Captain's words, the hunger he had been suppressing seemed like it might explode out of control. After all, he was hungry. Incomparably hungry.

"Heh heh, you really look a lot like me right now. That hunger... is something I'm familiar with. Don't worry, little Junior Brother. I'm going to take you to a big feast!" The Captain swallowed. *"Do you remember I mentioned taking you on a super big job?"*

"Well, going into a god domain, winning some authority over it, then snatching food from the tiger's mouth by taking some of the power of the god domain's upgrade to a god world... none of those things count as 'super.'"

"Do you know why I borrowed that destiny, got the Wordless words, and those hairs? Do you know why I used the upgrade power to improve the words and the hairs? Do you know why I added in so much of Crimson Mother's flesh?"

"It was all for the sake of the super big job! The Wordless words provide concealment, while the hairs provide escape!"

Xu Qing struggled to control his breathing as he started to realize what the Captain was talking about. It seemed absolutely crazy.

“Little Ah Qing, this time, my plan... is to get the number one treasure in all of Revered Ancient! And that is... that son-of-a-bitch broken face!”

By this point, the Captain’s craziness had reached such a high level that not even he could control his breathing. He actually looked nervous.

“Let me tell you, I’ve been paying attention over my past several lives. Only about half of the broken face is left, but all of those wounds are surrounded by flesh! There’s also the fine hair and the head hair.... Therefore, our goal is to get the blood, flesh, fine hair, and head hair of the broken face of the god! [1]

“That’s a half-step Living God! His flesh and blood doesn’t really count as flesh and blood anymore. It’s a precious treasure! And it contains his essence!

“It’s definitely delicious! And that is the super big plan I told you about! Everything before this was a mere appetizer. Those little sparrows out there aren’t even worth paying attention to. Skipping right to Flawless God? Who the hell cares about that crap?

“What I want is the flesh of a Living God! Are you in, little Junior Brother?”

The Captain’s crazy words battered at Xu Qing’s mind like tidal waves. However, crazy though they might be, Xu Qing’s hunger was only getting more intense.

Gritting his teeth, and his eyes crimson, Xu Qing said, “I’m in!”

Chapter 905: Two Kids Going All Out

The moment the Captain heard Xu Qing’s hoarse response, he got excited.

“Don’t worry, little Junior Brother. This time, your Eldest Brother is one hundred percent certain that nothing will go wrong!”

Xu Qing’s eyes had gone bloodshot with the decision to join the Captain. But after what the Captain just said, his heart started to pound.

The Captain, however, only seemed to be getting more excited. *“Little Junior Brother, from the year I figured out what these three gods were trying to do, I started planning this thing out. I put everything on the line to get a chance to join this ride!*

“Before we ran into that living teleportation portal, I wasn’t completely confident. I have plenty of escape items, and was planning to ensorcell them as well. I just lacked some of the materials. But then we ran into the living portal, and it was like heaven was helping me!”

The Captain laughed heartily.

“Even the original plot to deal with Crimson Mother relates to this moment. Crimson Mother’s flesh is an amazing thing. Shē was the first person to reach godly ascension in Revered Ancient, and is the one who called out to the face to begin with. That just goes to show that shē has some major karma with the broken face.

“That karma, plus the blessing of one of those hairs, is theoretically speaking enough to carry out a special teleportation! Unfortunately, the power required to perform the teleportation is beyond terrifying. And that’s what led to our trip to the god domain.

“Now, you know how hard it is to tap into the power of a god domain upgrade. It’s a very, very rare opportunity! What’s more, because the god domain is high in the sky, it’s close to the broken face for a short time.... But not even that would be enough without a heavenly dao to guide the way! And that’s where our son is going to come into play!

“Finally, with the concealment of the Wordless words, we’ll be completely unnoticed. We also have the power of the emperor’s corpse. With help from gods and emperors blessing us, you and I have the chance to pull off a super big job!

“Little Junior Brother, you and I are on the same page, and therefore, nothing could go wrong!”

The Captain’s words got crazier and crazier until he burst out into maniacal laughter.

Xu Qing wasn’t interested in listening any further. The more the Captain talked, the more dangerous the situation seemed. However... given how far they had come along, he wasn’t ready to just give up.

Forcefully suppressing the hunger within him, he asked, *“When do we get started?”*

“In just a moment! When the god domain collapses, that’s when we start the teleportation. We just— hold on, wait. We start now!”

Xu Qing’s gaze hardened.

In Revered Ancient’s dome of heaven, the broken face’s eyes finally shut. When that happened, the god domain quietly started crumbling into ash, beginning from the outside edges. As that happened, it got closer to the broken face.

From down below, the god domain was getting smaller and smaller.

The three gods sitting there cross-legged all opened thēir eyes. Thēy then vanished from the crumbling god domain, taking with them the unconscious Sir Firedark as well as all the other cultivators.

When they materialized, thēy were outside of the god domain, in midair above Revered Ancient. At the same time, thēir aura shot past the level of the tribulation fire and stepped into the Flawless level.

That massive upgrade came without any tribulation. Now thēy had hope of reaching the level of Altar God. In Revered Ancient, that was the hope of all gods, but sadly, it was an incredibly difficult

task. Taking in all of the Revered Ancient mainland, the number of gods who had become Flawless Gods was extremely limited. For example, even Crimson Mother had only reached the halfway point.

Now, godfire burned with great intensity in the three Flawless Gods, making their aura far more terrifying than that of Crimson Mother. It was easy to imagine how three Flawless Gods might completely change things in Revered Ancient. Their gazes were bright and full of life as they looked up at the crumbling god domain, which was the final aspect of their sacrificial offering.

