

# Read Beyond the Timescape Chapter 911: Xu Qing's Path

## *Chapter 911: Xu Qing's Path*

God Mountain glittered with golden light, but no godly decree was issued. Meaningful looks could be seen in the eyes of the three stewards, but they said nothing. The surrounding Firemoons and the subsidiary species, as well as everyone else looking on, seemed full of excitement and anticipation. Although some people were clearly surprised by the development, there weren't many. Apparently, it wasn't a surprise at all for Sir Firedark to challenge someone during the Darkheaven part of the ceremony.

It was almost as if it was expected among the Firemoon Darkheavens. Throughout all the countless years that had passed, there had never been a large number of Firemoons. In order to keep their species' battle prowess strong, a certain amount of infighting was acceptable. In fact, the way the Great Hunt was set up conformed to that custom. By raising venomous bugs in a jar, they fostered the warlike blood that pumped through their veins. And in the brutal 'survival of the fittest' environment, the strongest experts emerged. That was why, whenever the Great Hunt happened and someone was named a darkheaven general, it was acceptable for others to challenge them to fight, although only on that one specific day. Those were the rules. freewebnovel.com

Throughout the history of the Firemoon Darkheaven people, such challenges were rare, but they had occurred. That was why no one was particularly surprised by Sir Firedark's challenge.

What was more, Sir Firedark openly acknowledged that Xu Qing was the Grand Darkheaven, which ensured that the dignity of the ceremony wasn't violated, and that the fairness of the decision wasn't called into question. He was submitting a challenge in accordance with the rules.

That said, to challenge someone even after they had become the Grand Darkheaven... was something that had never happened before. After all, the glory of the Grand Darkheaven surpassed that of the ordinary darkheaven generals.

The Grand Darkheaven had such a superior position that, if he wanted to refuse the challenge, he could do so with a word. Of course, that would be a big blow to his reputation, and would reduce the glory of the Grand Darkheaven. What was more, challenging the Grand Darkheaven required paying a price. If the challenger lost, then they would have no choice but to deliver a drop of their soul blood as a penalty. That soul blood couldn't be used to kill them, but it could be used by the Grand Darkheaven as a life-saving item in a moment of crisis.

On the other hand, if the Grand Darkheaven lost, he wouldn't have to pay any price. It might seem unfair, but that was simply an understanding that needed to be accepted when someone in an inferior position challenged a superior.

As Sir Firedark's words echoed about, numerous gazes flitted to Xu Qing to see how he would react.

Xu Qing said nothing. He looked calmly at Sir Firedark, taking note of the burning white fire above his right shoulder. Within it was a shocking major world, and yet... Sir Firedark was not a Smoldering God!

*Second-stage Void Returning.* Xu Qing's eyes narrowed. If Sir Firedark had been a Smoldering God, then a display of strength like this wouldn't have been surprising. In fact, it would have been expected. But for someone who wasn't a Smoldering God to have the same type of major world that a Smoldering God would have... was different.

In fact, based on what Xu Qing understood, it didn't make sense. Based on his initial impression back in the mausoleum in the god domain, that unprecedented major world meant that Sir Firedark was only a step away from being a Smoldering God. That alone was enough to confirm to Xu Qing that Sir Firedark was extremely daring.

A major world was enough to step into Smoldering God, converge one's magical laws, and form the void soil dao foundation of Transform 10,000 Veracities! By taking the steps to reach the great circle of Void Returning, it could be considered, not necessarily one-of-a-kind, but unique in the current generation in Revered Ancient.

*Definitely befitting of the number one chosen among the Firemoons!*

Xu Qing's eyes were already gleaming with the desire to do battle. He knew he had to take an opponent like this seriously, and the fight would be a rare challenge. There was no need to state outright whether or not he would accept the challenge. His eyes made his answer clear.

Seeing Xu Qing's battle spirit rising caused Sir Firedark's battle spirit to also get stronger. His aura began to grow stronger, and the white flames on his shoulder burned hotter than ever.

"Xu Qing, I'm in second-stage Void Returning, while you're in first-stage. You might be extraordinary among Void Returning cultivators, but my Void Returning contains good fortune of heaven and earth. Furthermore, because I'm a Firemoon Darkheaven and you're a human, I have a superior fleshly body. Therefore, I will fight this battle with my left hand held behind my back!"

Sir Firedark extended his left hand and then put it behind his back. He had no intention of using it during the fight. Perhaps it was foolish to do that, but that was how powerful experts thought.

It wasn't a concession to Xu Qing, but rather, a way to preserve his own dignity and majesty. What was more, if he lost in this way, it would be losing a fight, not losing his heart. From a young age he had fought countless battles, many of them to the death. Bearing the name Sir Firedark, he had crushed fellow members of his generation one by one, cowing all the other chosen and winning glory with a clean conscience.

Because of that, his heart was strong. He knew that the path of cultivation was a competition amongst all living beings, and a fight against the many heavens. Xu Qing's actions in the god domain had left him astonished. If he won and dispelled that astonishment, then he could continue walking his path of invincibility. If he lost, then that astonishment would be a motivating force to try to catch up! But if he didn't fight at all, he would never dispel the astonishment.

Sir Firedark lifted his right foot and took a step in Xu Qing's direction. When his foot fell, rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth. The white flames above his right shoulder leaped into the sky and then spread out in all directions.

It moved with blinding speed, spreading 50 kilometers in the blink of an eye and 500 an instant later. A sea of flames spread for 500 kilometers, shockingly hot. At the same time, the major world inside of the fire became more majestic. However, it was still in the process of shrinking down. 500 kilometers was only the manifestation of the major world shrinking down by a small portion.

The sight of it caused all the onlookers to react with surprise.

"That world...."

"That mighty world isn't Smoldering God. It's Void Returning.... How'd he do that?"

"Now *that* is the number one chosen of the Firemoon Darkheaven people!"

It was truly a majestic world, the type that few people present had ever seen. Xu Qing had personally watched that world form, so he knew first-hand that it was a spectacular major world that surpassed anything ancient or modern.

Sir Firedark hovered in the air, voice booming like thunder as he said, "Before going to the god domain, I was in first-stage Void Returning, and this world was only in embryonic form. Back then, I could fight one-world Smoldering Gods, though survival wouldn't be certain.

"But now, I could crush a one-world Smoldering God with ease. Even most ordinary Smoldering Gods with two worlds couldn't match up to me. And I could even handle a Smoldering God at the peak of the two-world level.

"I'm going to name this world the Firedark World. If you can stand up to this, *then* you and I can compare divine abilities!"

He shoved his hand in Xu Qing's direction. Beneath him, the major world in the 500-kilometer sea of fire rumbled loudly and emitted terrifying pressure that rumbled directly toward Xu Qing. That pressure caused anyone lower than a Smoldering God to suddenly feel destabilized in mind, body, and soul.

Facing such astonishing pressure caused Xu Qing's eyes to glitter. However, he didn't back down an inch. After all, this was going to be his first fight after stepping into Void Returning. This fight would help him to come to understand what Void Returning was all about, and would also give him a clear idea of the level of his battle prowess.

As he hovered in midair, he lifted his right hand and pushed it out in front of him. That motion caused the boundless void soil within him to erupt. Soul threads shot out, spreading around him rapidly. The number of soul threads was astonishing. It created an entire sea of soul threads, within which lightning crashed.

1,000,000. 10,000,000.... Eventually 40,000,000 soul threads could be seen in the dome of heaven, and as they weaved together in the manner of a Xeno-Immortal, they formed... a major world! The size of this world was 500 kilometers, and was also in the process of shrinking down. The aura and pressure it emitted were completely terrifying. This was a case of creating something from nothing!

Xu Qing had taken the enlightenment of the founders and then carved out his own path. It was an unprecedented... dao of Xeno-Immortals!

Most astonishing was that in the major world formed from Xeno-Immortal soul threads was a heaven-rending, earth-crushing sound as a hundred illusory pillars rose up in different areas. The pillars pulsed with godly might, as they were formed from the blood of the broken face that Xu Qing had devoured. They formed illusory godly authority, and though Xu Qing had not yet gained enlightenment of them, they were still materializing.

Despite being illusory, their presence provided a blessing to the major world. In fact, that blessing made Xu Qing's world seem like... a god domain!

Even more terrifying was that in the middle of the major world were four pillars that weren't illusory. They were true and real, and they were covered with mysterious magical symbols. The symbols flickered with hair-raising might that surpassed all of the myriad magics and daos in heaven and earth. They were no symbols of a cultivator. Rather, they were Xu Qing's... godly authority lineaments!

The first was connected to his life essence. The second to the violet moon. The third to the god curse. The fourth to misfortune! When they appeared, Xu Qing's world of soul threads experienced a dramatic rise in aura, and made it even more impressive than the pressure of Sir Firedark's majestic world.

The scene caused a wave of astonishment to rock the onlookers.

“Is that even Void Returning??”

“Void Returning.... Before, I would never have believed that Void Returning could be like this!”

“Also... there are two of them!”

Xu Qing looked up. The world of soul threads rumbled loudly as it smashed into the Firedark World.

The power of two worlds erupted. The dome of heaven seemed like it might shatter. The lands seemed about to crumble. At that critical moment, the stewards took action, creating a standalone dimension where Xu Qing and Sir Firedark could fight, separated from Revered Ancient.

“Great!” Sir Firedark said, laughing heartily. He waved his right hand, and his major world rumbled again, growing into a world of ten thousand worlds, with surging destiny aura that seemed on the verge of forming the will of a world.

Xu Qing’s expression remained the same as ever as he exercised a thought, causing soul threads to separate from the world and turn into the huge eye of a god. It was an imitation of Emperor Ancient Spirit’s eyes, which Xu Qing had created.

The eye looked at Sir Firedark’s major world, and the world trembled. Then the destiny aura in the world began to circulate in the opposite direction. More soul threads flew out, turning into Crimson Mother, who stared coldly at Sir Firedark’s world. Everything trembled violently. Things weren’t over yet, though. Next, Li Zihua appeared in soul thread form, and he stepped into Sir Firedark’s major world. Even the fish god appeared and did the same.

In addition, what also appeared was the eye of the unnamed god Xu Qing had seen in Emperor-Receiving Prefecture beneath the Ghost Emperor’s weapon. After it formed, it entered Sir Firedark’s major world.

A host of gods had come!

The sight was astonishing to everyone, especially considering that Xu Qing was the one commanding the host of gods!

Within the crowd, the Captain was actually getting excited. *So, this is little Junior Brother’s path!*

*Chapter 912: Divine Ability Weakness*

Xu Qing wasn’t the first person in history to practice cultivation that conformed to both immortals and gods. Others included Master Seventh and Li Zihua. And there were

others Xu Qing had never heard of who walked that path. It was a path that, whether now or in the future, could be considered the most orthodox path, and was actually not very hard to walk.

However, because of that, it was actually the most difficult path. Though many people had walked it, none had reached the end. It was a path with many forks in it, and since no one had walked it to the end, it was hard to say which of those possible forks was the right one to take. The Captain's path couldn't be said to conform to this dao, but instead, was something to the side of it.

What was more, Xu Qing's path was slightly different. It looked like he was cultivating something that conformed to both immortals and gods, but the reality was that his foundation came from Xeno-Immortal techniques. Walking his path involved devouring gods, imitating gods, and then using them as servants.

On his path, gods were nutrients. And the entire purpose of it all was to become a xeno-immortal! An immortal who used gods for food.

On this occasion, his first fight after reaching Void Returning, Xu Qing was able to confirm the details of his path. Eyes shining, he used soul threads to make one god after another and send them into Sir Firedark's major world.

Instantly, the mountain peaks in the major world started crumbling as something dramatic happened. From a distance, it was possible to see Li Zihua, a figure that could prop up heaven and earth, incomparably gigantic. Wherever he went, heaven crumbled and the earth shattered. Crimson Mother's majestic form sent a blood mist out in all directions, causing all living things to howl in anguish as they withered up. The eye that was suppressed beneath the Ghost Emperor's weapon floated in the air, innumerable tendrils surrounding it in all directions, whipping about violently. Wherever it went, the world turned into paper, and it was just barely possible to hear gruish singing. As for the fish bone god, it entered the waterways of the world, reversing the rivers and turning the water pitch black. Emperor Ancient Spirit's eye absorbed the destiny and defiled it, transforming the very substructure of the major world. This was a case of gods launching an invasion that transformed everything.

It was actually similar to what happened to Revered Ancient long ago, although on a vastly smaller scale, and with Xu Qing taking the role of the broken face. Everyone was shaken to the core.

The arrival of the gods caused an instant explosion of mutagen in Sir Firedark's major world. A godly aura spread out, invading the sky, invading the lands, and invading everything within the major world. It was becoming a forbidden region!

If the process completed, then everything in the world would experience something like the Awakening of Insects. Fate would be changed, and living beings would transform. The place would become a world suitable for gods.

Most terrifying was that as the process of transformation into a forbidden region went on, soul threads appeared within Sir Firedark's majestic major world. They were new soul threads, not the 40,000,000 from before! Although there weren't many, only a few tens of thousands, they were proliferating rapidly. In the blink of an eye, they reached the level of several hundreds of thousands! The world wasn't just being invaded, it was being devoured!

This made it obvious how terrifying Xu Qing's battle prowess and divine abilities were after forming the godly void soil.

However, Sir Firedark was the number one chosen among the Firemoon Darkheaven people, and was known to be extraordinarily daring. Naturally, he was no weakling. Seeing that his major world was suffering an invasion, his pupils suddenly filled with innumerable heavenly bodies. As they flickered, his major world trembled. Rivers, mountains, living things, and anything and everything else seemed to suddenly possess their own wills. Seemingly coming to life, they started fighting back.

Included in that resistance were five burning suns that rose up and emanated their unique natural and magical laws. They were his heavenly daos!

Thanks to the arrival of the heavenly daos, the will of the awakening world, which had suffered interference from Emperor Ancient Spirit, continued manifesting. It was a battle of gods.

At the same time, Sir Firedark looked at Xu Qing with eyes bursting with killing intent. He took a step forward, shattering the air as he raced toward Xu Qing, imbued with a spirit that could conquer mountains and rivers.

Xu Qing's battle spirit also erupted, and he took a step forward with power that could destroy heaven and extinguish the earth. As the two worlds rumbled, the two cultivators raced directly toward each other.

Sir Firedark moved with astonishing speed befitting of his major world. And as he closed in on Xu Qing, terrifying fleshly body power surged. Sonic booms rang out as the two of them clashed over a hundred times in the blink of an eye. Every clash sent destructive shockwaves out in all directions.

Sir Firedark took a deep breath, causing boundless energy to rush into him. Next, he didn't pull off any flashy moves. Instead, he barreled toward Xu Qing, leading with his shoulder. It was a smashing attack, but it contained a great dao, which meant that it wasn't possible to evade it. It could only be faced head-on.

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed. He could sense the mountain-like force come from the blow, and he met it with a fist strike.

A deafening boom rang out.

