

## **Read Beyond the Timescape Chapter 961: The Setting Sun Illuminates the Hearts of Humankind; the Setting Sun Shines Upon All Revered Ancient**

*Chapter 961: The Setting Sun Illuminates the Hearts of Humankind; the Setting Sun Shines Upon All Revered Ancient*

“Yu Liuchen!” said a cold voice. It was solemn and filled with killing intent, and it came from the god of the Northfate Kings. But that was it.

Without the sword stuck in his chest, Yu Liuchen’s cultivation base now had nothing impeding it. And countless years in the past, he had reached Altar God. Although a species as powerful as the Northfate Kings wouldn’t necessarily fear an Altar God, they wouldn’t want to offend one unless there were absolutely no other options. That was especially true of an Altar God who hadn’t yet decided which species in Revered Ancient to accept faith from.

Therefore, all Tempest could do was accept what had just happened. That was very thought-provoking to all the other parties involved.

The Grand Emperor hovered in midair, holding the sword projection as he looked around. Wherever he looked, the air vibrated, and the gods retreated, not daring to face him. The powerful streams of divine will from various species backed away.

Everyone thought that Grand Emperor Swordsage was on his last legs. But what had just played out turned that around. And now, no one wanted to risk their life to get more information. After all, no one had any idea if Grand Emperor Swordsage currently... had another trump card, or... if he was still on a fishing expedition.

Time ticked by. After a few dozen breaths of time passed, the empress’ godfire was raging. Heaven and earth were now golden as boundless godfire pulsed with majestic force. As of this moment, she was only about ten breaths of time away from total success!

All eyes were focused on her.

Grand Emperor Swordsage looked at the empress and smiled. And yet, deep within that smile there was exhaustion. As of this moment, he really was on his last legs. Although he wished the sword in his hand would continue to shine brightly, the weakness hidden within him was spreading. Before long, he wouldn’t even be able to hold the sword in his hand. His soul shadow was now starting to fade away. Yet he held strong, ensuring that to any observer, he looked as powerful as ever. He would hold on until the empress was finished.

After that, in the last moments of his life, he wanted to take a final look at the lands of mortals, at humankind, and at the world of sorrow. In contrast to the Grand Emperor's weakness, the empress' godfire was radiant. The heaven and earth that existed inside the Grand Emperor grew dim. The heaven and earth that existed outside of the empress was increasingly golden. The aura of a god was becoming more apparent on the empress. The sound of boundless heavenly thunder echoed out, shattering magical laws and dao foundations. Her life force was changing! It was a scene to make anyone sigh. One party's longevity was ending. The other's life force was climbing.

*Just like reincarnation*, the Grand Emperor thought. Unbounded exhaustion and weakness swept through him like a tide, inundating him, causing his eyes, which had been bright and shining throughout his life, to cloud over. A heart full of wisdom was crumbling into dust.

Things blurred. At some point, the cloudiness turned red. And the dust somehow turned into paper. The red and the paper mixed, turning into... five red paper people. They seemed to be laughing and crying at the same time.

Four of them appeared around Grand Emperor Swordsage's soul. One of them appeared within it.

Then a peal of thunder rang out, along with a cry of grief. Then the expressions on the five paper people turned into that of pure greed. They pounced! The paper person inside of the Grand Emperor's soul body melted, turning into pure red that spread out to fill his soul and merge with the four paper people on the outside!

All of this happened very suddenly. And the timing was very precise.

The five paper people had been hiding within time itself like vipers. Like expert hunters with extreme patience, they waited until the empress was just about to succeed, which was the same moment that Grand Emperor Swordsage was at his absolute weakest and couldn't hold on much longer.

Then they bared their teeth. Then they launched a deadly attack!

The paper people descended on the Grand Emperor's soul shadow. They fused into it.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out as the Grand Emperor's aura was erased. The sword within Xu Qing let loose an extreme cry of grief.

Up in midair was a single paper person that now had Grand Emperor's soul shadow inside of it. It cackled.

"I finally got the light of a perished Quasi-Immortal!"

As of this moment, all powerful experts were shaken to the core. As of this instant, all gods were stricken in their god souls. As of this second, all living beings in Revered Ancient were astonished.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out. The lands quaked and the destiny aura of humankind cried out in anguish. Humans, be they government officials or commoners, all gnashed their teeth in fury. Heaven was collapsing! The Grand Emperor was perishing!

“Grand Emperor!!”

Numerous figures instinctively shot up into the sky, howling in grief and rage.

Humans, no matter how weak or strong they were, were hardly able to watch what was happening. Intense anger and shocking madness caused the blood of all humans to boil.

Xu Qing’s eyes were crimson as he stood there quietly. That was just his personality. The stronger his killing intent, the less he spoke. And then he burst into motion, The Emperor’s Sword thrumming, bright light shining off him.

Up in the dome of heaven, the cackling red paper person licked hīs lips and then turned in the direction of the raging godfire. Hē shivered as if hē were planning to make a move on the empress. Cackling again, hē prepared to make a move. Hē wasn’t content to just get the light of a perished Quasi-Immortal.

But then hīs smile faltered, and an agonized shriek rang out from hīm. An instant later, hē burst into flames. It was fire that seemed immeasurably powerful. It was dao fire, and it was formed from the last bit of Grand Emperor Swordsage’s will and determination. And it was ignited by the rage in the blood of humankind.

“Even now, you still have a trick left, Swordsage? You used your death, your dao, and your will to ignite the fire of humankind.... How ruthless you are!”

The paper person howled in grief as hē began crumbling into ashes. Hē was no longer capable of carrying out hīs conspiracy. The only thing left to do was take what was left of the light of a perished Quasi-Immortal and use it to pierce through the air and flee. It was true that hē had acquired the Grand Emperor’s light. Of all the plotting gods, only hē had succeeded in that. But the dao fire of will and determination was a variable that hē didn’t account for.

The price to pay for that mistake... was immeasurably large. After all, the fire wasn’t just burning hīm. It was also following hīs karma toward his true form, which was in hiding. Hīs howl of agony echoed out far and wide.

The rage of humankind still burned. And humanity's grief continued to spread in heaven and earth.

The empress' godfire combined with the fire of humankind, which contained the rage of countless humans. Because of that, the empress' godly will thrummed with intense human nature. As it filled hēr mind, it surpassed hēr godly nature.

The dome of heaven transformed into an enormous sea of flames visible from everywhere in Revered Ancient.

On Planet Ancient Emperor, the past emperors all stood. An intense godly aura pulsed off all of thēm. Thēy had become gods. Going forward, thēy would be mindless, and thus guided by the destiny aura of humankind. Thēy were... zombie gods!

The will of humankind was thēir will. Thēy would follow the same path that the species followed.

Up in the air, the empress' aura surged with unprecedented momentum, becoming a will that could surpass many heavens, and radiated brightly in all directions.

The sky dimmed as if to acknowledge allegiance. The lands quaked as if to kowtow in worship. Humans in all territories felt the resonance. Citizens scattered in other regions could sense their blood stirring.

That was because the rage of humankind, and the peak level of human nature, had fully awakened in hēr. Shē was a human god!

Thanks to the magnificent ceremony, as well as the assistance of the god domain talisman, plus the blessing of Grand Emperor Swordsage and the rage of humankind, shē... surpassed the Flawless level. Shē was an Altar God!

Altar Gods were more scintillating than any heavenly body. Their momentum could shake the highest heavens, and their majesty made them revered by all living beings. Their eyes were so profound that they could devour any living thing. When their long hair flowed, every strand pulsed with the most shocking godly aura possible. Even just one such strand that landed on the ground would cause heaven and earth to quake.