The dramatic event was ending.

Except then, Sunfire's expression flickered, and her pupils constricted. Starfire frowned. Their gazes were focused on the god domain as it flew toward the broken face. Only the very middle of the god domain remained, and even that part was starting to crumble into ash.

But then a burst of teleportation power appeared. It was dazzling and magnificent, and its aura surpassed even a hundred ancient teleportation portals all being activated at the same time. That made it completely eye-catching. In fact, it filled the sky!

The three gods weren't the only ones who were watching. All the gazes and streams of divine will that had been watching the three gods now shifted focus.

As they looked on... a figure appeared within the terrifying teleportation light. It was the emperor's corpse, within which were Xu Qing and the Captain!

Shock spread among the countless onlookers.

What are they doing? That was what everyone was thinking.

A complicated look flashed through Sunfire's eyes, though it lacked surprise. "Guess they're feeling suicidal."

Starfire's heart was pounding, and she had a very unusual expression on her face.

To the shock of all, as the teleportation light flared, the emperor's corpse lifted its right hand. Held between the fingers was an extraordinary golden hair! The light of teleportation was actually coming from that hair. The Captain had ensorcelled it several times, which filled it with godly might. As it appeared, the light of teleportation rose high into the sky.

"Son!!!" the emperor's corpse said in a booming voice.

The dome of heaven trembled as the cry of an infant echoed out over Revered Ancient. As a result, some minute changes occurred as the light of teleportation shifted to a specific point.

"Crimson Mother karma!" the emperor's corpse said.

A mass of Crimson Mother's flesh flew out, joining the teleportation light and filling it with red streaks. The teleportation received further fine tuning. Karma was being used to lock down on a specific location.

At that point, the god domain around the emperor's corpse collapsed. A deafening rumbling sound filled heaven and earth. It grew louder and louder until it was the only sound, as the god domain... vanished from the dome of heaven.

The sacrificial offering of a god domain was over. Perhaps it did turn into a god world. Just because it disappeared didn't mean it didn't exist. But there was another possibility, that being that the god domain couldn't survive the process.

It didn't matter either way. What was important... was that it had been sacrificed to the broken face. The three gods' plan of tens of thousands of years had been carried out to completion.

This was the shedding of karma! The power of the broken face was used for the upgrade, and then the sacrifice was given to the broken face, closing the loop. It was the closing curtain for the three gods.

However... it was simply the opening curtain for Xu Qing and the Captain!

The moment the god domain crumbled into ash, the last bit of the upgrade power... fully activated the teleportation. The hair turned into countless golden motes of light. The emperor's corpse had already vanished within them.

Inside the corpse, Xu Qing could hear the Captain laughing madly.

“Little Junior Brother.. let's goooo!”

Beyond the Revered Ancient mainland was a sprawling starry sky. If you could stand in that starry sky and look down at Revered Ancient, you would be able to see how vast it was.

Shockingly, there was also a golden spine outside of Revered Ancient. It was extremely long, such that it completely wrapped around the land mass like a golden centipede. There were no arms, no torso, and no legs. Just that golden spine, and the half of a broken face that hung down from it. The broken face's hair swayed down, brushing the cloud cover of the continent below.

The broken face had wounds covering it, which were surrounded by torn flesh, blood, fine hair, and bits of head hair....

Hē was astonishingly large. From the perspective of Revered Ancient, that size surpassed that of the sun and moon. What was more, looking from the perspective of the starry sky, hē seemed even bigger.

Cultivators were like nothing in comparison to even one of the fine hairs. It was the same with the head hair. They were so thick as to stand as their own heaven and earth, and exuded indescribable pressure.

The torn flesh was equally terrifying. Even the smallest drop of blood was like a sea, stretching forever and for all eternity.

Countless years had passed since hē floated from the depths of the starry sky and wrapped around Revered Ancient. There didn't seem much change to the broken face during that time. However, if you could pass through the River of Time and go into the past, you would find... that the golden spine was slowly wrapping tighter and tighter around Revered Ancient.

What was more, though the Revered Ancient mainland seemed vast, the reality was that it was smaller than before. It was in the process of being devoured. This was the broken face of the god that everyone saw when they looked up.

The face had a name: Desolation.

The face was paramount above all. From the moment hē had arrived in ancient times until now, there hadn't been a single living being in Revered Ancient who had come into hīs presence. It was as if, to hīm, all living things, and, in fact, all things, were just passing by in time.

Until... today. A tiny mote of light appeared in the void just next to one of the wounds and next to one of the drops of blood. If someone in the starry sky could zoom in on that mote of light, they would see a figure inside, clad in an imperial robe.

The moment the figure appeared, it blurred. A force too terrifying to describe slammed into it, something that surpassed what anyone could possibly imagine.

It took only a moment for the corpse to start falling into pieces. Yet in that moment, the corpse had a completely crazy facial expression. It was as if nothing in existence could surpass what was in front of it, leading to the ultimate levels of craziness and greed.

Naturally, that expression came from the Captain.

The eyes of the emperor's corpse shone brilliantly, like the ghost of someone who had starved to death and then been hungry for tens of thousands of years, and would do anything just to get a bite of food.

That gaze came from Xu Qing.

As of this moment, the two of them were completely in sync, both in thought and action. Looking completely crazy, and disregarding their crumbling bodies and fading souls, they rushed toward the nearest sea-sized drop of blood.