Xu Qing flew backward. Meanwhile, Sir Firedark's eyes were bloodshot. Ignoring the injuries from the backlash, he again attacked with explosive force. Closing in on Xu Qing, he reached out toward Xu Qing's throat and clenched his hand down into a fist.

He was trying to crush Xu Qing's throat!

*What divine ability is this?*

Xu Qing's expression turned grave. He could sense a type of great dao in this technique as well, and it caused his eyes to flicker coldly. All of a sudden, three mountains appeared in front of him.

One was frigid gold. One was as red as blood. And one was engulfed in flame.

The three mountains collapsed an instant later, and Xu Qing tumbled backward. However, Sir Firedark was still on a mad offensive. The hand he had used to try to crush Xu Qing's throat transformed into a fist, and he launched a blow. It was the very same Undying Emperor's Fist he had used to shatter the Captains body back in the emperor's mausoleum.[1]

The moment it appeared, wild colors flashed in heaven and earth, and a berserk aura erupted, along with an indescribably domineering sensation.

Things weren't over yet, though. Seemingly building on all the momentum from before, the moment the Undying Emperor's Fist landed, Sir Firedark suddenly erupted with golden light.

That light emerged from his skin, muscles, tendons, bones, and blood! The skin was the outer barrier. The muscles were like a heavenly king. The tendons provided extra strength. The bones were the foundation. The blood was the essence. [2]

Combined, they formed....

"Undying Five Elements!"[3]

Sir Firedark glowed with boundless golden light as he moved with explosive speed and mountain-toppling, sea-draining force. He was seemingly unstoppable in this peak state of momentum, and as he closed in, all of his fleshly body techniques combined into a fist that could destroy the cosmos. That fist shattered natural laws, ravaged magical laws, and shocked all living beings.

Xu Qing's eyes shone brightly, as if with the light of daybreak. Sir Firedark's series of divine abilities seemed breathtaking to Xu Qing.

*I want them!*



As the enemy closed in, Xu Qing unhesitatingly sent Ninedawns outside in an external manifestation. It swept over him, turning into ancient mage armor. The will of the antemage filled the form, causing it to expand and grow, until it became a modern-day antemage. As tall as a mountain, with a head in the dome of heaven, it emanated a sensation of time itself, as well as a legacy from antiquity. The nine dragon skulls swirled around the armor, making it seem even more domineering. All of the beasts in the Mountain and Sea Region howled as their blood seethed. freewebnovel.com

An ancient and wild sensation filled heaven and earth, and it all came from Xu Qing. He thrust his palm out toward Sir Firedark's incoming fist. The force from the fist and the palm collided from a distance.

A tremor passed through Sir Firedark. His fleshly body wasn't affected at all, but his mind began to crack as intense pain flooded his brain. Blood sprayed out of his mouth, and his face turned pale. A look of intense defiance filled his eyes, yet he couldn't stop himself from tumbling backward.

In the spot of the actual clash, the air shattered in layers, forming into a black hole that caused both of the two worlds to tilt in its direction. Infinite draconic lightning bolts snaked out, forming a massive lightning net that covered everything.

One of the two combatants used a consummate divine ability. The other used the peak of the mage dao. That clash was so destructive that both sides were wiped out. The only thing left behind was a raging tempest that would even cause Smoldering Gods to do a double take.

Within that tempest, Xu Qing was like an immortal devil, his hair whipping about him as he strode forth. He looked somewhat excited, with his eyes glittering. He could now see that this wasn't a case of Sir Firedark's divine ability being inferior to his dao of the antemage. Instead, his opponents' technique... was damaged and incomplete. That was a far cry from his own, which was a complete, intact legacy.

The enemy's technique was extreme, but it only benefited the fleshly body, not the soul. It wasn't that Sir Firedark's soul power was insufficient. Actually, his soul power surpassed that of most people in his generation. But when you compared how much the technique boosted fleshly body power, the soul aspect just couldn't compare.

That was the reason why Sir Firedark had lost this exchange. That said, he was still terrifying.

Xu Qing got the feeling that the technique could be used by any level of cultivation base. And it improved as one's cultivation base got higher, getting more and more terrifying. In fact, it didn't seem to have a limit!

However, when being cultivated to the level of Sir Firedark and Xu Qing, it had flaws. And those flaws created a weakness.

Thus, as Xu Qing's heart filled with coldness, he stepped toward Sir Firedark. The mage armor had already fallen off of him, turning into streams of light that faded into the air. The antemage will also departed from Xu Qing. Astonishingly, when it reappeared, it was right above the head of the fleeing Sir Firedark.

Sir Firedark's face fell as the antemage will became corporeal and crushed down onto him. What was more, the Ninedawns skulls pierced through the air to surround Sir Firedark, with a gaping mouth that emitted a shrill sound that targeted souls along with the antemage. It created a power that could lock the body in place!

Sir Firedark shivered. He knew that he had a weakness, but the fact that Xu Qing honed in on it so quickly left him feeling very anxious. He wanted to fight back, but before he could, Xu Qing suddenly extended his right hand. Ripples spread out in all directions, turning into a surface of water.

Everything was reflected on it. It was none other than Fishing the Moon in the Well. It was a divine ability that could lock down the soul, and with the blessing of the antemage, it did so instantly.

Meanwhile, seven lamps appeared behind Xu Qing, all of them glimmering with underworld light. It was the Seven Lamps Underworld Fire Curse, in which extinguishing the lamps extinguished the enemy. At its core, it also targeted the soul!

When it came to talking about experience in battle, it was true that Xu Qing was young, but from the moment he became a cultivator, he had fought people, fought heaven, and fought gods. Countless life-or-death experiences had honed his battle instincts to an incredibly shocking level. If he found a weakness in your technique, you died. Therefore, he unleashed all of his soul-targeting techniques to the maximum level. What was more, within his major world of soul threads, the god authorities of misfortune, the violet moon, and the god curse all went wild.

Although it seemed unlikely he needed to use all of that godly authority, he was the type of person who, once he identified a weakness, could attack it with everything he had. He wouldn't give his opponent any chance to turn things around.

1. Sir Firedark's ability bears many similarities to Bai Xiaochun's Undying techniques from [A Will Eternal](#). Many readers commented on this in Chinese. Considering that in [chapter 887](#) Sir Firedark used the "Undying Emperor's Fist" (which was one of BXC's go-to techniques), well.... 📖

2. In AWE, the "Undying" set of techniques more or less has five parts that correspond to the sections listed here. That's especially true of the 'heavenly king' part, which is the same set of characters that could be rendered as 'golden vajra warrior.' This is a good point to expound on translation choices. In AWE, the "heavenly king" translation choice basically makes sense, but when put into the context of BTT, it's not as congruous. Translations choice can change depending on context, even with the same author. 📖

3. All comments relating to Captain Planet will result in permanent IP, GPS, and DNA bans from Wuxiaworld. Thank you. 📧

### *Chapter 913: I'm Back and Invincible*

Summoning the Ninedawns armors, using the antemage to suppress the enemy, activating Fishing the Moon in the Well, implementing the Seven Lamps Underworld Fire Curse, and calling on three types of godly authority. All of this takes a while to spell out, but in reality, it occurred in the time it takes a spark to fly off a piece of flint.

In the blink of an eye, Sir Firedark, with his terrifying fleshly body, ended up locked in place in body, mind, and soul. His incomplete nature was relative, not absolute. But as far as Xu Qing was concerned, it was still a deadly weakness.

What was more, Xu Qing had no interest in sparing an opponent with the intention of using them as a replacement in death later down the line. It was a much better choice to just kill them up front.

Therefore, he didn't hold back at all in his attack. He went all out. He extended his right hand, which created the projection of a huge palm that reached toward Sir Firedark. It seemed illusory, but not, real, but not, as if it was formed from pure fate. And it contained an indescribably mysterious will that became the sky over the watery surface, and made more ripples flow out over it. There was no sound as the water splashed, and the soul in the reflection of Sir Firedark was fished out by the massive hand.

The moment it happened, Sir Firedark's fleshly body lost its vibrant sheen of life. He became like the walking dead. In Xu Qing's hand, his soul was glittering and multicolored, but at the same time, listless.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered as he flexed his fingers in preparation to crush it.

But then something unexpected happened. The previously listless soul didn't struggle. Instead, it blurred as some heaven-defying technique was unleashed. Then it vanished from Xu Qing's hand.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered. The moment Sir Firedark's soul escaped, the lamps of underworld fire behind him all went out. When the lamps were extinguished, the curse exploded. A grunt rang out from thin air as Sir Firedark's soul was suddenly forced out into the open. It was no longer glittering and bright, but dim.

Simultaneously, Xu Qing's three types of godly authority erupted, becoming three golden threads that sliced through the air, through fate, and through life and death, heading straight toward the dimming soul. They locked onto karma to kill fate as they appeared right in front of the soul. Three golden threads interlocked and swept out in deadly fashion.

As the dome of heaven flickered and the lands shook, Sir Firedark's soul was sliced into pieces, becoming numerous glowing motes that scattered into the air.

Xu Qing's efficient actions put his decisiveness fully on display. And yet, he wasn't done yet. As Sir Firedark's soul was eradicated, Xu Qing stepped forward to his fleshly body and chopped his hand down.

Sir Firedark's body was a lifeless husk, so it was no surprise when the head flew off the corpse and the rest of the body collapsed into chunks of gory flesh. Then black fire swept over all the chunks of flesh, burning them into something unrecognizable.

Although Sir Firedark had a fleshly body that couldn't easily be reduced to ashes, it wouldn't be possible to restore the body to its original condition after this immolation.

All of these things happened so quickly that the Firemoon cultivators looking on were visibly shocked. In fact, many couldn't believe what they were seeing. However, the Firemoon nobility included some of the most powerful experts in their species. Also, the three stewards were present. And none of them seemed particularly surprised, and in fact, were just watching calmly.

What was more, Xu Qing didn't feel any sense of victory at having killed Sir Firedark. Frowning, he turned to look at the spot where Sir Firedark's fleshly body had been burned up. His pupils constricted.

Right there above the chunks of the fleshly body was an illusory projection. Within the projection was a mausoleum. It was the emperor's mausoleum from the god domain, and within it was Sir Firedark, seated cross-legged beneath an enormous Nobleplexus umbrella. An instant later, the projection blurred, then became clear again. Sir Firedark was still there, but the surroundings were different. Sir Firedark was now in the Mountain and Sea Region. In a very short period of time, the illusory projection shifted several hundred times, and every time, Sir Firedark was in the middle.... Put precisely, it was the Sir Firedark from several hundred different specific times in the past.

Xu Qing didn't interfere. He just watched with glittering eyes as Sir Firedark, who took seemingly no defensive precautions, unleashed a gruish ability that seemed to be very close to a god magic. After each illusory image appeared, it collapsed into countless motes of light, then formed back into a huge circle of light.

Astonishingly, this was a very intense time power!

After seven or eight breaths of time passed, Sir Firedark stepped out of the light in physical form. The chunks of flesh floating in the area collapsed into ashes, then the circle of light shrank down, turning into a pearl that dropped into Sir Firedark's palm.

Sir Firedark looked exactly the same as before, but was also different in a certain way. Although Sir Firedark had always been good-looking, it was in a steadfast and resolute

way that would normally be described as 'handsome.' But now... those good looks were more properly called elegant and beautiful.

He had become a she. The same change could be noted in the physical body, which now had an ample chest, slender waist, and long legs that were barely visible beneath a flowing skirt. There was nothing steadfast and resolute to see here, only cold elegance.

This was what Xu Qing remembered Sir Firedark looking like.

The crowds went silent. Those who knew about Sir Firedark's unusual divine ability weren't very surprised, but those who weren't aware of it were flabbergasted.

The Captain blinked a few times and then chuckled darkly.

Xu Qing hovered in midair, looking thoughtful.

*Eldest Brother mentioned that in the Mountain and Sea Region he saw Sir Firedark use an amazing divine ability that was close to being a god magic, and that after using it, one's gender would change. I guess this is that same divine ability.*

*It really is close to being a god magic. It can force a reincarnation based on what happened in the past, yet maintain the current cultivation base and battle prowess.*

As Xu Qing pondered those things, Sir Firedark walked out of the circle of light, looked at him, and sighed inwardly. She could have unleashed her divine ability more quickly, but had intentionally gone slowly in the hopes that he would launch an attack. If he did attack at that time, she could have sucked him into the divine ability, then infected him with its power. That would have taken all of the terror in his memories and turned it into a devilish fire that would burn his body and soul.

*Unfortunately, my legacy technique only contains the Undying Codex and only some of the Time Immemorial Codex. I'm missing the Live Forever Codex and the second half of the Time Immemorial Codex. What's more, my Undying Codex is damaged. Though I grafted other magics to complete the suite of techniques, it led to some side-effects when using the latter part of the Time Immemorial Codex. That said, if Xu Qing had tried to interrupt my Sutra of Former Reincarnation, I might have had a chance at winning! [1]*

With such thoughts in mind, Sir Firedark's killing intent burned. Taking a step forward, she extended her right hand. The life essence pearl glittered, whereupon a host of light rings appeared around her that looked just like the one from before.

Next, figures stepped out from the light rings.

All were Sir Firedark. They were all weaker in cultivation base than the true form, but considering they could all act and think in unison, they were extraordinarily formidable. As Sir Firedark's battle spirit skyrocketed, her bodies from the past did the same, and

they all rushed toward Xu Qing from different directions. They weren't any weaker or slower than before, and in fact, were superior.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered as he lifted his right hand, then dropped it. The golden thread from the godly authority of misfortune vanished, then mysteriously appeared within Sir Firedark's fate. The power of misfortune filled her providence.

The facial expressions of all of Sir Firedark's past bodies changed dramatically. Some of them, as they charged forward, suddenly found themselves facing rifts in the air, like mouths waiting to devour them. Some of them suddenly found themselves going dim from head to toe as their cultivation bases were mysteriously thrown into chaos. In some even more dramatic cases, their divine abilities backfired, inflicting serious injuries. There were others who, because of the chaos inflicted on their divine will, had their connections to Sir Firedark severed. As a result, their eyes turned bloodshot, and they spun and attacked each other.

The gruish nature of this development caused waves of shock to fill the hearts of the cultivators in the area.

Some of the members of the nobility even murmured, "The power of misfortune."

Sir Firedark's expression flickered, but she knew that now wasn't the time to get distracted. With her battle spirit still at a peak level, she shot toward Xu Qing.

Xu Qing's eyes were as cold as ice. At this point, he had a fair understanding of Sir Firedark's divine abilities. Yet that wasn't what he had set out to accomplish. From the very beginning, he had been trying to end the fight as quickly as possible. Though he knew his opponent had a soul weakness, he wasn't planning to target it again.

After the misfortune was unleashed, Xu Qing's godly authority of taboo poison raged out in a black mist. Within it came a shocking roar. A huge projection of Hellfei appeared within it, like a god that could crush heaven and earth. A solitary eye flickered and turned to look at Sir Firedark, who was about 300 meters away from Xu Qing.