The surrounding air seemed to fill with unusual pressure that weighed down on the chests of every living being. Cultivators and gods alike suddenly felt stifling pressure. All of them bowed their heads.

The only one who didn't was the Grand Emperor. As hē hovered there casting out boundless light, the fire didn't dissipate. Instead, it raged with more intensity, surrounding hēr with the fire of a god altar. It converged the rage of humankind, burning the dome of heaven, incinerating time, and raging in all directions. Then it turned into words that shook the cosmos.

“Master Righteous Veil, wherever space reaches and wherever time passes, the person to annihilate you in soul and body will be one of my people! That is my Altar God oath.”[1]

The words became a sealing mark that descended into Revered Ancient to join the natural and magical laws. All humans heard the words, and they were branded in their souls and blood, to be passed on from generation to generation.

Killing intent surged in Xu Qing’s eyes. At the same time, grief filled his heart as he slowly turned to look in the direction of Grand Emperor Swordsage’s statue.

In the light of the fire, the Grand Emperor statue still stood tall and majestic. It was as if a message were being sent to later generations, that he had used the last breath in his life to fulfill his desires, to fulfill his wishes, to help the empress succeed. And in the very last moment, he pulled in the flame of humankind. He had done everything he could. And he had no regrets.

Xu Qing lowered his head, clasped hands, and bowed very deeply to the statue. All human beings, filled with sadness, also bowed.

Grief filled the lands. Grand Emperor Swordsage had spent the first half of his life dominating the lands near and far. He followed Dark Serenity on the campaign trail, serving humankind. He had established the Swordsage Division, and had composed the swordsages’ creed.

*Sever vile destiny from the commoners, spread light through heaven and earth!*

*Bring about a golden age of peace; the sword means life. We protect all living beings!* [2]

The second half of his life was spent carrying out that creed. On this day, the very last scrap of his aura was extinguished. Sadly, though he wished to catch a glimpse of the final hope of humankind, he would never be able to do so....

Far off in the distance, a sun was rising over the horizon. The long night had passed. The sun had set the previous day, but now it was coming up again.

It was like the line of poetry which read, “*The setting sun illuminates the hearts of humankind; the setting sun shines upon all Revered Ancient.*” [3]

The sun set. The sun rose.

1. Master Righteous Veil was previously mentioned in [chapter 927](#). I originally rendered it as Master Deluo, but after consulting with the author, I settled on Righteous Veil. For more details about that, check chapter 927. ☞

2. The swordsmage mission statement was previously mentioned in chapter 370. ☞

3. This line of poetry was invented by the author. ☞

*Chapter 962: Empress Executes Gods (part 1)*

Sunset and sunrise are separated by the night. But they can still be considered to alternate between each other.

Xu Qing looked at the statue of the Grand Emperor, and then at the empress up in the air. Countless thoughts ran through his head, and he felt like enlightenment was brewing within him. There was a tug on his mind, and among the more than one hundred faint lineaments in his void soil, there were a handful that were clearly fluctuating.

At that moment, the sun was rising. Multicolored dawn light spilled out, driving away all of the darkness and gloom.

Ultimately, Xu Qing's gaze focused on the empress, and the dazzling light that surrounded her like a seven-colored garment. The light seemed to connect all living beings and make them part of Revered Ancient.

Five godly auras pulsed from the vortexes on Planet Ancient Emperor.

Eastglory. Mirrorcloud. Sageheaven. Dao Life. Dark War....

The five emperors were under the control of destiny aura. They wore imperial robes and crowns, and glittered with different types of godly authority as they floated up from the vortexes. They arrayed themselves behind the empress. Their majesty towered into the heavens.

Wild colors flashed, winds screamed, and the terrain in human lands trembled. All humans felt their blood surging. All of it converged into a will that rose high into the sky. It was as if notice was being given to everyone everywhere in Revered Ancient that... humans had gods now. And humankind was going to rise to prominence.

All human heavenly kings prostrated. The heavenly marquises joined them. So did all the government officials. The Five Greater Celestial Divisions. The Five Lesser Celestial Divisions. Cultivators. Commoners. Countless human sects. All of the human armed forces in the Imperial Region. All of them bowed to the empress and the emperors!

“Empress!”

The voices of countless humans drifted out. The dome of heaven shook and destiny aura swept back and forth everywhere. They were giving voice to the will of humankind.

As that voice spread out, and the light shone, forces throughout Revered Ancient were shaken. And that was true of the gods of many species.

Especially when... the empress looked up, sending Altar God pressure and energy into the world.

“Today, imperial blood was spilled. But not enough god blood flowed.”

As those two sentences were spoken, killing intent surged into the heavens. Frigid coldness upended the cosmos. Each word cracked like thunder and shook the canopy of heaven.

All of a sudden, the various gods that had come to interfere with the proceedings, whether thēy were hidden or not, were rattled deeply. Without any hesitation, thēy turned to flee.

Blazeflame from the Redland Nobleplexuses. Nightcorpse from the Netherworld Chasmcorpses. Tempest from the Northfate Kings. All three shivered. The fire was sent spinning off to the side, the corpses tumbled backward, and the tempest dissipated.

It was even more dramatic with the gods in hiding. Some of thēm still harbored malicious intentions, and weren't completely certain of the empress' battle prowess and godly authority. But as the peak state of humankind's will raged, thēy didn't dare to cause trouble.

Unfortunately for thēm, humankind was different than it had been in the past. Although Grand Emperor Swordsage had perished, there was now a new Grand Emperor. And that meant that these gods couldn't just come and go as thēy pleased.

It was just as the empress had said. Not enough god blood had flowed.

The empress lifted hēr hand. Altar God power surged. Shē reached out and closed hēr hand into a fist.

The dome of heaven sank down. It was almost as if heaven had become a curtain, and the empress had grabbed it and pulled it to the side. Infinite starlight poured down from beyond the heavens, gathering above human lands to form the hand of a god.

It could crush anything, even space and time!

Revered Ancient trembled. The dome of heaven crumbled. And the entities hidden in cracks in space and time unleashed intense fluctuations, tapping into godly authority and power. Thēy joined forces.

But joining forces wasn't enough for thēm to be able to stand up to the power of an Altar God. Screams of agony rang out as massive amounts of god blood rained down into the world of mortals.

There was one specific god that the empress' hand of starlight grabbed and pulled out into the open. The form of the god was a huge eye with three pupils that was completely golden. Xu Qing had never seen any god eye like this before. There were ancient symbols flickering within the eye, and it pulsed with an aura of intense heat. It was clearly a god that came from lands of burning fire. After it was dragged into the open by the hand of starlight, it struggled to break free. Frantic chanting rang out as it tried to manipulate the cosmos. It didn't qualify.

The hand of starlight closed, and a heaven-rending, earth-crushing sound rang out as the eye exploded. The god power was crushed. The god soul was extinguished. The god body was wiped out of existence.

*RUMBLE!*

A god had perished!

As the deafening sound rippled out, endless amounts of god blood poured down. It was purified and without mutagen, and thus, it became nutrients for humankind. It filled the imperial capital. The world trembled.

"That's not enough," the empress said calmly. Shē looked to the south, to where Blazeblade from the Redland Nobleplexuses was fleeing. "Your godly authority relates to fire. Why not take a look at my fire?"

The empress' godfire raged, causing the tilting canopy of heaven to become a world of flames that shot in the direction of hēr gaze. Where it went, heavenly fire burned.