The Six Filths of the Gods erupted.

"First filth: godfire's smoke rises and converges impurities; create uncleanness." Xu Qing's words were like a command being uttered through Hellfei's mouth, converging the cosmos and forming the sound of a great dao.

The moment the words echoed out, Sir Firedark shivered from head to toe as countless impurities appeared inside her. They became innumerable black splotches that spread out over her body and face. The sudden development caused her to shiver.

“Second filth: god soul’s desire builds and converges mortality; shed omniscience.” Xu Qing’s cold words sounded like the voice of heaven. Sir Firedark’s face fell as all sensations vanished for her.

“Third filth: god body decaying and building rot; never eternal.” The black splotches started rotting, and in the blink of an eye Sir Firedark looked like a person, but not. Like a ghost, but not. As her flesh decayed and fell off, rotting bones were revealed.

“Fourth filth: god shrine covered in dust and losing brilliance; sever joss flame.” Her dao foundation collapsed, and a howl of agony escaped Sir Firedark’s lips. Her cultivation base was now trembling.

“Fifth filth: godly nature is filth loses wisdom; decline personhood.” Her soul dimmed, and the power of eradication loomed.

“Sixth filth: godly fate births curses and severs life; eradicate godsource!” Killing intent burned in Xu Qing’s eyes as his voice rang out like thunder.

The Six Filths of the Gods were making their first appearance in Revered Ancient. Because of its power, Sir Firedark’s fleshly body collapsed in an instant. Her soul was wiped out, and all of her bodies from the past dissipated. Just then, the power of time again erupted, and an illusory figure appeared again. Sir Firedark was once again using the same secret magic from before. Xu Qing looked on with an icy expression.

He had been looking for a weakness in the technique, and he had found it! He wasn’t interested in wearing down the enemy by killing her over and over again. He wanted... to wipe her magic out in one shot.

He dropped his right hand, and the violet moon godly authority flared. It became a violet moon, whose moonlight shone down onto the illusory form of Sir Firedark and entered her fate. Within the illusory figure, a violet-colored moonlight appeared. That moonlight also entered Sir Firedark’s past, filling every corner of it. Moonlight tapped into every aspect of Sir Firedark, causing something akin to omniscience to appear within Xu Qing.

Sir Firedark wanted to struggle, but Xu Qing shook his head. The thrum of a sword emerged from within him, along with cold light that was imperial will. A heaven-sundering surge of energy shot out, causing the dome of heaven to flicker with white, glorious light.

It was a sword projection! It was none other than The Emperor’s Sword!

By using the soul of North Emperor to grasp Grand Emperor Swordsage’s sword, he couldn’t quite summon the full sword materially, but he could form a sword projection.

With the violet moonlight as the tether, he slashed the sword down! This sword could eradicate reincarnation, sever the past, and slice away the present. Within the illusion,

all of the versions of Sir Firedark coughed up blood, and their facial expressions became those of madness. The surrounding crowds devolved into an uproar, and the nobility were visibly taken aback.

The three stewards' eyes glittered, and the youth among them vanished. Astonishingly, he appeared within the illusory versions of Sir Firedark's past, standing in front of each version, where he raised his hand to block the innumerable projections of The Emperor's Sword.

Xu Qing made a quick judgment call. Flicking his sleeve, he caused all of the glorious Emperor's Swords to suddenly vanish. The sword disappeared, the surrounding energy went back to normal, and heaven and earth went calm.

Xu Qing calmly clasped hands and bowed to the young steward. Then, paying no further attention to the situation, he turned and walked toward the Captain.

With the canopy of heaven back to normal, and the sword projections gone, Sir Firedark's secret magic finished working. With a new body formed, she stood there with a complicated expression on her face as she looked at Xu Qing walking off.

"I concede. In the future, I'm willing to replace you in death one time!" She reached up, touched her forehead, and then sent a drop of soul blood flying toward Xu Qing.

Xu Qing accepted it without a word.

The young steward standing next to Sir Firedark looked at Xu Qing with a profound gleam in his eyes.

"Omniscience?" he said grimly.

Xu Qing shook his head. "Not full omniscience. Just omniscience about her."

His words were met with silence.

1. And here we go. All of these techniques were those used by Bai Xiaochun in A Will Eternal. Considering how long it took Bai Xiaochun to complete all of the techniques described here, there are obviously far too many references to list as links. If you don't remember the details, or have never read AWE before, you'll have to go back and start at chapter 1?? ! I have to be honest, I flipped my lid when reading this. So cool! And I also have a confession to make. When Sir Firedark originally used these abilities, I didn't think it was the same technique from AWE, and assumed it was just something with a similar name. In fact, my original footnote said something along the lines of "This seems similar to Bai Xiaochun's ability from AWE, but there is no evidence to assume it's the same ability." Obviously I had to change that footnote considering what ultimately happened. In any case, I feel like I have a special connection to both Meng



Hao and Bai Xiaochun considering that I translated their stories. So the developments in this chapter are very cool to me! ?

*Chapter 914: The Creditor Awakens*

The Dreamflow region was one of the five regions that formed the southeast border of Firemoon Darkheaven territory. It was a strange region that sometimes featured verdant mountains and crystal waters. But sometimes it was full of impurities, with the mountains dark and the waters filthy.

The reason was because of the gruish clouds that drifted about in the region. There weren't individual clouds. Rather, the clouds flowed endlessly like a mighty river. When the clouds were white, the lands beneath were bright and full of energy. But when the clouds turned black, demons and devils abounded, and mutagen invaded all living things. That was the natural state of the region, in other words, its climate.

The local species had a name for the phenomenon: dream clouds.

At the moment, a very unique dharmaboat was flying through the white clouds in the sky over the Dreamflow Region.

The ship didn't look ordinary in any way, as it was shaped like a person. In fact, it looked like an old woman in a black robe, with countless tentacles swaying around her. However, her form was mostly hidden within the clouds. Any mortal who happened to spot the old woman would think that a god was patrolling the sky.[1]

Two people were seated cross-legged on the head of the god-like old woman.

"What do you think of this region, little Ah Qing? Let me tell you, there's a legend associated with this place.

"Supposedly, many years ago there was a godly ox that fell asleep while passing through this area. The ox dreamed a beautiful dream, and then, upon waking up, sneezed. That sneeze caused the beautiful dream to come out in the form of water vapor that eventually became the cloud cover.

"Not long after that was when the dream clouds appeared in the region."

The person speaking looked like a young man with ordinary facial features but unusually bright eyes. In fact, if you looked into them, they were like vortexes that could devour anything and everything. His hair was a mess, and his general appearance wasn't much better. But he wore a bright red robe that made him look very flashy and eye-catching. Anyone who caught sight of him from afar would feel inclined to look closer at him. After all, it wasn't just his robe that was red. He also had red shoes and red pants.

The young man in red looked very pleased with himself as he spoke proudly to the person seated next to him, who was another young man.

The second young man posed quite the contrast to the first. He wore an ordinary green jerkin that didn't seem fancy at all. His face was so extraordinarily beautiful that anything he wore apparently wouldn't even dare to vie for attention. The extremely attractive young man opened his eyes and looked down at the pleasant scenery below.

"That legend started back in the day when you were in Firemoon Darkheaven territory. By you. Am I right, Eldest Brother?"

His voice was clear and pleasant.

Of course, these two people were Xu Qing and the Captain, who were on their way back from God Mountain.

In response to Xu Qing's words, the Captain chuckled. Looking at the distant horizon, he stretched lazily. "That's right. I just wanted to illustrate a point. A universal truth. And that is... historical truths often need a bit of embellishment!"

The Captain looked more proud than ever.

"Years from now, how do you think the history books will portray our accomplishments in Firemoon territory? And how will they describe the amazing things we accomplished in the name of humankind? Well, I've already figured out what the history books should say."

The Captain's eyes gleamed. "In the year 2939 of the Dark War calendar, the exceptionally heroic humans Chen Erniu and Xu Qing completely dominated a host of Firemoon Darkheaven chosen, seized the title of Grand Darkheaven, and became famous in all of Revered Ancient. [2]

"Then, during the most important ceremony of the Firemoon Darkheaven people, they had the three Firemoon stewards issue orders to all of their subsidiary species, prohibiting them from invading human territory for 1,000 years. With one word, the Nightshades were put in their place!

"For humankind to have two exceptional individuals like this was nothing short of an amazing honor. It proved that humans in Revered Ancient could make a comeback, and indicated that the destiny aura of Revered Ancient still acknowledged humankind."

Xu Qing looked oddly at the Captain but didn't say anything. Although the Captain had been exaggerating slightly, in essence, what he had just said was true.

The two of them had left the ceremony before it was even over. But after defeating Sir Firedark, Xu Qing, who was the Grand Darkheaven, had the right to make a request of

the three stewards. Of course, that was the entire reason why Xu Qing had come to the lands of the Firemoon Darkheavens.

The three stewards had issued orders instructing all of their subsidiary species to withdraw from the fighting with the humans. What was more, the Firemoon forces would no longer support the Nightshades in their conflict.

Xu Qing was surprised at how smoothly everything went. It was almost like the entire war was just a child's game. He had even had other strategies prepared in case his gambit didn't work.

"Eldest Brother, I've had the feeling for a while that the Firemoons were always going to pull back their troops. It's as if our actions just gave them the justification to do what they wanted to do from the beginning." Xu Qing looked at the Captain.

The Captain waved his hand dismissively. "You're overthinking it. Forget about why it happened. We get to bask in the glory, that's all that matters."

Xu Qing grinned. What the Captain said made sense. Since there was no way to find out the details, there was no point in thinking about it too much for the time being. What mattered most was that the result was positive. Having reached this point in his train of thought, he looked down at the shadow cast beneath him by the sun.

Because the sunlight was filtered through the clouds, it became mottled, and Little Shadow wasn't very distinct. But Xu Qing could clearly sense its cautious emotional fluctuations. It was explaining that it didn't want its lord and master to be worried, so it had been pretending to be dead.

Little Shadow had actually awoken five days ago, and had pretended to be dead for only an incense stick's worth of time before Xu Qing noticed.

At first, Xu Qing had assumed it really was dead. Back in the Mountain and Sea Region, the effort to succeed with Ninedawns resulted in Little Shadow sustaining grievous injuries. Later, its will dispersed, and it went so deeply dormant it seemed dead.[3]

*It has a very resilient life force.*

He was actually pleased to see Little Shadow awake, and he even smiled. Presumably, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior wasn't as happy.

As for Little Shadow, it had mixed feelings. On the one hand, it was glad to be alive. But after the danger it had faced, it could only wonder what further dangers awaited it in the future.... It didn't dare to express that sentiment, though, and just cautiously sent out some happy fluctuations. Then it sent out something more concrete.

"Milord... promised... Crimson Mother... flesh?"

Xu Qing's smile faltered.

Little Shadow shivered slightly.

\*\*\*

As Xu Qing and the Captain made their way back toward human lands, the news about Xu Qing becoming the Grand Darkheaven was already starting to spread rapidly through Revered Ancient.

Considering that the three gods of the Firemoon Darkheaven people had become Flawless Gods, everyone was paying much closer attention to them. After all, the development was definitely going to change the power dynamics of Revered Ancient. In fact, every minor development among the Firemoon Darkheavens was subject to scrutiny. Naturally, that included them appointing a new Grand Darkheaven.

The fact that the Grand Darkheaven was a human, regardless of whether it was coincidental or intention, was obviously very noteworthy. What was even more noteworthy, though, was that a lot of people had seen that very same human trying to take some of the flesh of the broken face.

In almost no time at all, species all across Revered Ancient started seeking information about Xu Qing and Chen Erniu. Their names became fixed in the minds of countless powerful experts. It was the same among humankind.

Long before Xu Qing and the Captain even returned, the news about them reached the capital in the Imperial Region. It was like a tempest that astonished heavenly kings, heavenly marquises, and all the other important officials. That included the imperial princes.

"The Firemoon Darkheavens'... Grand Darkheaven!"

"In all the history of the Firemoons, this is the first time a human ever became Grand Darkheaven!"

"This... this is inconceivable!"

"Xu Qing fought the number one Firemoon chosen, and if one of the stewards hadn't interceded, that chosen would have died!"

"The Exalted Xu issued a request that the Firemoons withdraw their troops, and that the Nightshades surrender to humankind!"

"What peerless ability! It's heavenly!"

Most of them knew Xu Qing but were unfamiliar with the Captain. As the news spread, it was obvious that the person named Chen Erniu wasn't the main character. Most of the attention was focused on Xu Qing.

Bewilderment. Incredulity. All sorts of emotions ran high in human lands.

It was the same in the Imperial University. The Xeno-Immortal School had already risen to prominence, but now Xu Qing's name was even more famous, and that brought even greater dividends. To the excitement of the Xeno-Immortal School students, their school of thought was climbing to the peak of peaks.

Even more excited than them were the swordsages who had come with Xu Qing from Sea-Sealing County to the imperial capital. Xu Qing's glory shone far and wide, and that reflected on them. All the pressure that they had been feeling thanks to Xu Qing going missing was long gone. In fact, all of the cultivators from Sea-Sealing County felt swept up in the glory and majesty.

That was especially true of Ningyan. He knew full well how Xu Qing's meritorious service would reflect on himself. Of the eleven sticks of crown prince incense that stood in the capital, his wasn't necessarily burning the fastest, but he wasn't in a good position. Thankfully, because of the war, the crown prince selection had been delayed. As a result, he was brimming with anticipation regarding Xu Qing's return.

After hearing the news about Xu Qing, Kong Xianglong of Sea-Sealing County laughed heartily. He was happy for Xu Qing, and he was happy for Sea-Sealing County. By now, he realized that he would never catch up to Xu Qing. But that was fine, as he had realized he had his own path to walk.

In the days Xu Qing had been gone, Palace Lord Li Yunshan had been training Kong Xianglong. It was clear that the old-timers in Sea-Sealing County wanted the position of palace lord to be handed down to a descendant of a previous palace lord.

Wu Jianwu was also excited that Xu Qing was returning, but at the same time, had some negative feelings. In order to make himself seem like he was on the same page as everyone else, he composed a special poem.

*"When creation began, Qing was there. Who is luckiest among the people of Revered Ancient? I should also have been a Darkheaven; instead that Ox stole my prize."*

The poem had picked up some speed, and was actually quite popular already.

Among the group from Sea-Sealing County was a woman who was very special to Xu Qing. She was currently seated cross-legged in a building with a jade slip held in her delicate hand. She was smiling. Elegant, she was like an exquisite ceramic vase, with the fairest skin possible. She had eyebrows that curved like mountains, eyes like limpid autumn waters, a straight nose, crimson lips, and pearly teeth. She had a slender,

attractive frame that was as supple as a willow tree swaying in the breeze. Her every move abounded with feminine beauty and charm.

*The young man has really grown up.*

She blinked, then lifted a piece of green cloudcake and put it in her mouth.

\*\*\*

Xu Qing and the Captain had crossed the Firemoon Darkheaven border and were now in Fardark County.