Off in the distance, the empress' godfire surrounded Blazeblade. Hē struggled weakly, but that struggling was like the actions of a child. It was completely and utterly useless. Hīs godly authority was related to flame, but today... that authority was not hīs to command. God blood rained down on the lands to the south. A scream of immeasurable agony erupted from hīs mouth, echoing through the world. All who heard it were deeply shaken.

The empress' face was completely expressionless. Shē had only looked at Blazeblade for a brief moment. Now shē turned hēr gaze to the west. That was the direction in which Nightcorpse from the Netherworld Chasmcorpuses had fled.

"Your godly authority relates to corpses. You command life and death. In that case, let me show you how I command life and death."



The moment the words left hēr mouth, the western horizon distorted, revealing a once-invisible figure that had been fleeing into the night. It was as if a veil had been torn away. From a distance, it looked like a black spot in the light of day. Within that spot were countless corpses, clumped together into a sphere.

At the moment, all of the corpses had the same expression on their faces. They looked shocked. Then something very grisly happened. All of the corpse's faces blurred as they transformed into expressionless versions of the empress' face. Then they opened their mouths and spoke the same words the empress had just spoken.

The sound of their words combined, creating a godly voice that crushed the authority of life and death. That authority couldn't reverse anything now. An agonized shriek rang out from the depths of the corpses. God blood rained down in the west.

The empress' gaze shifted to the north.

“And then there's you. My lands don't need a north wind.”

The moment the words were spoken, a great wind rumbled on the northern horizon as a huge storm was revealed. Within that storm was Tempest, the god of the Northfate Kings, whose servant had already perished. Hē was now alone. In response to the empress' godly voice, hē turned with shining eyes.

“Empress, the Altar God level is not the current peak in Revered Ancient. You—”

“Pipe down!” the empress replied coolly.

Though shē spoke in a cool tone, hēr voice was unyielding. The moment hēr words echoed out, the storm surrounding Tempest shattered. It was not permitted in the lands of humankind. No wind from the north could exist.

As the north wind collapsed and Tempest was destroyed, endless amounts of god blood rained down on the human lands in the north. A cry of anguish echoed in all directions.

The empress was so mighty that with only a few words, shē took the lives of three Flawless Gods, leaving all onlookers shaken in body and soul. This was the power of an Altar God.

However, the Northfate Kings were ranked second among the top species of Revered Ancient, and no one knew exactly how many gods they worshiped. But there was at least one Altar God.

Therefore, the sound of wind rose up again.

“When Sunfire, Starfire, and Moonfire rose to a higher level, I, Northfate, was given leave to depart. As for you... this matter is concluded!”

It was another north wind, but this was different from Tempest. This time, it was a frigid wind, something that could freeze time and seal gods. Hē had come before, only to have hīs arm severed by Grand Emperor Swordsage. Now hē was back. And hē was also an Altar God.

From a distance, it was possible to see a snowy storm that formed a huge arm that reached out and grabbed Tempest. [freewebnovel.com](http://freewebnovel.com)

Simultaneously, a snowy storm sprang into being above the empress' head. It was so large it spread to cover the entire imperial capital, then the Imperial Region. It... was going to freeze the entire nation, and seal all humankind within the storm.

Then the zombie emperors surged with godly might as they extended protection in all directions.

The empress stepped forward and rose above the snowstorm. "You're the one I've been waiting for!"

#### *Chapter 962: Empress Executes Gods (part 2)*

The empress' eyes shone with ferocity. It was a given that shē knew how strong the Northfate Kings were, and that provoking them would have repercussions. But humankind had an Altar God now, and that meant it wasn't appropriate to *conceal one's strength and bide one's time*. Patiently hiding would only result in many other groups probing humankind to see how strong they were. And of course, the Northfate Kings wouldn't cast aside their malicious intentions because of that.

Years ago, Grand Emperor Swordsage had relied on his shocking battle prowess to cow everyone. That was what made it possible for him to keep humankind safe. Even when he was only a clone, he still managed to keep most of the gods away.

Right now, strength was the best protection!

Shē wanted to tell the Northfate Kings that humankind was like a protruding nail. Northfate might be strong, but striking that nail would still come with a price. Shē also wanted to reveal how valuable of an ally shē could be. Shē wanted everyone to know that shē wasn't just an Altar God. She was a very strong Altar God!

Therefore, as shē spoke the words and then stepped out, shē closed her eyes. The sky above all regions in Revered Ancient vibrated.

There were many suns in Revered Ancient, and it was the same with moons. As a result, at any given time, it could be daytime or nighttime in different locations. It just depended on the region.

When the empress took that step, all areas with sunlight in Revered Ancient were affected. If the broken face opened hīs eyes at that moment, hē would see a patchwork of white and black. And just like a lamp being put out, all of the areas in which daytime existed... suddenly went dark.

Every single region in Revered Ancient slipped into nighttime. A god had blown out a lamp, causing all light to temporarily leave Revered Ancient. That included the territory of humankind. What was once day had now become night.

Except... in the sky above the imperial capital, the empress hovered, hēr eyes closed, and shē was now the only source of light in all of Revered Ancient. This was the godly authority of the empress: to remove the concept of light, and collect it in hēself, to become the only light in the world.

In fact, it was like a Dawning Sun. When that authority was unleashed, Revered Ancient would enter a long night.

The empress opened hēr eyes. Infinite light spread from hēr eyes. It was the source of all light in Revered Ancient, like the concept of light for all regions. It was like the dawn breaking the night. Where that light went, heaven and earth became bright. The snowstorm melted. The god Northfate became nothing. That didn't involve perishing. But it was a grievous wound, similar to the injury suffered by Yu Liuchen years ago. The only thing left behind was a voice that thrummed with fear.

“I can't believe your godly authority... is that of light....”

The voice faded away. In the end, that godly authority made it impossible for hīm to save the god Tempest.

Tempest's god blood fell like rain into the world of mortals. That god no longer existed. The world went back to normal. The regions which had lost their concept of light returned to their original state. The sky above human lands was once again filled with the light of day. Two statues of gods descended from the sky, landing in the south and the west.

One was Blazeblade. The other was Nightcorpse.

The empress didn't wipe thēm out of existence, but instead sealed thēm in the lands of humankind. Enough god blood had been spilled. The godly ascension ceremony was now concluded. All parties present were completely silent.

Sunfire, Moonfire, and Starfire looked at the empress for a moment before slowly leaving. The deal was concluded. Thēy had no reason to stay. freewebnovel.com

Everything everywhere was quiet.

Humankind as a whole should have been excited. But just as the tide ebbs and flows, after the surge of the species' will, humans now felt sorrow because of the departure of the Grand Emperor.

Xu Qing sighed softly as he looked around. Perhaps even heaven and earth were affected. Xu Qing felt like he could just barely hear the heaven of Revered Ancient singing a dirge.

A cold wind blew over human lands... and it contained a sobbing sound, a coldness that could pierce down to the bones. It grew more intense until fluctuations filled the sky. An endless wind filled the sky, and it seemed full of the howl of ghosts and ghouls. It was endlessly ravenous, as if it came directly from the netherworld.

In the imperial capital, in a certain courtyard, the current palace lord of the Summer Immortal Palace looked up at the heavenly wind. "An inauspicious omen," she said in a hoarse voice that sounded almost like a sigh. "A wind from the Nine Serenities...."

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Someone had opened the netherworld. The wind from the Nine Serenities blew stronger and stronger across Revered Ancient.

The wind hastened across the imperial capital of humankind. It passed the multiple regions belonging to the Firemoons. It swept across empty wastelands. And eventually it gathered... in the Heaveneater Region. In the Heaveneaters' imperial capital there was a mirror image of the godly ascension ceremony carried out by the empress. There, the wind from the Nine Serenities turned into a massive vortex.

In all directions, reflected images of the godly ascension ceremony shimmered. In this location, five past Heaveneater emperors raged with godfire. However, they were not in the process of godly ascension. Instead, their fleshly bodies were burning.

And that made the wind grow stronger! It turned into a Nine Serenities vortex, rumbling loudly as it spread out to cover the imperial capital, everything around it, and eventually the entire Heaveneater Region. The wind didn't whimper. Instead, it cheered and chanted in anticipation.

"Return!"

In the vicinity of the ceremony were innumerable Torchlight agents, and countless cultivators in black robes. All looked up and shouted the same thing.

"Return!"

The sound grew louder and more majestic, affecting all heaven and earth, kicking up huge winds. Then, the Nine Serenities vortex rumbled up toward the dome of heaven.

Taking it in as a whole, the Heaveneater Region was awash with rivers of blood and full of mountains of flesh. There were too many corpses to count, and they were arrayed as if for a feast. It was horrendous and appalling. It almost seemed as if the Heaveneater's imperial capital... was the location of a ceremony of an even larger scale than that in human lands! This was definitely a ceremony that could shake heaven and shatter the earth!

And that was exactly what the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was aiming for. He wanted... to restore the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan! He wanted to take his old kingdom and bring it back from ancient times and into the modern era. He wanted his personal nation to once again be a part of Revered Ancient! He wanted to restore his country!

Years ago, Bai Xiaozhuo had been working toward the same dream. Sadly for him, he had failed.

As for the crown prince, he desired to bring back the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan in full. It was a task of monumental difficulty! And thus, he needed a massive ceremony!

He had to... organize, actuate, and participate in an unprecedented ceremony of godly ascension. He needed to take a portion of time and prepare it as a sacrifice to offer to Living God Eminent Desolation. And in selecting a location in which to restore his kingdom, he needed to perfectly duplicate the ceremony, in something akin to substituting one life for another.

Have someone else suffer the tribulation, with the result of both parties succeeding! The more majestic, radiant, and unprecedented the ceremony, the more likely he would succeed in restoring his kingdom. Therefore, he chose... the godly ascension ceremony of the human empress!

Humankind originally didn't want their emperor to become a god. So in that sense, the ceremony was unprecedented.

For an Imperial Sovereign to cast aside the path of the cultivator to become a god was something that had never happened in all the countless years that had passed. And thus, it was monumentally difficult.

As of now, the empress had succeeded. Therefore, he would succeed. He didn't actually need to personally be there. Everything was playing perfectly according to his plan.

The broken face was delighted. Deafening rumbling sounds filled the dome of heaven over the lands of the Heaveneaters. Cracking sounds rang out as the vortex overhead spread, and the door to the netherworld was cracked open.

“Return!”

“Return!!”

Countless Torchlight agents, black-robed cultivators, and experimental god bodies howled the same thing. Their voices called out to the souls of the deceased. With a nation-wide ceremony backing it, that sound stretched into the netherworld.

It dragged the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan to the forefront of the netherworld, from a section in time before it had been destroyed, and was complete. Then it descended into the Heaveneater Region.

The intense sound shattered the sky and crushed the land. An illusory kingdom appeared from within the netherworld. It came out of the shattered cosmos down into Revered Ancient.

This was the very same Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan that, years ago, had shaken all species in Revered Ancient. Shrieks and howls full of defiance and madness echoed out from the illusory kingdom. Countless souls of the deceased cried out from the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan that had long since been buried in time.

They included citizens, soldiers, and government officials.... There seemed no end to the sea of souls that swept out over the Heaveneater Region. They swept toward the rivers of blood and mountains of flesh and began to devour all of it. It was all nutrients for them. All of the flesh and blood of an entire region had been prepared for the people of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan to use as new bodies.

One after another, new bodies formed, and new auras erupted out. Eyes opened, and they were full of piety. As for their hearts, they were full of hatred toward heaven, earth, and all species!

They had returned!

The Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan had been restored!

A magnificent imperial capital descended upon the Heaveneater imperial capital, replacing it. It was now an enormous, violet city. Similar cities appeared in other locations in the Heaveneater Region. In total, there were 99 of them.

Inside the imperial capital, there was an imperial palace of violet and cyan. There, flesh and blood bodies appeared, and they all looked into the depths of the palace, where the imperial throne was. They kowtowed.

It wasn't just them. As of that moment, all of the awakened citizens of Violet and Cyan turned in the same direction and fervently kowtowed. They were waiting. Waiting for

their unparalleled crown prince to return and sit on the imperial throne. When he did, he would ascend the throne and become... the Emperor of Violet and Cyan!

Years ago, when the crown prince fought his last battle, he made a promise to the entire Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan.

*“When I return, I will ascend the throne as emperor!”*

As of this moment, the emperor for whom they awaited, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, who had already achieved most of his larger goal, was walking toward the imperial capital of humankind. Every step he took caused the ground to moan and the sky to ripple. His expression was warm, and he was even smiling.

“I’ve come to get that doll, lil’ bro.”

*Chapter 963: Zi Qing and Xu Qing (part 1)*

In the imperial capital in Ningyan’s mansion, there was a courtyard set aside specially for Plumdark.

Plumdark was struggling. She sat cross-legged in the middle of a host of complicated sealing marks that floated around her. They formed a sealing barrier that bound her in place. The sealing marks were made of soul threads that had erupted the moment the ancestral sacrifices began, thus preventing Plumdark from leaving.

Not very far away in another residence, Erniu sat cross-legged, also struggling. In fact, blue veins bulged out on his forehead, and his eyes were bloodshot. He was surrounded by similar sealing marks. However, these weren’t soul threads. Instead, they had been set up by Master Seventh.

“Old man!” he roared, struggling with all his might. “You damn geezer! I can’t believe you plotted against me like this! You sealed me here? Fool! I refuse to be your apprentice!!”

Outside, the Nine Serenities wind blew through the imperial capital.

The sky seemed murky above. The door of the netherworld was opening, and it couldn’t be hidden. As it was revealed to Revered Ancient, everyone who had been paying attention to the empress’ godly ascension ceremony noticed it. After all, this involved an ancient kingdom being restored. And the ceremony itself was extremely gruish.

However... it was different from when the empress became a god. No species, and no god, attempted to stop what happened in the Heaveneater Region. They ignored it. It was almost as if it were some sort of taboo. The reason was that it was a sacrifice to a Living God, and Eminent Desolation was pleased.

In the imperial capital of humankind, the empress looked up, and a complicated expression flashed across hēr face briefly. An instant later, shē was calm. The deal shē had made with that certain person was now concluded. Both parties had achieved the desired result.

In the future, the interests of the species would be the most important.

Humankind had broken ties with the holy lands. The Grand Emperor had perished. Going forward, humans in Revered Ancient would not have the same stability as before. Whether or not humankind would rise to prominence would depend solely on the actions of the empress. Just as shē had said before. Shē would shoulder the responsibility of all karma!

Calm at heart, the empress looked out at humankind. The excitement of the commoners in the imperial capital was palpable, and the government officials were clearly feeling similarly. The imperial children looked nervous.

The empress finally looked at Xu Qing. *That person's younger brother in this life is the one the Grand Emperor chose to bear his sword....*

Hēr gaze took in Xu Qing, who stood on the War Drum of Humankind, his face bereft of any injuries or wounds.