There, the smell of blood mixed with mutagen to fill heaven and earth.

1. Xu Qing's old dharmaship resembled the Merflok 'god' Joine. It was originally described in [chapter 551.1](#).
2. The last time the specific date was mentioned was in [chapter 539](#). The first time was in [chapter 401](#).
3. Little Shadow fell asleep in [chapter 862](#) and hasn't been mentioned since then (other than one passing mention in [chapter 890](#)).

*Chapter 915: The Suspicious Fellow Daoist Feng and Two Shysters*

*Hold on. Something doesn't make sense.*

As Xu Qing's dreadnaught flew into the sky over Fardark County, the smell of blood caused his eyes to narrow.

Standing next to him was the Captain, looking disheveled and messy. Eyes flickering, he muttered, "The smell of blood is strong. At the very least, a million living beings must have died to create such an odor."

"A million?" Xu Qing felt a sense of vigilance rise up within him as he scanned the surroundings.

Two years ago, when they were traveling in Firemoon Darkheaven territory, they hadn't ever passed through this area. In fact, it was only a few days ago that they had chosen to travel this way, thinking it was the most prudent option. And that was done after they had compared the various bits of information they had about the place. Based on their understanding, the border regions of this county were occupied by random, scattered species. Because those species lived in the small border region between two more powerful species, they were generally cautious, and also showed respect to both humans and Firemoon Darkheavens.

But now this place was full of the smell of blood, and it caused Xu Qing's and the Captains' hearts to sink.

"Is it blood from animals? Or from the local species?" Xu Qing exchanged a suspicious glance with the Captain.

Regardless of where the smell of blood came from, it indicated that something dramatic had taken place in Fardark County. And that meant this place wasn't safe anymore.

"Don't tell me some god or some old codger is planning to ambush us here?" the Captain murmured.

"If so," Xu Qing replied grimly, "then we wouldn't be smelling any blood. That would just *beat the grass and startle the snake*. Also, gods usually don't operate like that."

If there really was an ambush coming, it would mean there were people in hiding, or perhaps restrictive spells about to be unleashed. Except, other than the smell of blood, nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

In response to Xu Qing's assessment, the Captain nodded. "It's also not how those old codgers operate. They don't act so crudely."

After some further discussion, the Captain was of the opinion that they could just keep going. Xu Qing, in contrast, wanted to skirt the area. Turning around now would result in some wasted time. What was more, every bit of time that passed increased the general danger they were in.

They were currently very close to human territory. At their current rate of travel, they would be there in seven days at the most. But upon discovering that something was amiss in this place, there was no way that someone like Xu Qing would just barrel on ahead. After reaching an agreement about what to do, they backed out of Fardark County and picked another route. It would take two to three times longer, but it would be a lot safer.

\*\*\*

Some distance away from the spot where Xu Qing and the Captain had turned around, there was a small city of nonhumans. The city had been sealed tight, and was currently a scene of bitter horror. Corpses littered the ground, and blood pooled together into rivers and lakes. It was shocking to see how many people were dead.

Hovering in the air over the city were a few powerful experts from that species, and all of them had expressions of horror, anxiety, and despair on their faces.

They were currently locked in combat against clouds of bugs. Specifically, they were black centipedes as long as an arm, with ghost face markings on their backs. They were

extremely ferocious, and let loose piercing howls constantly. There were no less than tens upon tens of thousands of them.

The ghost-face centipedes had surrounded the Void Returning patriarchs of the species, and it was obvious they wouldn't be able to hold out for very long. In fact, one of the patriarchs withered up, and the venomous bugs pounced on him. As they burrowed into him, he died screaming.

Higher above them in the air were two figures. One was male and one was female. They were the very same Feng Lintao and Lan Yao who had descended from beyond the heavens earlier.

"Fellow Daoist Feng," Lan Yao said coolly, "those ghost-spirit darkipedes are profound to say the least. Given their appearance, I'd say it won't be long before they can evolve into heavenpedes."

Hearing that, Feng Lintao chuckled. "Don't be so quick to praise me, Fellow Daoist Lan. It'll take a few hundred years before the darkipedes can evolve. In fact, even if— huh?"

Before Feng Lintao could finish speaking, his expression flickered and he looked off into the distance.

Lan Yao noticed that, and her eyes glittered. "What is it, Fellow Daoist Feng?"

"Nothing noteworthy," he replied. "You must have noticed the same thing, Fellow Daoist Lan. Out of an abundance of caution, I set up some void eyes from the holy lands. They're considered secret treasures, and though they're not *that* amazing, they are very good at remaining invisible. Given they come from void beasts, they're foreign to Revered Ancient and don't conform to the local natural laws. As a result, outsiders can't detect them. Just now, a void eye happened to spot two local cultivators." Feng Lintao's eyes narrowed. "However, the two of them seem to be very cautious. Instead of proceeding on their way, they backed up and chose a different route. I'm not in the mood to intercept them at the moment, and considering we have more important matters, I guess they just got lucky."

Lan Yao smiled faintly. "You always act so cautiously, Fellow Daoist Feng. Apparently, the words you spoke earlier to drive away Yue Dong were not exactly accurate. You *do* take this place seriously."

When Feng Lintao declined to respond to Lan Yao, her eyes glittered, but she didn't press for further information.

\*\*\*

Xu Qing and the Captain had already left Fardark County. At a certain point, Xu Qing performed an incantation gesture to transform the dreadnaught so that it no longer



looked like an old woman. Instead, it became invisible, and at the same time, sped up by several times over.[1]

Leaving no sign of their passing, they sped along.

Although they no longer smelled blood, both were still on high alert. After a few days passed in which nothing happened, the two of them reached a point about three days from the border of human territory. That was when they saw something like a red mist on the horizon, and once again smelled blood. It obviously had formed recently, and was still spreading.

Xu Qing's expression turned grim, and the Captain's eyes glittered menacingly. The two of them rotated their cultivation bases as they looked at the blood mist.

Blue light spread from the Captain's eyes, while Xu Qing's eyes turned pitch black. Both used their respective vision methods to pierce through the mist. What they saw was a scene from hell.

"That—" the Captain said, cutting himself off in surprise. Xu Qing was frowning. Both could see the source of the mist.

It was a small city belonging to a minor species. The city had been overrun by the blood mist. Not a sound could be heard inside, and there were no signs of life. Shockingly, massive amounts of corpses had been piled together to create ninety-nine towers. Every single tower seemed to be made from nearly 10,000 corpses.

The minor species had been slaughtered to make those towers. At the same time, the third eye that every member of the species had in their forehead had been dug out. The smell of blood was coming from the corpses of this three-eyed species. And when it got strong enough, it turned into a blood mist.

"A blood sacrifice!" the Captain murmured. "Their souls have been extracted already. This isn't the type of blood sacrifice offered to a god. No, this looks like something used to create some sort of unique treasure."

Looking at the city, Xu Qing said, "Presumably the smell of blood from earlier was caused by something similar."

The Captain nodded. Looking closely at the blood mist, he suddenly said, "Except this blood mist hasn't been taken away. Whoever made it isn't finished yet.... This has nothing to do with us. We should just keep going and worry about it after we get back to human territory. There's no need for us to meddle in affairs here."

Xu Qing didn't feel some sort of overwhelming compassion for nonhumans, so he nodded in agreement. The two of them then put away the dreadnaught, tapped into their cultivation bases, and became two shadowy figures that shot forward.

\*\*\*

A short distance away, the two cultivators surnamed Feng and Lan, who were responsible for the blood sacrifice, were piercing through the air.

“Most of the blood sacrifices are finished,” Feng Lintao said. “All the requirements are met. Anyone who enters those areas won’t be able to cause any trouble now.” In his hand was a blood-red pendant that he looked at, his eyes flickering with excitement.

“20,000,000 souls,” Lan Yao said coolly, “including those of mortals and cultivators, used to summon a sea of blood and corpses. In the holy lands, methods like that are major taboos. If you got caught, you’d have your soul extracted and your mind destroyed. Fellow Daoist Feng, you’re really being reckless in your attempt to acquire *that* thing.”

“Hmph. There’s no need for mockery, Fellow Daoist Lan. I’m not just doing this for myself. When I get *that* thing, you’ll benefit a lot as well. I wouldn’t dare to do something like this in the holy lands. But things are different here. And don’t forget the agreement we made, Fellow Daoist Lan. If you suddenly feel regret and fail to live up to your word, well....” Feng Lintao’s eyes narrowed as he looked at her.

She smiled faintly. “You’re overthinking things, Fellow Daoist Feng. If everything plays out as you said it would, then I won’t have any need to back out of our agreement.”

Feng Lintao nodded and was about to say something further when his expression darkened, and he turned to look off into the distance. “They’re back. When it happened a few days ago, I assumed they were just passing by. Contrary to expectation, they picked another route leading right to us.

“Despite their probing, they’re not choosing to leave. Maybe they are just passersby, or maybe... they have ulterior motives! Furthermore, now that they’ve detected the blood sacrifice, we can’t risk them leaving and spreading word.”

Feng Lintao frowned. He was suspicious and even paranoid by nature, and this plan of his was extremely important to him. To see people suddenly showing up and acting like this was just too unusual. Ultimately, killing intent rose up within him.

“Better to play it safe than sorry. These two Void Returning cultivators need to be exterminated!”

Having reached the conclusion that this was definitely the best idea, Feng Lintao blurred into motion, rocketing off into the distance at incredible speed. Eyes glittered, Lan Yao followed. In the briefest of moments, the two of them vanished.

\*\*\*

The next day, Xu Qing and the Captain were only two days away from the border of human territory. That was when the sky suddenly turned dark and a host of lightning bolts descended, accompanied by a shocking tempest that roared in all directions.

A cold voice rang out.

“Halt, you two!”

A hand composed of wind and lightning stretched out of the tempest toward Xu Qing and the Captain. It was so big it filled half the sky, and seemed capable of crushing anything in its path. The infinite lightning dancing within it was shocking to the extreme.

Stunned, Xu Qing and the Captain stopped in place then fell back. Unfortunately, they reacted too slowly. The huge hand dropped down, grabbed Xu Qing and the Captain, and then squeezed down violently. A rumbling boom rang out as Xu Qing and the Captain exploded.

“Hmm?”

Almost as soon as they exploded, an expression of surprise could be heard from the tempest. Then two people emerged. They were none other than Feng Lintao and Lan Yao.

Looking at the flesh and blood in the huge hand, Feng Lintao’s expression turned grim. “Blood puppets. Not true bodies. But do they really think methods like this will enable them to escape me?”

Feng Lintao snorted coldly, then performed a single-handed incantation gesture. He blurred, then reappeared and began to give chase.

About half a day away, Xu Qing and the Captain were speeding along.

The Captain’s eyes glittered coldly. “Those two blood clones I left behind to cover our tracks were destroyed. Someone has a whole lot of killing intent directed at us. We’re still two days away from the border. I’m afraid we aren’t going to make it in time.”

Xu Qing didn’t respond. Looking around, he spotted a low-lying mountain off in the distance. Flying over, he landed on it and then waved his hand to send soul threads flying out in all directions. In the blink of an eye, warding spells popped up, creating a cloak of concealment.

The Grand Darkheaven Armor appeared to cover him, and he flicked his wrist to summon a blood-red dagger. The dagger was covered with mysterious designs that formed a vicious face, the mouth of which opened and bit into Xu Qing’s palm. Xu Qing’s expression was the same as ever as he allowed the vicious face to drink a mouthful of his blood. That caused the face’s expression to turn fanatical before it sank

down into the dagger. Then the dagger disappeared into his palm. The only thing that remained was a sound like that of breathing, coming from his hand. Hoarse and filled with longing, it was extremely gruish. This was the Spirit-Devouring Dagger that Xu Qing had acquired after becoming the Grand Darkheaven.

With those things accomplished, he looked up, his eyes pulsing with killing intent. "I guess this means we're going to have a little fight."

Grinning viciously, the Captain dropped down next to Xu Qing, sat cross-legged, and began to glow with blue light. After it spread out about 50 kilometers, it flickered and vanished. Then, gruish faces appeared in his eyes. This time, though, they didn't stay inside, but appeared outside of his eyes, turning into over a hundred illusory faces that circled around him, and concealed him in invisibility.

Next, he struck himself in the chest, whereupon a mind-shaking roar echoed out from behind him as an enormous tumor rose up, then burst open, allowing a blue, skeletal hand to emerge. That hand shook even Xu Qing and filled him with a sense of danger. The moment the hand flew up into the air, it disappeared into invisibility.

And yet, the Captain still wasn't done. Gritting his teeth, he grabbed his spine at the neck and twisted it, ripping out his own backbone. His body immediately went limp, but then quickly straightened up. He grinned maliciously.

"There's something I didn't mention before, little Junior Brother. I smell the aroma of a treasure! A very delicious treasure!" The Captain licked his lips as a crazy look gleamed in his eyes.

Xu Qing, meanwhile, felt moved. After a bit of thought, he performed an incantation gesture, causing his shadow to blur and spread out. At the same time, seven lamps appeared behind Xu Qing, which merged into him. Then he closed his eyes and sat there silently.

About two hours later, Xu Qing opened his eyes. The crazy look in the Captain's eyes looked even stronger. The two of them peered up into the dome of heaven. Up above, a blood cloud appeared, which spread out amidst thunderous rumbling sounds. Then a man and a woman appeared.

1. This appears to be an author mistake. Xu Qing's dreadnaught never looked like "an old woman," in other words, Joine. That was actually his spirit cruiser (reference chapter 555.1). That said, I don't think it's beyond the realm of possibility that Xu Qing could make it look however he wanted. Except it was never mentioned that he had changed it from being a sun to an old woman. Many chapters from now, the "old woman" version of the dreadnaught gets mentioned again, so whether it's a mistake or not, that is how the author wants it going forward apparently. 📧

*Chapter 916: Green Ox Tramples the Wind [Qing & Niu Trample Feng] (part 1)*

The blood mist seethed, connecting to the dome of heaven for no less than 500 kilometers. Lightning crackled within it like writhing crimson snakes. Rumbling thunder sounded like heavenly daos roaring to shake the cosmos. The lands beneath the blood mist were under insurmountable pressure, which caused boulders to tremble and start floating up into the air. It was almost as if there was some horrific evil in the clouds that was exerting influence over all living beings.

Even the low-lying mountain where Xu Qing and the Captain waited was affected by the power of the blood mist, and started trembling. It was truly an astonishing sight.

The man and woman that walked out of the blood mist seemed like rulers of all heaven and earth. They abounded with power, and they pulsed with sky-obfuscating, land-enshrouding auras.

The man was like a mountain. He was tall and burly, with an oppressive pressure that radiated off of him and a facial expression that was both cold and filled with unswerving determination. At the same time, his eyes shone with grim and unfeeling brutality.

The woman was as beautiful as an immortal, with hair that swayed in the wind, a waist as supple as a willow tree, and enticing curves that would cause anyone who looked at her to palpitate with desire.

These two weren't human. Though they were both extremely good-looking, both had wings on their backs and natural third eyes. They were dressed exactly the same. Both wore black robes embroidered with golden thread. And the golden thread flickered with light that created spatial rifts around them as they moved! It was horrendous to say the least!

They were none other than Feng Lintao and Lan Yao.

Once out in the open, Lan Yao flashed an enigmatic smile as she looked down at Xu Qing and the Captain. Her gaze seemed to linger a bit longer on Xu Qing.

As for Feng Lintao, his expression was placid as he hovered overhead. "Why aren't you two pieces of trash running away?"

Xu Qing and the Captain both looked up grimly, their hearts pounding with the desire to do battle. This person was obviously intent on chasing them down. And despite the fact that they had never met before, much less had any reason for a grudge, he... still wanted to kill them! They intended to return that favor! There was no hesitation on their part. They lived in brutal times in which killing wasn't just the result of grudges or conflicts.

What was more, it was obvious this person wanted to kill them because they had encroached on his blood sacrifice. In response to this person's rather extreme behavior, Xu Qing didn't say a single word. That was just his personality. He wasn't the type of person to quibble. He was the type of person who took action, and when he did take action, he killed!

He looked at the two nonhumans, first to confirm that they were a different species, and second to try to identify any weaknesses they might have. As far as he could tell, their biggest weak spot was their throat.

In contrast, there was no way the Captain could hold back from offering some sharp words. Laughing derisively, he said, "What, you think having chicken wings makes you bird people or something? Listen up, you three-eyed little chickens, watch your tongue when you speak to your superiors!"

In response to the Captain's words, Lan Yao frowned, and her gaze turned colder. Feng Lintao's expression turned grim, and he suddenly looked at the area surrounding Xu Qing and the Captain.

"So," Feng Lintao said coolly, "you entrenched yourself and even set up some crude warding spells. No wonder you dare to use such language when addressing an important person like myself. Sadly, it doesn't matter what methods some trifling Void Returning cultivators use. You're still *frogs in a well* who clearly *don't know the height of the heavens or the depths of the earth.*"

Feng Lintao took a step in their direction, and it caused the blood mist to rumble and weigh down with greater pressure. The ground quaked, and the boulders floating in the air shattered. It seemed that, in the blink of an eye, the entire area was locked down, making all natural and magical laws conform to his will.

When that will settled onto Xu Qing and the Captain, their expressions flickered, and they rotated their cultivation bases as if they were fighting back with everything they had to muster.

Feng Lintao's expression was cool and apathetic as he took a second step. A great cracking sound echoed through the dome of heaven, as if the sky had split open. The ground shook even harder. The low-lying mountain couldn't stand the pressure anymore and started crumbling beneath Xu Qing and the Captain.

As the rubble of the rocks floated higher into the air, Feng Lintao lifted his right hand and then pushed it down. An immense force gathered, crushing down on everything, like a gale force wind sweeping onto a pile of leaves to crush them out of existence.

The shattered rubble of the low-lying mountain became ash, and even the air began to crumple so that it looked like a wrinkled piece of cloth. And it was all gathering around

Xu Qing and the Captain. Rumbling sounds echoed out as Xu Qing and the Captain were ripped to shreds, causing blood to spray everywhere.

Feng Lintao's expression didn't change. Apparently, he didn't think killing a couple of Void Returning cultivators was worth reacting to. Then, just as he was about to turn and leave, his expression flickered, and he looked back at the spot he had just attacked.

The moment he did, the air filled with hundreds of thousands of magical symbols. Specifically, they didn't come out of nowhere. They came out of the crushed rubble of the boulders, and they instantly spread out to fill the area.

They were the result of the warding spells Xu Qing had set up. After they appeared, the hundreds of thousands of magical symbols flashed three times, then erupted.

A deafening rumbling sound could be heard as the power of hundreds of thousands of warding spells created a huge tempest that swept over Feng Lintao. His facial expression still didn't change. The golden embroidery on his black robe suddenly expanded, forming a shocking defensive spell that blocked all external attacks. Eyes derisive, he prepared to fight back.

But then his face fell as the tempest formed from warding spells revealed over a hundred gruish faces within it. The vicious faces looked extremely greedy as they smiled eerily and bared their teeth, which were long and pointed. All of them pulsed with terrifying auras.

They had been hiding in that wind, but Feng Lintao didn't realize it until now. With mouths gaping, they lunged toward Feng Lintao. They moved with incredible speed, and at the same time, glowed with blue light that allowed them to pass right through the fluctuations emitted by Feng Lintao's robe. As they pounced, they started biting into him.

"What the hell are these things?" Feng Lintao blurted, shaken. He immediately went into a double-handed incantation gesture, causing his Smoldering God cultivation base to erupt. Something like mercury swept out, covering him and fighting back against the faces.

However, that was when Xu Qing appeared, hovering in midair outside the tempest. Instantly, the seven lamps within him flickered. They were none other than the Seven Lamps Underworld Fire Curse, which targeted the enemy's soul. The moment the lamps flickered, they all simultaneously went out.

Extinguish the lamp, extinguish the enemy.

The curse instantly swept over Feng Lintao. He was first inhibited by the warding spell tempest and then got tangled up with the Captain's gruish faces. He was terrifyingly

strong, and was already in the process of exterminating the faces. But Xu Qing attacked with extreme precision, and cooperated perfectly with the Captain.

As the underworld curse erupted, Feng Lintao's expression flickered dramatically. A power of extermination stabbed into him, piercing to his soul. As the pain filled him, he was overwhelmed by a sensation of withering. As a result, his effort of dealing with the grisly faces slowed.

Taking advantage of the moment, the Captain's grisly faces looked even crazier as they started self-detonating.

Huge booms rang out, shaking heaven and earth. Immense force struck Feng Lintao in both his soul and his fleshly body, immediately putting him into a very bad state. That said, he came from the holy lands, and had a lot of techniques at his disposal. A blow that might have been fatal to others simply wasn't capable of killing him.

He was preparing to launch his counter attack, but there was no way that a killing move from Xu Qing and the Captain would be as simple as this.

The next moment, Xu Qing closed in, surrounded by glittering light and terrifying might as he clenched his right hand into a fist. Then he launched a blow that could shatter the air and pierce through the land. It formed an undying body and an indestructible will, something domineering and completely extraordinary.

It was none other than Sir Firedark's Undying Emperor's Fist!

Were Sir Firedark here to witness this happening, he would be completely astonished. Back during the fight with Sir Firedark, Xu Qing had been paying very close attention, and had already begun to make an imitation of the technique in his mind and heart. After the battle, he gained further enlightenment, and was now able to use it in a magnificent way.

As the fist descended, Feng Lintao's expression flickered again. And yet, the true killing move from Xu Qing and the Captain had yet to appear.

The Captain had taught Xu Qing how to act in a truly crazy manner. But the Captain had also learned some things from Xu Qing. He had learned from Xu Qing that it was fine not to launch an attack. But if you did launch an attack, you should go all out, and not hold anything back. That was Xu Qing's style.

Therefore, the moment Xu Qing unleashed the Undying Emperor's Fist, a blue, skeletal hand appeared out of nowhere and snatched viciously toward Feng Lintao's heart from behind.

The blue skeletal hand was extremely eerie, as if it was from another world. And the piercing howl it emitted could shake the mind and cause the emotions to reel. It would



cause someone to feel terror and fear that couldn't be blocked, and would make one tremble both in soul and fleshly body. A will of decay erupted, as if this skeletal hand were from a dead god, and could infect anything and everything with something incredibly inauspicious.

In the blink of an eye, the blue skeletal hand pierced through everything to join Xu Qing and unleash the power to destroy souls.

All of this takes some time to describe, but in reality, it happened in an instant. From Feng Lintao's perspective, he had been just about to seize victory, only to suddenly find himself in a truly deadly crisis. That sudden change caused him to gasp. That was especially true of the skeletal hand behind him, which caused his hair to stand up on end.

That said, he had abundant experience in battle. And to be a part of this mission launched by the holy lands, it was a given that he was considered an extraordinary person there. Therefore, in that moment of crisis, he didn't hesitate to open his mouth and spit something out. It started out only about an inch long, but as it flew out, it grew bigger, until it was fully three meters.

It was a black shield!

It was sturdy and ancient, and didn't have any sort of magical symbols or designs on it. It looked ordinary in nature. However, it emanated an ancient sensation that made it seem like it had been steeping in a river of time for endless years. The moment it appeared, it created defenses all around Feng Lintao.

And it immediately pushed back against Xu Qing's Undying Emperor's Fist, the Captain's blue skeletal hand, the tempest, the exploding faces, and the power of the underworld curse. Deafening booms echoed out and wild colors flashed in heaven and earth.

Xu Qing and the Captain both shivered as they tumbled backward several dozen meters before lurching to a halt.

At the same time, a dazzling red light flickered around Feng Lintao as a blood-colored form charged out and raced to a position some 300 meters away. Countless red streams of light shot out of the black shield to prevent anyone from chasing after the blood-colored form.

Xu Qing's face darkened, and a crazy look gleamed in the Captain's eyes. They were both looking at that blood-colored light as it came to a stop 300 meters away. It was Feng Lintao.

*Chapter 916: Green Ox Tramples the Wind [Qing & Niu Trample Feng] (part 2)*

At the very last moment, Feng Lintao used the extraordinary black shield and a secret magic to get to safety and put some distance between himself and his opponents. Of course, he paid a heavy price to do so. He got closer to his comrade, but not too close. Keeping a few dozen meters between the two of them, he shivered and then coughed up a mouthful of blood. His face was pale and his expression grim. From the look of it, his vital energy had been damaged.

Lan Yao hadn't made a single move up to this point. She was actually shocked at what was happening, but suppressed that. "Fellow Daoist Feng, can you really not handle two simple Void Returning cultivators?"

Feng Lintao snorted coldly. "There's no need to ask such questions, Fellow Daoist Lan. You saw with your own eyes that these two little punks aren't ordinary individuals. What's more, they're obviously used to working together. You're just trying to get me worked up, aren't you?" He smiled grimly. "In the hopes of seeing what trump cards I have? Well, there's no need for trickery like that."

Lan Yao laughed softly. "You're thinking too much into it, Fellow Daoist Feng. I was just curious! Our deal is still in place. Why would I do something like that?"

Feng Lintao didn't provide any reply other than another cold snort. He wasn't surprised at all that Lan Yao hadn't stepped in to help him. They were working together, nothing more. And yet, for her to ridicule him in his current bedraggled state was very irritating, which was why he had ceased to be so polite.

As of now, he was taking Xu Qing and the Captain very seriously. He was a cultivator from the holy lands, with a Smoldering God cultivation base. Granted, his cultivation base had been sealed before he came to this place, which limited him to two-world strength. But to him, even Void Returning cultivators with powerful trump cards should have been easy to wipe out. Except, things were different now.

He wasn't the only one who had assessed the situation in that manner. That was why his companion Lan Yao had stood to the side and refrained from interfering. Even she had assumed that Feng Lintao would have no trouble in this situation.

They really couldn't be to blame for that. If the two of them had been facing one of Revered Ancient's Smoldering Gods, they wouldn't have acted so casually. But Xu Qing and the Captain looked like nothing more than first-stage Void Returning cultivators. Given that, it might not have made sense to disregard them, but it definitely didn't make sense to take them very seriously. Because of all that, what actually happened left both of them shocked.

Eyes glittering as he sized up Xu Qing and the Captain, Feng Lintao projected a message to Lan Yao. *"These two must be extraordinary individuals in the Revered*

*Ancient mainland.... Even in the holy lands, they would be considered chosen. Fellow Daoist Lan, aren't you fond of strangling chosen to death? Why don't we work together on this?"*

Lan Yao chuckled. *"They're human. It's not strange at all for humans to have chosen like this. As for working together to fight them, well, you went out of your way to try to kill them, Fellow Daoist Feng. That has nothing to do with me! That said, considering our deal, I guess it makes sense for me to lend a helping hand."*

Feng Lintao's eyes glittered as he looked at Xu Qing and the Captain. All of a sudden, he waved his right hand, causing intense rumbling sounds to echo out as a host of black clouds appeared. Shockingly, the black clouds were actually formed of numerous black centipedes with ghost faces on their backs, all of them roughly the size of an arm. They were incomparably ferocious, and their piercing cries hurt Xu Qing's ears, and caused a very serious expression to appear on the Captain's face. There were no less than tens upon tens of thousands of them.

After they appeared, Feng Lintao waved his hand, and the ghost-face centipedes massed together and swept toward Xu Qing and the Captain.

Little Shadow was there on the ground, but its range seemed to be affected by the massive pressure.

The moment the ghost-face centipedes began their charge, the Captain raised his hand, and the blue light that had been concealing him flickered and rose into the air. Wherever it went, a power of frigid coldness spread out, freezing heaven and earth, and sealing all living beings.

The centipedes bore the brunt of the attack, and they slowed down. That said, they didn't seem any less ferocious than before, and they even fought back, spitting out fire that spread everywhere. The frigid power was exceptional, but there wasn't quite enough of it to deal with so many of the centipedes and the seas of fire that they spat out.

As the two forces clashed, countless shadows on the ground spread out to target... the shadows cast by the cloud of centipedes!

The power of possession suddenly erupted!

Next, Xu Qing and the Captain shot forth, one from the left, the other from the right. Both closed in directly on Feng Lintao. After things went poorly earlier, Feng Lintao had clearly come to think of these two opponents as equals. As a result, he had not only unleashed the ghost-face centipedes, but had also tapped into his cultivation base. All of a sudden, two black balls of fire appeared above his shoulders! Astonishingly, he had a major world on each shoulder, glittering as they pulsed with terrifying auras.

Even more astounding was that he had three additional balls of black fire, one above each hand and one above his head. However, those three fireballs were dim, as if they were covered with fog, or perhaps sealed. It was the same with the major worlds within the balls of fire.

“Five-world Smoldering God!” Xu Qing said with a sharp inhalation.

“But three worlds are sealed. Why?” The Captain was surprised, but that surprise was quickly overtaken by curiosity. After exchanging a glance with Xu Qing, he sped up.

As the two of them closed in, they unleashed divine abilities. The Captain’s blue light shone with unprecedented brightness, to the point where it almost seemed possible to discern a major world within it. As for Xu Qing, he had unleashed 40,000,000 soul threads, which quickly formed the same amazing world he had used in his fight with Sir Firedark.

It was a majestic world filled with a hundred godly pillars to prop up heaven, and it had three extraordinary types of godly authority. As the might of the world surged, it joined the Captain to race toward Feng Lintao with deadly force.

Seeing that, Lan Yao’s expression suddenly became far graver than before.

It was the same with Feng Lintao, whose pupils constricted. And yet, killing intent still proliferated in his eyes.

“So you really *are* chosen. Each of you is a Void Returning cultivator who can summon the world of a Smoldering God! Well, that’s fine. Now I’ll just have to show you what happens when an inferior offends a superior!”

The two worlds above Feng Lintao’s shoulders rumbled as they shot forward in illusory form toward Xu Qing and the Captain.