Xu Qing sensed her gaze. He bowed.

The empress nodded hēr head slightly, then looked at the rising sun and spoke in a voice that echoed through heaven and earth.

“A decree is hereby issued in the east of Revered Ancient, to all regions.

“The sun is rising. Let all of my people in all of the regions prepare for resettlement. No humans in any outside region are to be killed.

“King Firecrusher. King Northriver. King Cloudtide.... You will lead seventeen heavenly kings and seventeen commanders-in-chief to the regions controlled by nonhumans in the east of Revered Ancient. Find all of my people... and bring them home.”

Hearts swelled in response to the words.

From the time of Eastglory and on, there were too many scattered citizens in foreign lands to count. It wasn't that other emperors hadn't desired to gather them together. They just lacked the power. But on this day, the empress issued a decree as an Altar God. In the east of Revered Ancient, hēr voice was like a natural law.

King Firecrusher and the other heavenly kings instantly flew into action. Bowing to the empress, they voiced their assent.



Continuing, shē said, “All other government ministers, imperial princes, and other related personnel: in seven days in the grand hall of the imperial palace, a new imperial name will be selected, and a new dynasty will be announced!”

In response to the empress’ words, the officials all bowed.

“The ancestral sacrifices are hereby concluded. Everyone is dismissed. Eleventh, you come with me.”

Planet Ancient Emperor sank back down into its original position. The canopy of heaven went back to normal. The destiny aura of humankind was no longer active. The cultivators on the planet were teleported away and appeared in the air outside. The grand ceremony was officially over.

The officials could see that the empress wanted to talk to hēr son, and didn’t wish to be disturbed. After bowing, they took their leave, their minds full of thoughts about the ancestral sacrifices.

Eleventh Prince’s heart raced with nervousness. He felt like a child who had misbehaved as he walked over to the empress, his head hanging. When he reached hēr, he opened his mouth to speak, except he wasn’t sure what to say.

However, the empress wasn’t even looking at Eleventh Prince. Shē looked into the sky. There, the War Drum of Humankind had disappeared, and now that the officials were all gone, Xu Qing was visible.

“King Skycrusher,” the empress said calmly.

As Xu Qing floated in the air, he bowed to the empress. “I’m waiting for someone, Your Majesty. He should arrive soon.” freewebnovel.com

The empress looked at him deeply for a long moment. Without saying another thing, shē turned and went back in the direction of the imperial palace. Eleventh Prince took a deep breath and nervously followed hēr.

Heaven and earth were silent. Compared to the dramatic events of earlier, this silence seemed deathly and stifling. Within that pressure, Xu Qing hovered alone in the air. No one appeared anywhere nearby. He just patiently looked at the horizon.

Truth be told, he was being very patient. He had been waiting a long time for this day. And he was confident that the person he was waiting for would come. That was his premonition. To be precise, the year he arrived in the imperial capital and first caught sight of the person acting as the imperial preceptor, he knew that this day wasn’t far off.

Time passed.

The sun continued to rise until it sent light and heat out over the lands. Eventually... it was noon. Intense sunlight wiped all darkness away from the lands and cleansed everything. It was so bright that it almost seemed impossible to look at the sky.

Xu Qing had seen many days like this. There was one in particular that was branded into his soul. It was something he would never forget for his entire life.

It was the last noon he experienced in Peerless City. The sunlight that day had been very bright and strong, until a figure appeared. And then blood started to rain down in Peerless City....

On this day, that same figure appeared to Xu Qing at noon in the sun. The color violet invaded the light, cutting off the heat and descending from above. Step by step, he entered the world of mortals. Ultimately, he superseded the light in heaven. He replaced the sky. He became the only thing Xu Qing saw, filling his field of vision.

It was Zi Qing, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan![1]

He had beautiful facial features, a warm smile, peaceful eyes, and a soft gait.

Hovering in midair, he looked in the direction of the imperial palace and said, "Congratulations, Your Majesty. You successfully became an Altar God."

A calm voice responded from the imperial palace. "You should be in your own region, not here with my people."

Hearing that, Zi Qing smiled faintly and nodded. "You're correct, Empress. As soon as I get the doll, I'll leave."

With that, Zi Qing turned to look at Xu Qing. His gaze was as gentle as ever, just like back in Peerless City. "Have you been waiting for me this whole time, lil' bro?"

Xu Qing nodded, his expression unchanging.

"It seems you've really grown up. In that case, let's go. I'm going to take you home." Zi Qing smiled and reached out with his right hand gently to grab Xu Qing. His act of reaching out caused the dome of heaven to spin. The lands trembled. A terrifying force descended on the world, cutting off time and severing the surroundings from the fate of Revered Ancient.

Everything around Xu Qing became an instance of space-time separate from Revered Ancient. It was something that couldn't be prevented or avoided. That hand... was like fate itself.

In fact, it was hard to say if it was a misconception or not, but within the palm prints on the hand, Xu Qing saw Peerless City, the blood rain, and himself, clutching a doll and crying.

But then a cold snort echoed out from the imperial palace. There were also five godly auras that erupted from the destiny aura of humankind. They locked onto Zi Qing. In an instant, the spinning of the world ceased, and the rumbling went away.

Zi Qing's hand stopped in place and he looked at the imperial palace. "Your Majesty, this is a family matter between me and my lil' bro."

"Xu Qing is one of my officials," the empress replied in a calm but firm tone. "He's King Skycrusher of humankind, and is the tutor of the imperial princes."

"Oh?" It sounded as though Zi Qing had just heard something very amusing. His smile widened, and something scintillating appeared in his gaze in addition to the warmth. It was something extremely ancient. His voice changed in a similar way. "From the look of it, my lil' bro doesn't want you interfering, Your Majesty. But since Your Majesty already spoke up, I suppose... we should play a little game of choice. What do you say?"

Zi Qing flipped his left hand over to reveal a violet wooden box.

1. In case you missed it, I have a footnote in [chapter 938](#) explaining Zi Qing's name. 📖

*Chapter 963: Zi Qing and Xu Qing (part 2)*

Zi Qing opened the box with a single finger, and... a beam of light shot out from inside! It had no specific color or shape, and in fact, it couldn't be seen. It could only be felt. But as soon as it appeared, ripples flowed out in the dome of heaven. An intense rumbling sound echoed out. The sun and moon went dark!

Everyone in the imperial capital, from mortals, to cultivators, to the government officials, all reacted with shock.

That was because, that beam of light... Was the same light that came when the eyes of the broken god face opened!

The first time it appeared was years ago in Seven Blood Eyes, when Zi Qing's servant Night Dove opened a similar box. Later, Xu Qing saw it come out of an experimental god body.[1]

However, the light that came from the box held by the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was vastly more intense than what appeared in Seven Blood Eyes. No matter what almighty cultivation base someone had, even if they had divine abilities and daoist magics that could transform heaven and earth, none of them... could prevent themselves from trembling. Even gods were affected.

It came down to a pressure by a greater level of life, and it hung over the heads of the countless species on Revered Ancient, like a death sentence. Levels determined everything.

When the wooden box opened, a gaze emerged that was formless and shapeless. It couldn't be perceived with the naked eye. As a result, the clouds seethed as if they were an angry sea. The entire imperial capital blurred, such that nothing was clearly visible.

It seemed to be accompanied by a chanting that could shake the soul, which filled heaven and earth, destabilizing all. Everything in heaven and earth blurred and distorted.

However, the imperial capital wasn't Seven Blood Eyes, and the empress was a powerful Altar God. Therefore, the imperial capital's grand spell formation activated. The destiny aura of humankind rose into the air, bringing with it the five past emperors who were now gods. A heaven-shaking, earth-shattering aura emerged from the imperial palace, becoming a gigantic vortex that sucked away all the light in the area.

However... if Zi Qing said he wanted to play a game with the empress, there was no way he would come unprepared.

The next instant, another gaze erupted within the Imperial Region, in a mysterious location that was guarded year-round by a massive military force. It was a location where an ongoing mission was carried out by humans throughout history. For tens of thousands of years, no matter what happened, that location never interfered.

Other than the massive military force in that location, there was also a very unique sect. It was one of the top ten great sects of humankind, yet no disciple from that sect ever appeared publicly. They were on guard duty all the time! That sect carried out its mission in a deep abyss, and it was called the Hidden Earth Society![2]

Their mission was to guard the gate in that abyss. They didn't even need to follow imperial orders.

That abyss led to Crimson Mother's home, which was also the home of Li Zihua. It was... the true Revered Ancient mainland! It was the battlefield where the Summer Immortals from Deep Earth had fought the Godfolk from Brilliant Heaven.

The Summer Immortals won that fight, and then sealed the Godfolk from Brilliant Heaven along with their god emperor there. In addition, they took what had once been the heaven of Revered Ancient and turned it into the earth.

That was what led to the later version of the Revered Ancient mainland.

Beneath Revered Ancient, and above Deep Earth, was the location where the Brilliant Heaven Godfolk were sealed. From then on, the heavenly daos considered that location an abyss.

There were nine doors leading into the abyss, and humankind guarded one of them!

Light erupted from one of the abyssal doors, becoming a terrifying might that answered the call of the light in the imperial capital. Intense rumbling sounds filled the air as nine cracks appeared on the door to the abyss.

Deafening chanting then filled the Imperial Region, accompanied by howls of defiance. They wanted to come back. They were the true rulers of the Revered Ancient mainland. They were the Brilliant Heaven Godfolk!

Intense fluctuations spread through the Imperial Region, bringing boundless mutagen from the cracks in the abyssal door. It came from underground. From under the sand, the rivers and the mountains. It came out of cities. From out of tiles, bricks, food, and inanimate objects! It came out of every living thing as well, creating a dark mist.

The mist merged with the cloud cover overhead, changing its color. In the blink of an eye, it turned a ghastly crimson color. Red lightning crackled back and forth, and blood began to rain down. Something unimaginably terrifying, and something unstoppable, was forming thanks to these two beams of light.

If it wasn't stopped quickly, and if the abyssal door opened, then humankind and any neighboring regions would descend into pure catastrophe. In an instant, humankind's destiny aura was thrown into chaos. Heaven and earth trembled as thunder boomed.

Zi Qing hovered in the air, a warm smile on his face. "Your Majesty, you and those five imperial zombie gods have about an incense stick's worth of time to suppress the abyss. I doubt you'll have trouble sealing the cracks. As for me, I'll take advantage of the time you need to deal with the abyss to take my lil' bro away.

"And therefore, ma'am, let the game begin. What is your choice, Your Majesty? Do you choose one person? Or do you choose your people?"

Zi Qing looked at the imperial palace.

The vortex above the imperial palace rumbled as the empress' eyes appeared. Three breaths of time passed. Then the five zombie gods surrounding Zi Qing shot in the direction of the abyss. The vortex above the imperial palace vanished. The empress also went in the direction of the abyss. Shē chose the people.

As a result, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was stirred emotionally for the first time in this life. He laughed. Yet as he laughed, a gleam of reminiscence appeared in

his eyes. He was thinking of a time in the past when a person in a similar circumstance also chose the people. He looked at Xu Qing.

During this entire time, Xu Qing's expression hadn't changed at all. He just watched calmly.

"The empress abandoned you, lil' bro," Zi Qing said. "In fact, it seems everyone you care about has abandoned you. None of them want to choose you. Therefore, why not come home with me?"

Zi Qing once again reached out with his hand of fate, and this time there was nothing stopping him from grabbing Xu Qing.

The Emperor's Sword within Xu Qing thrummed, but he didn't respond to it. He just looked at Zi Qing and calmly said, "My big brother. The Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. All these years, there's been a question I've always wanted to ask you. And that is... what are you afraid of?"

When Zi Qing heard Xu Qing's words, his smile didn't falter, and he opened his mouth to say something.

But then a sound rang out that shook the dome of heaven. It was a howl that seemed to contain infinite determination and madness sufficient to topple the cosmos. And it came from a certain residence in the imperial capital.

"I'm gonna eat you, fool!"

The sealing marks surrounding Erniu shattered by a mad burst of power that erupted from him. However, he still couldn't fly up into the air.

The sky suddenly turned blue. Endless ice sealed the heavens and froze the lands. Within that blue sky appeared a host of blue arms, as well as a blue vortex. As it rumbled, auras of reincarnation and death appeared, along with the sound of sealing marks shattering.

There were also the sounds of someone panting for breath. It was as if some terrifying entity were inside of the vortex, struggling to crawl out!

Simultaneously, blue snowflakes started floating down. Astonishingly, the blue snowflakes turned into blue worms that filled the world.

"Who said Ah Qing has been abandoned? I never abandoned him, fool!"

As the shout echoed out of the imperial capital, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan looked over.

For the first time since Xu Qing decided to wait for Zi Qing, his expression changed. Looking over at the blue vortex, he could sense the madness pulsing in his Eldest Brother, and could feel the seals being undone.

“Calm down, Eldest Brother!”

Things seemed to calm for a brief moment, and then another shout rang out. “Calm? Calm?? Now’s the time to go all out!”

The vortex erupted with an even more shocking sound, something that could shake heaven and earth. It sounded as if the act of opening those seals was unimaginably difficult. As a result, the deafening sounds from inside the vortex diminished. Ultimately, there was a shuddering bang, followed by a howl of defiance. The vortex faded away. The snowflakes disappeared. The blue color faded from the sky.

Shortly after, the maddened aura again rose up within the residence in the capital. It tried to explode out again. But then came some booms, and another failure.

It happened over and over again. The maddened sounds grew more intense.

“Seems your Eldest Brother is putting on a bit of a show,” Zi Qing said with a smile. By this point, his hand of fate had latched on to Xu Qing and pulled him close. “That’s fine. I’m not going to hurt him today. That said, I’m very curious about the question you just asked. But what makes me even more curious is that you were waiting for me. So... what were you planning to do?”

Xu Qing remained as calm as ever. “Based on your actions earlier, my previous determination was confirmed.”

Zi Qing looked with warm anticipation at Xu Qing, as he was clearly very interested to hear what was going to come next.

“Back in Sea-Sealing County,” Xu Qing continued quietly, “I kept wondering about the same thing. I wondered what I would have to do to kill you. I didn’t know your true level of battle prowess, nor what you were capable of. I thought a lot about the situation, and the only thing I could think to do was get stronger.

“Yet I never gave up trying to think of a better solution. It was in the Moonrite Region that I realized there was a possibility.” Xu Qing looked at Zi Qing. “It was in Firemoon territory that I perfected my idea. Then, last night, I saw you in action, and I saw you unleash your time powers to sever Shopkeeper Zhao’s time, as well as your own. I also saw you use his providence like a nourishing tonic. That was when I made my mind up.”

Xu Qing’s voice seemed somewhat hoarse, like sand grating against time and drifting into memory. “Why did I experience a sense of completeness when striking the drum? Back in Moonrite Region, why did I see images from Peerless City that don’t exist in my

memories? Why do I have memories of a kind version of you all those years ago? But at the same time, memories of a cruel version?