At the same time, Feng Lintao took a deep breath, then exhaled a stream of silver light that spread out to cover him until he looked like he was pure silver. After that, the silver light erupted, turning into something like a sharp blade that slashed out with terrifying pressure. As a result, Xu Qing’s soul threads that made up his major world started rumbling. Unexpectedly, it looked like the silver light was capable of cutting through them. It was the same with the blue light of the Captain’s world. The silver light was truly spectacular.

“It’s the light of the holy lands, little Junior Brother!” the Captain blurted, his pupils constricting. “Fall back!”

He immediately shot backward at top speed.

Xu Qing's expression flickered. He had no idea what the 'light of the holy lands' was, but he did know that the term 'holy lands' represented something monumental. That said, he could tell that there was something a bit off about the Captain's behavior. Based on what he knew of the Captain, this just wasn't something the Captain would do. After all, they still had more trump cards, most notably, the emperor's corpse!

*Eldest Brother must have some trick up his sleeve....* With that thought in mind, Xu Qing plastered a shocked look onto his face and started fleeing.

"So you know about the light of the holy lands. Interesting." Feng Lintao, who looked like he was made from silver, laughed coldly. Suddenly, he vanished, only to appear right in front of the Captain. He thrust his hand out.

The blue light surrounding the Captain collapsed, and the Captain himself seemed to vanish from existence.

"Hmm?" Feng Lintao's eyes glittered as he vanished again. This time, he reappeared right in front of the fleeing Xu Qing. He thrust his hand out again.

Power surged around Xu Qing, and the world of soul threads in front of him collapsed as the hand smashed through it and landed on his chest.

At the same time, a thump rang out as Xu Qing was sent flying back several hundred meters. His face was pale, but he didn't seem to have any injuries. The glittering Grand Darkheaven Armor was combined with the Ninedawns skulls that circled around him, as well as his god body. Coupled with the copied version of the Undying Emperor's Fist and the fleshly body blessing it provided, Xu Qing's defenses were at a terrifying level.

Feng Lintao was completely and utterly shocked. "Such defenses... Fine, let's see you survive some magical laws without getting hurt!"

He snorted coldly as he made a grasping gesture. In response, innumerable threads appeared in the air, swirling around to form an immense web. The web was made from natural laws, and the silver light made it completely silver as it spread out. It slashed through anything in its path.

Xu Qing's cultivation base was in full rotation, and the power of his defenses were at the limit. When he made contact with the web, piercing sounds rang out as his fleshly body power fought back. However, he couldn't stop himself from being forced backward.

As the web shot forward, Feng Lintao focused on the spot where the Captain had disappeared, and tried to force the Captain out into the open.

The moment the Captain appeared, he self-detonated, turning into a host of innumerable blue worms that surrounded the skeletal hand. Then, the hand shot toward Feng Lintao with shocking speed. It moved with astonishing speed and force. Frigid

coldness spread out as the skeletal hand smashed through the silver light, closed in on Feng Lintao, then viciously grabbed him. At the same time, the worms opened their mouths and spat out frigid energy.

In the blink of an eye, the light of the holy lands was pierced through, and Feng Lintao's face fell. Though he managed to block the skeletal hand, he couldn't stop the all-enveloping frigid energy. Unending coldness spread out, instantly affecting him.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered with killing intent as he unhesitatingly lifted his right hand. A blood-colored dagger appeared, with a vicious face on it. He slashed the dagger toward his enemy.

A swishing sound rang out. The net of magical laws was slashed apart by the dagger. And then, in the time it takes a spark to fly off a piece of flint, Xu Qing appeared right behind Feng Lintao. The dagger slashed through his throat!

Feng Lintao's face fell even more dramatically. At the same time, Lan Yao, who had only been watching up to this point, narrowed her eyes and lifted her hand. Instantly, a host of flower petals covered the spot where the other three were fighting.

Lan Yao took a step forward. Clearly she was planning to join the action.

However, there was no way Xu Qing and the Captain would let Lan Yao do something like that. The moment she began to take action, a blue spine materialized in front of her and lashed viciously toward her.

At the same time, the ghost-face centipedes that were spitting out fire to deal with the blue light suddenly switched to face Lan Yao. They had been taken over by Little Shadow!

All of a sudden, the blue light shifted, turning into a barrier that surrounded Lan Yao!

#### *Chapter 917: Spirit of the True World*

The field of battle in the dome of heaven had been separated into two parts by the freezing wall of blue light!

To the left of the blue light, Xu Qing and the Captain were unleashing devastating trump cards. The Captain transformed into innumerable blue worms that belched out frigid energy to freeze all things. With the blessing of the blue skeletal hand, it became a terrifying might that could smash through everything with astonishing killing intent. Xu Qing was like the emissary of death itself, with the Spirit-Devouring Dagger in his hand, backed by a will of death and a destructive wind as he launched his attack.

To the right of the blue light, Lan Yao was locked in place and facing innumerable ghost-face centipedes, all of which had been taken over by Little Shadow and were

belching black flames that became a sky-obscuring, sun-blocking poisonous gas. Because of all that, Lan Yao had no way to interfere.

But what really struck fear into her heart was the gruish blue spine, which writhed in front of her like a gigantic blue centipede. In fact, it looked very similar to the host of smaller ghost-face centipedes, and pulsed with an incredibly terrifying aura. From a distance, it seemed like the Captain's centipede was the king of all the other centipedes, leading the sea of bugs to shake heaven and earth.

The aura cast by that sea of centipedes was something Lan Yao had never encountered before, and left her filled with a sense of crisis. As of now, it was hard to tell whether she was actually trapped in place, or whether she was simply unwilling to risk trying to help Feng Lintao.

Next, Feng Lintao, whose fleshly body had been frozen in place by the Captain's worms, was hit by the skeletal hand. It was like a hammer crushing an ice cube as his fleshly body was ripped to shreds. Then the hand grabbed his heart and squeezed down on it. His heart was clearly about to explode.

At the same time, the blade light of Xu Qing's Spirit-Devouring Dagger sliced through the light of the holy lands and reached the skin of Feng Lintao's throat. A swishing sound rang out, and a huge wound opened up, slashing all the way through Feng Lintao's neck to the point where his head was nearly severed.

Lan Yao's eyes flashed as she flew backward and defended herself against the blue spine.

*He's probably going to use his trump card now, right...?*

At that critical moment, as death seemed to wrap up Feng Lintao, and a bitter cry escaped his lips, his eyes also gleamed with determination. Then, his five major worlds, three of which were empty and two of which were real, suddenly flashed brightly.

The terrifying power of a Smoldering God erupted, billowing out in all directions. The skeletal hand that had been crushing his heart could no longer exert any force at all. It was as if the heart, which had been about to crumble, was now a chunk of hardened iron.

Xu Qing's dagger stopped in place and could inflict no further damage.

The facial expression of both Xu Qing and the Captain flickered as five-colored light rose up from Feng Lintao's five worlds. At the same time, a feather emerged from each of them. Feathers even came from the sealed worlds, as if the sealing that affected the worlds couldn't do anything to the feathers. Each feather was a different color, but all were roughly a foot long. The moment they emerged, they pulsed with a chaotic, primeval aura, something incredibly strong and intense.

In fact, that aura seemed very similar to the aura of a domain treasure. It seemingly contained the power of essence, which was something that could shake flesh and blood, all while causing the soul to shiver.

“Spirit of the True World!” the Captain blurted, his pupils constricting. He decisively disengaged from combat and flew backward, all while giving Xu Qing a meaningful look.

Looking shaken, Xu Qing unhesitatingly withdrew the Spirit-Devouring Dagger and flew backward several meters.

The moment the Captain recognized the feathers, and the two of them fell back, the aura of the feathers shot up into the sky, turning into a five-colored tempest that connected the dome of heaven to the lands below. The five colors shoved aside the clouds and caused terrifying might to whip violently everywhere. Ultimately, the five precious feathers fused together, turning into a five-colored feather fan that pulsed with such an explosive energy it could shake the world and rock the ancient past. [1]

Feng Lintao grabbed it, whereupon his gaze turned icy cold. All of a sudden, his complexion did not look hale and ruddy. Apparently, using this precious treasure inflicted serious damage to his vital energy. Now wasn't the time to worry about that, though. Gripping the five-colored feather fan, he waved it toward Xu Qing and the Captain.

The result was a massive wind that shook heaven and earth. It was a wind that could sweep aside anything as if it were a loose leaf. The air shattered, and blood sprayed out of the mouths of Xu Qing and the Captain.

The Captain's body was ripped to shreds. The flesh and blood formed back, only to be ripped apart again. It happened several times, and whenever he formed anew, the same thing would happen.

Xu Qing had it a bit better off, as his fleshly body was incredibly tough. Whether it was because of his god body, his Grand Darkheaven Armor, or the blessing of the Undying Emperor's Fist, his fleshly body was unusually durable. Though he still coughed up an enormous mouthful of blood as he tumbled backward, his body didn't collapse. Unfortunately, the glow of the Grand Darkheaven Armor went dim, and pain filled him from head to toe.

At the same time, the blue wall blocking Lan Yao fell back, as did the blue spine and the countless possessed ghost-face centipedes.

However, it didn't seem that Feng Lintao could sustain further use of the five-colored feather fan. The fan once again turned back into five feathers, which returned to his five major worlds. At that point, all of his worlds went blurry. It looked like their essence had been badly damaged.



Silver blood sprayed out of Feng Lintao's mouth, and his face turned incomparably pale. He now looked profoundly weak. Staring grimly at Xu Qing and the Captain, he hoarsely said, "You actually forced me into the position of opening my essence.... I underestimated you two and had no choice. What a pity three of my worlds were sealed. If I'd been able to use five-world power, I could have slaughtered you in an instant."

Xu Qing's expression was cold and grim. Saying nothing, he looked at the wound on Feng Lintao's neck, which was already healing up. The sight caused his heart to sink. This fight had really impressed upon him what kind of reserve powers a Smoldering God could have. Although he still had a few moves left... it wasn't lost on him that this opponent still had an ally with similarly terrifying battle prowess.

In contrast, the Captain simply chuckled derisively. "Any chance you could refrain from talking such rubbish, Chicken Wing? What, you really think that using five-world Smoldering God power to kill two Void Returning cultivators is something to write home about? You're from the holy lands. You have the light of the holy lands, and you cultivate the Spirit of the True World, a signature ability of the Devilbird species!"

After revealing who this opponent was, the Captain licked his lips.

Xu Qing said nothing. He had already come up with various speculations when the Captain mentioned the 'light of the holy lands,' so he wasn't very surprised.

Feng Lintao said nothing for a few breaths of time. Looking hard at the Captain, he then said something that filled the two of them with even deeper anxiety. "You're right. It's nothing worth writing home about. I wasn't thinking straight. But going forward, I will be."

Feng Lintao had nearly died twice. He had lost a lot of face, and had also damaged his vital energy and essence. As the words left his mouth, he seemed incredibly calm, and his expression turned even darker. He now looked very cold and apathetic. Few people in his position could do something like that, and it just went to show how terrifying this Feng Lintao was.

Next, Feng Lintao turned to Lan Yao, clasped hands, and bowed. "Fellow Daoist Lan, I'm aware that you were holding back on purpose, all with the goal of getting a glimpse of my trump card. Well, now you've seen it.

"In the final analysis, the two of us made a deal to work with each other. I admit that if I want to kill these two, I either have to undo my seals, or I have to use more of my essence power. If I undo my seals, then I'll immediately face expulsion by the heavenly daos. After all, the holy ancestors haven't yet come, so the heavenly daos don't approve of us....

"What's more, if I use more of my essence, it'll affect the deal we have in place. And therefore, I hereby request your assistance, Fellow Daoist Lan!"

Feng Lintao was being very sincere, to the point where he waved his hand, sending the blood pendant that was the result of the blood sacrifice directly over to Lan Yao.

“That item relates to our efforts. I’ll hand it over to you for safe keeping, Fellow Daoist Lan. Consider it an expression of my sincerity.”

Feng Lintao could have transmitted all of his words, but instead he spoke them out loud. That was how confident he was.

As a result, Xu Qing and the Captain could hear everything very clearly.

Xu Qing cleared his thoughts. He hadn’t used any god magic. He still had The Emperor’s Sword, plus the emperor’s corpse. And yet, that was when the Captain blinked a few times and projected a message.

*“Don’t do anything impulsive, Little Junior Brother. These two Chicken Wings aren’t simpletons, and we’re actually not a match for them. We need to get out of here and back to the sect. Once we’re with Master and the prime elders, we’ll be safe.”*

The Captain spun, collected all of his items, and then raced off into the distance. In fact, he apparently spat out a few mouthfuls of blood to initiate a blood escape art and gain some speed. Xu Qing didn’t hesitate at all to collect the ghost-face centipedes and then race away at top speed. In the blink of an eye, the two of them became prismatic beams of light that disappeared over the horizon.

Feng Lintao didn’t stop them from leaving. Instead, he looked calmly at Lan Yao.

Lan Yao laughed softly. Grasping the blood pendant with her delicate hand, she hefted it a few times and sighed inwardly. The truth was that she had been holding back, for the exact reason Feng Lintao had mentioned. She’d wanted to get a glimpse of his trump card. Now that she’d seen his five-colored fan, she was convinced that he actually had even bigger assets that he hadn’t revealed. Based on what she knew of him, there seemed to be a very high likelihood that he had even deadlier tools at his disposal.

That said, it didn’t seem like a very smart strategy to continue holding back in the hopes of learning about them.

*What’s more, those two humans are definitely chosen. They’re not simpletons.... Just now they were projecting messages to each other in which they mentioned a Master and some prime elders. Whether or not that was a trick, it’s something we should take into consideration. If it’s not a trick... then it means they’re backed by a terrifying organization. And that seems very plausible. After all, it’s not as though some random group could groom even one top chosen like that, let alone two.*

*If I keep forcing Feng Lintao to act on his own, it'll cause too much of a delay. Furthermore, if we make too much of a scene, it could lead to unintended consequences, and could affect the larger mission. Another thing to consider is that if I piss off this Feng fellow too much, then given his personality, he might start guessing at the truth. After all, a bit of probing makes sense, but if I push it too far.... Well, as the saying goes, too far is as bad as not enough, right?*

Having reached this point in her train of thought, Lan Yao nodded. "How can I help?"

Feng Lintao's eyes glittered. "Ideally," he replied coolly, "you could have personally taken action, Fellow Daoist Lan. Presumably, once you saw what they were capable of, you didn't want to take that risk."

Lan Yao didn't respond.

"In that case, Feng Lintao continued, "I would like to request that you let me borrow a drop of Nobleplexus good fortune serum. With that, I can unleash my Nobleplexus Holy Hex, and thus assimilate those two humans."

"Nobleplexus Holy Hex?" Lan Yao first looked surprised, then she chuckled. "You really are taking them seriously. Using the Nobleplexus Holy Hex is a bit over the top, isn't it? Besides, given your current level of strength, even using some Nobleplexus good fortune serum will only allow you to unleash a small portion of the true might of the Nobleplexus Holy Hex. And even that will be terrifying. That said... I guess it might be worth it to assimilate the two of them with that hex."