“In that second version, my body is ripped apart much like that tattered doll you gave me. And why did that second memory not exist in me before?”

Xu Qing looked directly at Zi Qing. “Who took those brutal memories away? Who replaced them with memories of good times? If it was the same person, then why would the person who ripped me apart then put me back together? That kind of behavior is quite a paradox.”

During the entire time Xu Qing spoke, Zi Qing didn’t interrupt. But at this point, he spoke in a warm, kind voice. “Is it possible that the person saw you ripped apart, and then felt bad? Therefore, he put his lil’ bro back together, and then gave you some warm memories instead?”

As they hovered in the air, Zi Qing and Xu Qing looked at each other. The wind blew, stirring their hair. The patchwork doll at the door of the greater spirit mansion also stirred in the wind.

1. Night Dove opened the box in [chapter 313](#). Much of the wording above is the same as that chapter. A box and light also showed up in [chapter 463](#) when Xu Qing fought Master Shengyun’s father, Chu Tianqun. ☞

2. The Hidden Earth Society was mentioned previously in [chapter 749](#). ☞

#### *Chapter 964: Beyond Time*

Zi Qing, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, spoke in a soft tone. He wore a violet robe and had long, violet hair that swayed gently behind him. His pale, violet eyes were focused on Xu Qing, who was bound tightly in his hand of fate. His facial expression was tender and caring. He looked exactly like the perfect older brother that Xu Qing remembered from Peerless City.

“Isn’t it possible that’s what really happened?” he said softly. His voice seemed to merge with the wind and dissipated into the ancient past. It was almost like it was supposed to be buried in time, back in Peerless City. “I mean no harm, lil’ bro. This hand of fate is a gift from me to you. It’s formed from the last bit of destiny aura from the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan.”

As the words left the crown prince’s mouth, the huge hand of fate rumbled and turned into a violet dragon that pulsed with destiny aura.

“And the reason I came here today is to take you home. I already pulled the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan out of the netherworld. It’s settled in place in the Heaveneater Region, along with countless citizens and government officials. They’re



waiting for me. Once I'm back, I'll ascend the imperial throne and become the Emperor of Violet and Cyan.

"You, as my younger brother in this life, are bound deeply to me by karma. That's why I want to take you back with me. The moment I become the Emperor of Violet and Cyan, then you can inherit Revered Ancient's ancient title of Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. That title was once the ultimate expression of glory, and I'm prepared to pass it on to you.

"Once you take it, I can command the destiny aura of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, blessing you with it so that you can ignite your godfire. You can then surpass your current cultivation base and become a god. Can you accept that, lil' bro?"

Zi Qing's voice filled heaven and earth like thunder, shaking the surroundings. His words pulsed with a sensation of fate, confirming that what he was saying was true, and corroborating the determination in his heart. Everything he had just said was true and real. Heaven and earth had borne witness to that.

In fact, as Zi Qing spoke, he reached up and touched his forehead as if to extract something, although nothing appeared. However, when he extracted that invisible thing, he suddenly seemed to have lost something very important. It was his title. His name. He had extracted the name of Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan and added it into his words. Now he waited to hear Xu Qing's decision.

At the moment, Xu Qing had a violet dragon of destiny aura coiled around him, roaring with heaven-shaking, earth-shattering might. All he had to do was nod his head, and it would merge into him. With its help, he could ignite godfire and become a god.

The cultivators who could see what was happening were reeling.

Down in the residence, Erniu looked stunned. Then he gritted his teeth and shouted, "You can't trust him, Ah Qing. He's lying!"

Xu Qing looked at Zi Qing in front of him. The crown prince looked back at him with a tender expression. They were the only two people in the air above the imperial palace. The surroundings rippled and distorted. [freewebnvel.com](http://freewebnvel.com)

The rumbling from the abyssal gate was still audible, and the two beams of light were still sending out powerful mutagen everywhere. However, the rumbling wasn't getting any louder. In fact, it was starting to diminish. Clearly, the empress and the five zombie gods were succeeding.

The incense stick's worth of time was almost up.

Yet the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan didn't seem anxious at all, either in his expression or his tone of voice. It was as if this decision of Xu Qing's was the most

important thing in the world to him. Within time, he had seen countless images, most of which concluded with Xu Qing accepting the name and becoming the new Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. In a few of them, Xu Qing refused, but those were in the minority.

The conclusion was foreordained, and that was him offering the gift and Xu Qing accepting it. Zi Qing's gaze was soft as he looked at Xu Qing.

Xu Qing said nothing for a long moment. Truth be told, Zi Qing's offer had caught him by surprise. As he looked him in the eyes, his mind filled with memories of childhood. After that long moment passed, Xu Qing didn't state his choice.

"I don't believe you," he said grimly. "In fact, I have a little speculation that I'd like to confirm. Back during that brutal section of time in which I was ripped to shreds, isn't it true that, afterward, something very, very unusual happened?"

"If my speculation is correct, then whatever happened after I was ripped apart, it led to you cutting that section of time away so that it wasn't visible to the world. Then you replaced that bit of time with some nice memories. That way, I wouldn't realize what happened. Afterward, I believed those nice memories to be true."

This was an alternate explanation of what happened. And as the words entered Zi Qing's ears, his kind and gentle expression faded away.

Xu Qing looked at his older brother and continued, "I'm thinking that you had a very specific reason for giving me that patchwork doll. And as my speculations grew more clear, I realized that, in all likelihood, that doll is actually a key."

Normally speaking, Xu Qing didn't talk this much. But today was unique, and so was the person he was talking to. "It's a key to open fate. Just like the providence you ripped away from Shopkeeper Zhao." Xu Qing took a deep breath and looked at the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, who no longer looked kind and gentle, and who was now pulsing with a very unusual aura. "Isn't it true that, back when I was ripped to shreds, you saw something? Or maybe you needed something. Or maybe you feared something. And therefore, you had no choice but to cut away the truth and replace it with something nice. It was like a sealing, wasn't it?"

"And today you saw an opportunity, which is why you're here. When you offered to let me become the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, it just further confirmed my speculation. If I agreed, then going forward, would the soul inside of me be my own? Or would it be yours?"

"I'm honestly not sure what your true objective is. But it seems like you're using that name as a gruish possession technique. And that has led me to a realization. My soul has something you want, but can't get. So this is your only option. Am I right, big brother?"

Zi Qing's pupils constricted.

Wind blew through heaven and earth, stirring both of their hair. As the scintillating sunlight shone down and cast mottled shadows, Xu Qing began to pulse with unstable and terrifying fluctuations. They were destructive fluctuations that influenced fate, causing bright colors to flash in heaven and earth, and stimulating the wind. It was an aura of self-detonation.

Xu Qing was unhesitatingly doing something completely and utterly shocking to everyone. He was choosing to self-detonate, thus ripping himself to shreds like what happened all those years ago. That was his answer to the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan. He wanted to know what was inside his soul.

*Years ago, Master Shengyun's father Chu Tianqun used a god magic on me. He wanted to erase all the karma in my soul. But in the end, he screamed in shock.... What did he see...?[1]*

Although Xu Qing didn't know what Zi Qing's ultimate objective was, given everything that had played out, it seemed obvious that past karma was an element. That said, this information didn't change his existing plan.

There was no way that, after laying eyes on Zi Qing in the imperial capital, he would hold back from crafting a plan. That wasn't his personality. Back when he first realized the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was in the capital, he had secretly communicated with Master Seventh, and the two of them had hatched a plan.