Lan Yao nodded and waved her hand, sending a jade bottle flying out.

1. Traditional Chinese feather fans are how you would probably imagine them. A fan made of feathers. That said, they do have a sort of typical look and feel. [Here are a few pictures.](#) 📷

*Chapter 918: Don't Worry About Me, Little Junior Brother, Just Get Out Of Here!*

The jade bottle was so white and sleek it almost looked like the fat of a lamb. It was even surrounded by a glowing white halo, making it seem completely extraordinary. Feng Lintao reached out, caught it, scanned it with divine will, and then nodded.

Voice cool, Lan Yao said, "The Nobleplexus Holy Hex is a secret magic that only direct bloodline clan members of my species can learn. Rumor has it that if you unleash its full potential, you can even assimilate a god. Those two humans are anything but simple, and we don't have time to waste, so this is all I can do.

"The truth is that it's not a rumor. You're only a half-blooded Devilbird, so you have no way of knowing all the details. Truth be told, back when the holy ancestor led my people away from the Revered Ancient mainland, it was technically before Eminent Desolation

arrived, yet other gods had already appeared. Back then, the holy ancestors used the hex to assimilate a number of High Gods.”

Feng Lintao’s expression flickered as he nodded. “Many thanks for the information, Fellow Daoist Lan. Given that the two humans now have a bit of a lead, I need to unleash the magic right away.”

With that, Feng Lintao took a deep breath. Without the slightest hesitation, he opened the jade bottle, whereupon a drop of milky white liquid flew out. It didn’t emanate any spirit energy fluctuations. However, the entire area immediately became extremely dry, as if all the water had vanished. It was almost as if no other liquids could exist in the presence of this serum.

Both Feng Lintao and Lan Yao released the light of the holy lands around them, causing them to be covered in silver. Apparently, that protected them from the serum.

A serious look could be seen on Feng Lintao’s face as he looked at the white serum in front of him and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. As a result, a host of sealing marks flew out toward the serum. A grisly scene resulted. Each sealing mark that reached the serum would pass through, then grow larger, reaching a size of 300 meters as it flew up into the sky. There, it would disappear. By the end, a total of 108 sealing marks did this.

Apparently, that was Feng Lintao’s limit. By the time the final magical symbol vanished into the air, it had become translucent. Also, the dryness in the area disappeared.

Feng Lintao looked at Lan Yao and said, “Alright, those two can’t get away now. Let’s go see how it plays out.”

Lan Yao smiled gladly as the two of them strode off through the air.

\*\*\*

A few thousand kilometers away, Xu Qing and the Captain were speeding through midair. They had not said a single word to each other so far, and were focusing completely on their escape.

A moment later, a 300-meter magical symbol appeared in the sky overhead, then screamed down to intercept them. An instant later, its shocking speed brought it right down in front of them. The air shattered, turning into innumerable fragments that, from a distance, looked like a blooming flower.

Actually, it really was a flower! It was as white as a lotus, and was slowly rotating in place.

Both Xu Qing and the Captain suddenly looked very grim. Without any hesitation, they changed directions. Just as they did, a second magical symbol appeared in the dome of heaven. Then a third and a fourth....

Eventually, more than thirty were falling toward them. Rumbling sounds echoed out nonstop as the air shattered, with fragments whipping about wildly into the form of a storm.

It was a storm of numerous white lotuses, which were surrounding and hemming in Xu Qing and the Captain.

At the same time, even more 300-meter magical symbols appeared in the sky. In the blink of an eye, a total of 108 white lotuses had surrounded the 50-kilometer area, and they spun madly as they created a terrifying sealing power. Even more shocking, each rotation caused green threads to appear.

They contained scorching power and might to eradicate the world as they swept noiselessly toward Xu Qing and the Captain. Before long, Xu Qing and the Captain were surrounded by countless green threads. And as the precious lotuses rotated, more threads appeared.

From a distance, it was possible to discern that the green threads were actually creating a gigantic, 50-kilometer green lotus!

All of the water vapor in the area had vanished, to be replaced by scorching heat that baked the lands. A sensation of assimilation rocked heaven and earth. This sealing magic was like a massive furnace!

Inside, Xu Qing and the Captain both had serious looks on their faces. An intense sensation of crisis filled both of them. They exchanged a glance, and then both resorted to different methods of escape.

The Captain shivered as a host of blue worms appeared, which spat out frigid energy. The spine and the skeletal hand flickered within that energy as they launched a vicious attack straight ahead. A rumbling boom echoed out like heavenly thunder, and the gigantic lotus furnace shivered. However, it didn't crumble.

As for Xu Qing, his Spirit-Devouring Dagger could slice through natural laws, but it couldn't cut through this wall of assimilation, only shake it slightly.

Seeing that, Xu Qing looked silently at the Captain. Their eyes met, and they didn't need to exchange any words. Both knew what the other was thinking.

"Are you sure?" Xu Qing asked in a low voice.

"I'm sure!" the Captain replied, licking his lips and blinking a few times.

A blue worm appeared in Xu Qing's hand, which he absorbed. Then, without another word, Xu Qing lifted his right hand and smacked it toward the top of his head. That blow caused rumbling to sweep through his body. His god soul flew out from his fleshly body, which then opened its mouth and devoured his fleshly body.

The Captain did the same thing. His god soul flew out, which he used to contain countless worms.

Xu Qing, in his god soul body, shoved his hand out in front of him. That caused ripples to surround him, and despite the lack of any water vapor in the area, it suddenly looked like a surface of water. The ripples spread out. Unfortunately, the Nobleplexus Holy Hex was truly terrifying. Though Fishing the Moon in the Well could be used anywhere, it was being gravely affected in this circumstance. The moment the water ripples appeared, they almost instantly began to dry up.

Xu Qing in god soul form didn't take time to sit around and contemplate things. Taking advantage of the time bought by using Fishing the Moon in the Well, he waved his hand toward the surface of water. What he fished up wasn't a lotus, but rather, the Captain's soul.

Next, a huge hand appeared outside of the massive lotus. It contained immeasurable power, as it was made from a river of stars. It reached down and made contact with the lotus, whereupon the hand shivered, and the lotus shone with bright light.

Sadly for the lotus, the illusory power of Fishing the Moon in the Well was very unusual. That was especially true since Xu Qing had become one of the essence sources of Fishing the Moon in the Well, providing it with very powerful personhood.

As a result, the huge illusory hand rumbled loudly as it pierced deeply into the massive lotus. It dropped down to fish out the god souls of Xu Qing and the Captain. Grasping them in its palm, it forcefully pulled them up.

It looked like Xu Qing was going to succeed at using an unimaginable tactic to break free. But right then, a cold snort echoed out. Countless flower petals swept through the air to land on Xu Qing's Fishing the Moon in the Well hand.

The cold snort came from Feng Lintao. The flower petals came from Lan Yao. Both of them looked surprised, and were clearly taking the situation seriously. Obviously, neither of them could have ever guessed that Xu Qing could do something so outrageous.

An instant later, Feng Lintao waved his hand, and a rumbling storm wind turned into a five-colored peacock with a black horn, which lunged toward Xu Qing's hand. Lan Yao's flower petals converged, turning into a sword of flowers that could sever heaven. It chopped down!

Instantly, Xu Qing's massive hand trembled on the verge of collapse. It seemed incapable of lasting much longer. In that moment of crisis, a desperate howl erupted from the palm of the hand.

The Captain's god soul burst out into the open, spat up his fleshly body, and then fused with it.

"Don't worry about me, Little Junior Brother, just get out of here! Go tell the sect what's happening!"

The Captain, looking like he was ready to die, threw all caution to the wind. He spread his arms out wide, and dazzling blue light became a host of worms that erupted wildly. Combining with the spine and the skeletal hand, they turned into a humanoid obstacle that blocked the path of the five-colored peacock and the heaven-severing sword of flowers.

"Eldest Brother!!" Xu Qing cried, his eyes flashing with fury. But in the end, there was nothing he could do. Taking advantage of the time the Captain had bought, he allowed the massive hand to pull his god soul free.

Outside of the massive green lotus, the huge hand vanished, and Xu Qing's god soul appeared. There, he spat out his fleshly body and combined with it, then turned to flee.

That was when a cold voice echoed out from the massive lotus. "If you leave, your Eldest Brother's god soul will be destroyed! It's your fault he's in this position!"

As the voice echoed out, the lotus became transparent, revealing Lan Yao and Feng Lintao inside.

Feng Lintao currently held the Captain by the neck. The Captain's eyes were closed and he wasn't moving. It looked like he was unconscious. He was limp and covered with blood, as if he had been seriously injured.

Xu Qing looked down, his expression one of grief and indignation, but also, decisiveness. All of a sudden, godly authority flared around him. The violet moon rose, Hellfei appeared, and the power of misfortune surged. There was more. The Emperor's Sword within him thrummed as the emperor's soul seized it. What resulted wasn't a terrifying sword projection as occurred in the fight with Sir Firedark. Instead, it looked like signs of putting everything on the line. The Grand Darkheaven Armor shone dazzlingly. Everything Xu Qing was doing was indicating that he was ready to die fighting. In fact, a host of ghost-face centipedes appeared, all of them pulsing with the power of self-detonation.

When Feng Lintao and Lan Yao saw that he seemed ready to throw caution to the wind, their hearts sank. Although they still had things they could do to continue this fight, the

reality was that they both had their own agendas, and they had to be on guard against each other.

As a result, neither wanted to take action casually. Although these humans were only in Void Returning, they had already unleashed some astonishing techniques. For example, the huge hand just now had contained dao reverberations, and was clearly nothing to take lightly. Getting free from it wasn't going to be an easy thing. What was more, this person had just revealed a godly aura that was so terrifying they could hardly imagine what trump card it represented. And then there was that sword will.... Feng Lintao and Lan Yao could both sense the faint aura of an emperor within it.

*He has an Emperor's Sword!*

That was what both of them were thinking as they struggled to control their breathing. Based on their past experiences, they could only come to the conclusion that if Xu Qing unleashed all of his battle prowess, it would be risky to try to contain him. And it was hard to say which of the two of them might get injured by the sword. They were now actually starting to get scared, and were starting to realize this situation wasn't going to be resolved easily.

They couldn't let Xu Qing go free, and it wasn't going to be easy to capture him. And killing him would be even less easy. Unfortunately, *if you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off.*

The only upside was that they had his Elder Brother captive in the Nobleplexus Holy Hex. But in the end, it was still something of an impasse.

Feng Lintao's heart continued to sink, and his gaze flickered unstably.

As for Lan Yao, she looked at Xu Qing then suddenly said, "Fellow Daoist, you must have an idea of how strong we are after all this fighting. And we can see how strong you are. We have your Eldest Brother captive, and at the same time, we can't let you go free. Since we're in a deadlock, why don't you consider... joining us on our task?"

*Chapter 919: Don't Work With Shysters*

"As for your Eldest Brother, after we finish, you can have him back." Lan Yao spoke in a calm, light tone, but her words were so shocking that both Feng Lintao and Xu Qing reacted with visible shock.

And Feng Lintao immediately snapped, "That's not going to happen!"

"Oh?" Lan Yao said with a sweet smile. "Could it be that you have other tactics at your disposal, Fellow Daoist Feng, plus the confidence to kill this person without ending up hurting yourself? If so, then I'm on board."

Xu Qing said nothing. He just looked down with glittering eyes.



Feng Lintao hesitated as numerous thoughts ran through his head. But in the end, he had to admit that Lan Yao was right, and her idea seemed the best way to end the impasse. In fact, it was the perfect way to resolve things. They feared Xu Qing's trump cards, but also couldn't let him go. It wasn't a simple situation to deal with, nor something that could be resolved with ordinary tactics. Fighting wasn't the solution either. Bringing Xu Qing in as an ally seemed the best option.

As for what would happen further on down the line, that would depend on how everything unfolded.

The biggest worry Feng Lintao had was that Lan Yao had other motives. But there wasn't anything he could do about that. Plus, he was the one who had this little punk's Eldest Brother captive.... In other words, he had the initiative and the upper hand. After some thought, the grim look on Feng Lintao's face vanished, to be replaced with a smile.

"That makes sense, Fellow Daoist Lan. Given this person's battle prowess, he definitely qualifies to work with us. What do you think, human Fellow Daoist? Are you willing to join us? It will be an immense good fortune for you!"

His grip on the Captain's neck loosened. The Captain shivered, and a frown appeared on his face, as if he were feeling pain despite being unconscious.

Xu Qing looked at the Captain and mulled the matter over. If it weren't for the fact that he had full faith in the Captain's acting abilities, and knew him very well, he would actually believe that the Captain was hovering on the brink of death. Of course, he gave no indication of what he was thinking. As for the current situation....

Inside, Xu Qing was laughing coldly, but outside, he grimaced, making it look like he had no desire at all to join them, but for the sake of a fellow disciple, he was *hesitating to shoot the rat for fear of breaking the vases*.

"How do I know you'll actually let my Eldest Brother go after the job is done?" he asked.

"That's simple," Lan Yao said. "Fellow Daoist Feng can swear an oath." She looked at Feng Lintao.

Feng Lintao said nothing, making it hard to determine what he was thinking. But in the end, he nodded. Looking at Xu Qing, he quickly swore an oath that came with some serious negative effects if he violated it. Of course, the oath would only go into effect after Xu Qing agreed to join them.

Xu Qing still hesitated. "How do I know you don't have some secret ways of getting around your oath without ramifications?"

Lan Yao frowned. So did Feng Lintao.

Xu Qing's expression of suspicion wasn't exactly surprising. In fact, if he hadn't said something like that, they would have found it suspicious. And either of them would have said similar things were they in his position.

That said, Feng Lintao made sure to look displeased and even angry. He snorted coldly. "Don't push things too far! We've already made some concessions. If you keep being stubborn, then don't blame me for just killing your Eldest Brother. And if it wasn't for me worrying about getting hurt, I'd do the same to you! If you insist on trying to wheedle out more advantages, then maybe I'll just risk injuring myself to put an end to you!"

Feng Lintao's killing intent began to bubble along with his cold words.

Lan Yao said nothing, but her eyes turned extremely cold, which indicated her attitude.

After a long moment passed, Xu Qing said, "I guess an oath is good enough. So, what is this mission of yours, Fellow Daoists?"

Upon hearing that Xu Qing would accept the oath, Feng Lintao's face softened a bit, and Lan Yao smiled.

"That's good to hear," Lan Yao said. "As of this moment, we're on the same side. May I ask your esteemed name, Fellow Daoist?"

"Sir Firedark," Xu Qing said quietly.

"This isn't a good place to discuss the details, Fellow Daoist Firedark," Lan Yao continued with a broad smile. "Why don't we continue traveling, and we can explain along the way?"

Xu Qing sighed softly but nodded.

The three of them turned into bright beams of light that shot off into the distance. Of course, they all kept some space between each other.

Along the way, Lan Yao explained what they were doing, though it was impossible to say how much of her explanation was real and how much was fake. A few days later, the three of them reached a huge ravine in the southwestern part of Fardark County.

The ravine was massive, like an enormous black scar across the land, going down so far it was impossible to see the bottom. Mists swirled within it, and the mutagen levels were very high. Everything in the area was withered, and it was possible to occasionally hear screams echo from the ravine that would cause one's soul to tremble.

Feng Lintao alighted at the edge of the ravine, still holding the Captain in his hand. He hadn't loosened his grip any further during the journey. Looking down into the ravine, his eyes glittered with excitement.

“This is the place.”

Lan Yao took a few steps forward until she was standing at the very edge of the ravine. She looked down.

Xu Qing stood several dozen meters away looking at the ravine, thinking about the mission the two of them had explained along the way.

*Fardark nectar, huh?*

He had never heard of such a thing before. Based on what Lan Yao and Feng Lintao had said, fardark nectar came from the quintessence of the fardark fruit tree. Before the broken face came, it was considered a precious treasure, and was even more effective than the fardark fruit. It was also considered a holy object to the Fardark species.

Back then, the Fardark species built a necropolis beneath the Fardark Fruit Tree, formed from the innumerable roots of that tree. That was also the location of something called Fardark Cistern. Every hundred years, the cistern would be opened, allowing the fardark nectar to be harvested. That said, it only amounted to a few hundred drops of the nectar.

The nectar did the same thing as the fardark fruits, except that it was hundreds of times as effective: it would provide indescribable benefits to anyone seeking enlightenment of magical laws. In fact, it was so effective that, in the past, people would go to great lengths to get a single drop. Unfortunately, after the Fardark Fruit Tree was destroyed, the nectar became even more valuable.

Fardark County really was known to produce fardark fruits in the past....

As Xu Qing contemplated all that, Lan Yao spoke up.

“Fellow Daoist Feng,” she said, “if you hadn’t allowed me to take a look at the ancient slip with your bloodline legacy information, I would never have believed that precious treasures like that even existed!”

“Back before the Fardark species left Revered Ancient,” Feng Lintao said coolly, “they really did drain the cistern and destroy the tree. As a result, fardark fruits and nectar became extinct in Revered Ancient. Their plan was to take the branches of the tree and replant them in the holy lands. Unfortunately, the replanting efforts in the Fardark holy land ended up failing. As it turns out, the tree couldn’t grow outside of Revered Ancient.

“Later, Holy Ancestor Fardark unexpectedly perished, resulting in the Fardark holy land breaking up and being distributed among different parties. I’m a half-blooded Fardark, and my paternal grandfather happened to survive the catastrophe. Only by activating my Devilbird bloodline was I able to reach the Devilbird holy land.

“What’s more, no one had any idea that I’m actually a descendant of the very same person responsible for wiping out the tree. And during the chaos of his mission back then, he secretly spared some of the tree roots.... He did it all in the hopes of staging a comeback for his line of the species. Before he passed away into meditation, he passed this secret on to someone else. Right now, I’m the only person who knows the truth.”

Xu Qing didn’t say anything as this conversation played out. Instead, he tried to determine how much of the story was true and how much wasn’t.

Meanwhile, Lan Yao nodded, her eyes gleaming with anticipation. “The ordinary fardark nectar doesn’t seem like it’s worth much, Fellow Daoist. What sounds really interesting is the *holy* fardark nectar you mentioned.”

Feng Lintao grinned. “I’d say there’s a high likelihood it’s here! After all, tens of thousands of years have passed, and my ancestor hid those roots very well. Unless something truly unexpected happened in the meantime, there should be a big stockpile of fardark nectar. And after it lays settled for long enough, it will turn into holy fardark nectar.”

Xu Qing’s pupils constricted.

Feng Lintao glanced at Xu Qing and then looked back at Lan Yao.

“Once we’re down inside,” he went on, “I’ll open the warding spell. All you need to do, Fellow Daoist Lan, is act as my dharma protector. Also, you need to make sure you honor the deal we made.”

Lan Yao smiled and tucked away a stray hair that the wind had blown loose. “Don’t worry, Fellow Daoist Feng,” she said in a leisurely tone. “The whole reason you came to me for help is that you needed that item of my husband’s, right? Of course I would never go back on the deal we made.”

Feng Lintao nodded. Saying nothing further, he waved his hand, causing an immense wave of force to spread out. It turned into the image of a five-colored peacock, which dropped down into the ravine.

Rumbling sounds filled the ravine as the black mist roiled to the side. A path opened.

Feng Lintao shot down into the depths.

“After you, Fellow Daoist Firedark,” Lan Yao said, looking at Xu Qing.

Saying nothing, Xu Qing walked forward and dropped down into the path through the mist. A moment later, there was no sign of him.

Xu Qing's cautious manner caused Lan Yao's eyes to glitter. After glancing off into the distance, she stepped forward and dropped down the path.

\*\*\*

Sometime after the three of them were gone, the mist closed back up and everything went back to normal. However, the screams coming out of the mists briefly grew more intense. Then things went completely silent.

A few hours later, a figure approached the ravine from off in the distance.

It was a woman. She was beautiful and had a gentle disposition, along with fair, flawless skin. Behind her graceful frame were two wings. Her clothing was exactly the same as that worn by Lan Yao and Feng Lintao. It was black with golden embroidery. Combined with her immortal-like appearance, it made her seem unusually lofty. Especially noteworthy were her glittering eyes, and the sharp gaze with which she studied the area.

*That Feng Lintao really is paranoid. He didn't just set up void eyes here, he also left behind a will of space-demolishing, and also some Nobleplexus holy energy.... He really wants to be able to tell if anyone shows up in this area. Of course... with the preparations I've made, none of that will do anything.*

This woman was the very same person who had previously been with Feng Lintao and Lan Yao. Her name was Yue Dong! Eyes flashing, she walked forward and dropped down into the misty ravine, where she disappeared without a trace....

*Chapter 920: Three-and-a-Half People Journey Through Fardark*

*The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind.* As far as Feng Lintao and Lan Yao were concerned, the oriole was none other than the young woman named Yue Dong.[1]

In the massive ravine in Fardark County, mists swirled, and rumbling sounds echoed out constantly. Howls pierced through the mist, some of them shrill and anguished, some of them cruel and fierce.

Shortly thereafter, a number of loud thumping sounds could be heard, like objects landing on the ground. Then a storm wind swept through the ravine. As the wind blew, the mists in the ravine were dispersed, almost as if a huge hand were waving them away. As a result, the bottom of the ravine was revealed! Sprawling ruins were visible.

The ruins were all that remained of once ancient and utilitarian buildings. There were towers, streets, houses, and all sorts of other buildings visible everywhere. Put precisely, this place had once been a small city. It was easy to imagine how many

people had once lived here. Now the buildings had mostly crumbled into rubble. Few were intact. What was more, the effects of mutagen were clear to see everywhere.

That said, there wasn't a single ancient corpse visible. Instead, there were the blood-soaked bodies of strange, two-headed birds laying around here and there. A few of them weren't dead yet, and were howling in anguish as they struggled weakly to rise. A figure dropped down from the mists above, landing right on top of one of the struggling birds. As a result, the bird exploded into a cloud of gore.

That person was none other than Feng Lintao.

Two additional figures dropped down after him. They were Lan Yao and Xu Qing.

Xu Qing looked around at the ruins, his expression the same as ever, but his heart full of vigilance. After taking in his surroundings, he focused on the Captain, who was still in Feng Lintao's grip. The Captain was still unconscious.

Xu Qing looked away at the bird corpses.

At first, their descent had gone smoothly, at least until they were ambushed by strange beings that seemed to be part of the surrounding mists. It was as if they were able to slip back and forth between illusory and corporeal.

It was a given that Xu Qing didn't make an all-out effort to fight them. But Feng Lintao seemed to be anxious, and immediately took out his five-colored fan. A single swipe of that fan forced the majority of the ambushers into the open, and killed many of them. Then Lan Yao took action. With Xu Qing assisting, they killed over a hundred. Of course, the ambushers were the strange birds.

Looking around somberly, Feng Lintao said, "This world really is a dirty and dangerous place. Even ordinary sparrows ended up infected by the aura of the gods, and mutating into this form. Fellow Daoist Lan, going forward, we'll encounter more creatures like this. If you keep holding back like you did just now, I'm afraid this journey is going to take far too long. And eventually... something very unfortunate could happen."

Feng Lintao looked at Xu Qing. "What's more, Fellow Daoist Firedark, if I take point and end up running into anything really difficult to deal with, it will be hard to avoid using your Eldest Brother as a shield."

Xu Qing's eyes glittered coldly as he looked back at Feng Lintao and said, "I'm more than willing to continue our previous fight to the death, even here!"

Feng Lintao's eyes narrowed as a frigid will pulsed on him, spreading out in all directions. His grip on the Captain's neck tightened. The Captain's legs twitched, and an expression of pain appeared on his face.

Xu Qing's expression turned grimmer.

Noting the hostility, Lan Yao laughed softly and stepped between them. "Alright, alright. Fellow Daoist Firedark, it's true that you didn't expend much effort earlier. You can't blame Fellow Daoist Feng for being a bit displeased about that.

"That said, Fellow Daoist Feng, considering we're working together, there's no reason to be so overbearing. How about this: if we run into any tricky situations going forward, we can all act in unison. But if something less challenging occurs, we can take turns handling matters."

Feng Lintao snorted coldly, then started moving forward at top speed. As he did, he eased his grip on the Captain, causing the Captain's legs to stop twitching.

Xu Qing watched him go, not saying a word.

Lan Yao looked over at him. "Let's go, Fellow Daoist Firedark."

Xu Qing knew full well that the two of them would never allow him to bring up the rear. Maintaining silence, he started moving. And thus, the three of them sped through the ruined city, with Feng Lintao taking the lead. They kept a good distance between each other, with Lan Yao staying a few hundred meters behind Xu Qing, and Feng Lintao staying a few thousand meters ahead of him.

As they went along, Xu Qing got a much clearer picture of the ruins. For instance, he soon realized that there were masses of tree roots in the spots between most of the buildings. There were many, many roots, although most of them were broken. On the edges of the city, many of the roots had grown into the rocks that made up the ravine's walls. Apparently, this city had been built within the tree roots.

In his mind's eye, Xu Qing could visualize the mighty tree that must have grown out of this ravine. It had surely been something that could prop up the sky, or perhaps, had spread out to make a sky of its own. The roots filled the ground below.

As for the city, long ago, it must have existed in what was then a huge cave. Then one day a very powerful person came along who hewed out a huge channel, creating the ravine and revealing the cave.

*In that case, was the tree... taken away by the Fardark species? Or did it just disappear into time? There are still roots here, which seems to indicate the tree didn't just disappear. There aren't any traces of the tree on the outside, though. I guess the most likely possibility is that they did take it away. And those responsible... were either the Fardarks or some other species that came along later.*

It was only natural that Xu Qing didn't immediately believe Feng Lintao's story about what happened in the past. When dealing with the unknown, Xu Qing preferred to

believe in his own powers of observation and judgment. The only exception would be if the person giving the information was someone he truly trusted.

Xu Qing kept his thoughts to himself as he studied the surrounding ruins. The style of the buildings was reminiscent of human architecture, although there were some differences in the details. That was understandable. Back in the time of Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity, humans were the top species in Revered Ancient, and nonhuman species tended to imitate their aesthetics.

Xu Qing kept studying his surroundings as they got closer and closer to the city center. At one point, a loud boom echoed out up ahead from Feng Lintao's position. At the same time, a shockwave rippled through the ravine.

Xu Qing's gaze hardened as he flew up to a higher position in the hopes of seeing what was happening. Lan Yao did the same. From that height, everything ahead was clearly visible. Xu Qing could see that, in the very center of the ruins, a vicious face had appeared on the ground. Being on the ground, the face had been concealed, which was why they hadn't noticed it. But after Feng Lintao flew over it, the face appeared. Now, a huge, rotten tongue stretched out of its mouth and was attacking Feng Lintao.

Feng Lintao had already grabbed the tongue. As his Smoldering God cultivation base power surged, he blurred, turning into a five-colored peacock that snorted coldly and attacked the face.

The peacock smashed into the face, which was obviously some extraordinary and freakish beast. However, the beast was weak, and collapsed into pieces as soon as Feng Lintao attacked it. After it was destroyed in body and soul, the only thing left behind was a huge pit.

Feng Lintao reverted from the five-colored peacock form into his ordinary self. Standing at the edge of the pit, he looked back at Xu Qing and Lan Yao. freewebnovel.com

"Now it's your turn," he said coolly.

Lan Yao smiled and flew into the pit.

Feng Lintao didn't move a muscle. He looked coldly at Xu Qing. Xu Qing said nothing as he flew into the pit. Seeing that, Feng Lintao also stepped forward and entered.

The pit was extremely cold inside. There were crystals embedded in the walls, and the deeper they got, the colder and darker it became. Of course, the three of them were all extraordinary cultivators, so they could see clearly despite the dark surroundings.

Things went much more smoothly than before. Enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn, and they didn't encounter any dangerous situations. However, the pit was truly deep. Despite moving down at a high rate of speed, they didn't reach the bottom.



Unfortunately, things only went smoothly for a short time. Before the second incense stick's worth of time had passed by half, the area in front of Lan Yao suddenly erupted with flower petals. The flower petals seemed weak, but they contained terrifying might. As they spread, rumbling sounds echoed out, and a snake-like creature whizzed out into the open near Lan Yao.

It had been hiding in the hopes of ambushing her, but she somehow detected it and used her flower petals to force it out into the open. Its appearance was shocking and ghastly. It wasn't actually a snake. Instead, it was something that resembled a long, wriggling intestine. It immediately tried to flee, but before it could, Lan Yao snorted coldly. The flower petals then converged, turning into a seven-colored peacock!

The peacock had a horn, and it was pure white! If you added the color white, then this peacock was actually made of eight colors! Whether its aura or the purity of its bloodline, it was superior to Feng Lintao's peacock by many times over.

After forming, it shot toward the intestine.

Xu Qing didn't offer any help. Instead, he felt the urge to look at Feng Lintao. As he did, he noticed a look of avarice flickering in Feng Lintao's eyes as he gazed upon the peacock.

When Xu Qing looked at him, Feng Lintao looked back at him and his expression darkened.

Xu Qing didn't react, and ultimately looked away. Meanwhile, the eight-colored peacock shone with bright light as it closed in on the strange intestine, ripped it to shreds, then returned to Lan Yao.

Lan Yao turned and looked at Xu Qing and Feng Lintao with an enigmatic smile. Eventually, her gaze focused solely on Xu Qing.

"And now, it's your turn."

1. I'm sure most of you are familiar with the mantis/cicada/oriole idiom. But do you know its origin? It comes from the *Zhuangzi*, one of the most important classic texts of Daoism. [Wikipedia link here](#) with more information about the *Zhuangzi*. 📖