And the key to the plan was to surpass Zi Qing's level of control over time. The idea was to do something that Zi Qing wouldn't have any way of seeing within time. Self-detonation was the only thing Xu Qing could think of that would fit the bill. Master Seventh had approved.

Zi Qing's face fell. Up to this point, his expression had been warm and gentle. But now, he was visibly taken aback. Not only had his pupils constricted, but also, his heart was pounding. This decision of Xu Qing's was not something he had predicted could happen. This was not something he had seen within time.

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A great distance away from the imperial capital of humankind, across the Forbidden Sea, was the continent of South Phoenix. The lord of that continent, Flame Phoenix, currently glided through the air, his sky-obscuring, sun-blocking wings stretched wide. Wherever he passed, the clouds churned and intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth. Cyclones sprung up beneath him to ravage the lands.

The area over which he circled was a ruined city overgrown with vegetation. It was the location where the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan had died years in the past. That location later came to be called Peerless City.

At the moment, there were hundreds of thousands of cultivators seated cross-legged there, forming a shocking spell formation. The formation covered a vast area, and was made of cultivators in Foundation Establishment, Nascent Soul, and Spirit Trove. There were also some Void Returning experts present. If Erniu were there, he would recognize most of them at a glance. The majority were disciples from Seven Blood Eyes, although there were also people from the Violet Lands. Actually, there were representatives from all of the major organizations in South Phoenix.

The inner ring of the formation was made of a terrifying collection of flesh that caused heaven and earth to shake, and created ripples and distortions in the area. That flesh was clearly extraordinary.

In the very middle of the formation was a 30,000-meter-tall giant made of mercury. The giant lay prone, and its face was an exact replica of Xu Qing's face. Located on the forehead of the giant was a drop of Xu Qing's blood.

Hovering in midair above the giant in a cross-legged posture was Master Seventh. The wind blew, stirring his white hair. He seemed particularly dignified, and his expression was one of unprecedented seriousness. Right at the time that Xu Qing chose to self-detonate, his eyes opened.

"Activate the formation," he said. "Stimulate time!"

The hundreds of thousands of cultivators shouted their acknowledgement. In the dome of heaven, Flame Phoenix spat out dazzling light. And Master Seventh pulsed with a profoundly ancient aura. That ancient, boundless aura seemed like a measuring stick to use on time itself.

*"The supreme star altar adapts unended.*

*"Expel the ancient, bind the modern, gods protected, spirits defended.*

*"Wisdom, sensibility, rationality and purity; the heart befriended.*

*"Three spiritual souls eternal, the physical soul distended.*

*"My apprentice is stable; reverse the Yellow Springs; hasten as if by laws amended!"*

Having said that, Master Seventh pushed his left hand down toward the silver giant. At the same time, he put his hand in front of his chest, performed an incantation gesture, and continued speaking.

*“The world is free, filthy energy out of sight.*

*“The deceitful darkness sways the distant light.*

*“The surrounding gods make me free of fright.*

*“Treasures and talismans speak to heaven so bright.*

*“In millennia past lived he named Zi Qing; he died on this spot and meditated before death; his last energy is now commanded by the Summer; Immortal guides the energy to this spot; hasten as if by laws amended!”*

Master Seventh’s eyes seemed full of anger, and each word he spoke boomed like thunder.

As it turned out, he was attempting to extract the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan’s last bit of energy that he breathed out in the moment of his death! He would extract it from time and from all things!

1. The incident with Chu Tianqun seeing something inside of Xu Qing was in chapter 465. 📖

*Chapter 965: A Fog Inside; A Hidden God of Thunder*

The Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan represented the ultimate level of glory of all time in Revered Ancient. It was a spectacular and peerless identity. He was the most prominent human to rise up since the arrival of the broken face of the god! He was conceived at the behest of the destiny aura of humankind. When he was born, a howl of grief echoed out of all the forbidden grounds in Revered Ancient, and mutated blood flowed from within them. He was sent by this great world of Revered Ancient to save itself, a convergence of the power of the world.

He was sent down with the mission of uniting Revered Ancient. He basked in the convergence of all the glory in heaven and earth.

But ultimately, he and his kingdom perished. The day he died, the mountain ranges in Revered Ancient all howled in anguish. The rivers flowed backwards as they wept. The heavenly daos grieved. Just before he died, he breathed out his last bit of energy, which contained the destiny aura of Revered Ancient, along with all of his glory as well as the providence he had gathered up in his life.

As he exhaled that last bit of energy, the providence scattered into heaven and earth. In the end, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was killed in body and soul.

When he reappeared, he was no longer the hope of Revered Ancient. Instead, he came back full of hatred and a desire for vengeance!

But on this day, a certain person used himself as a measuring stick on time itself. In the continent of South Phoenix, on the spot where Peerless City stood, which was where the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan died in battle, by the command of the Summer, and guided by an Immortal, heaven and earth received commands. Revered Ancient received commands.

That last bit of Revered Ancient's destiny aura that the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan exhaled, which contained his glory and providence... was being extracted from heaven and earth, extracted from time, and extracted from all things!

At that moment, hundreds of thousands of Seven Blood Eyes cultivators in the continent of South Phoenix joined their voices.

*"Commanded by the Summer; Immortal guides the energy to this spot; hasten as if by laws amended!"*

High in the dome of heaven, Flame Phoenix soared, time in his eyes, his gaze penetrating Revered Ancient. His wings obscured the sky, creating a massive wind in all directions, shaking the mountains and sending waves across the Forbidden Sea. He was providing a blessing to this most astounding of spell formations! And in the end, everything converged in the hand of Master Seventh, who hovered above the silver person.

It turned into a dazzling mist. Within that mist was Revered Ancient and providence!

Master Seventh looked at the mist with his ancient eyes. Then he lifted his right hand and sent the life mist flowing down to the forehead of the silver person below.

There, it fused with Xu Qing's blood. That, in turn, entered the silver person.

An instant later, rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth. Winds screamed, and the sky went dim. The blurry figures of numerous heavenly daos appeared. The mountains in Revered Ancient trembled. The rivers went wild, and in all locations, anguished howls rose up from forbidden regions and forbidden grounds. Mutated blood flowed from all of the forbidden grounds.

It was exactly the same supernatural phenomena that appeared when the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan was born!!

At the same time, Master Seventh's hair swayed behind him as his aura rose to astonishing levels. With his right hand, he touched the silver person's forehead, and with his left hand in front of his chest, he performed an incantation gesture. His eyes then shone with the light of suns and moons, which illuminated heaven and earth.

*“Dark sects of heaven and earth; myriad energies as the root; numerous cultivators bring infinite tribulations; demonstrate mine divine ability; inside and outside of the three worlds; only the dao is supreme.*

*“Command the free spirit; a body of golden light; reflect upon the body; accept a myriad variations; eradicate magics and eradicate the respected; five motions bring celebration; thousands of gods offer worship; make use of the thunder; ghosts and demons tremble in fear; the form of the pure fiend dies.”*

His words were like the voice of heaven, with every statement like the flow of time.

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The moment those words echoed out in South Phoenix, the power of self-detonation erupted from Xu Qing in the very distant imperial capital.

A black mist swept through his body, shredding his cultivation base, shredding his bones, shredding his flesh, and shredding everything about him. In an instant, his fleshly body was torn to pieces! The power of self-detonation rippled out in all directions. From a distance, it was a black ring of fog that expanded, crushing anything in its path.

If that was all there were to it, it might not have been a very big deal. To the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan, the self-detonation of a Void Returning expert could be suppressed with the mere wave of his hand. It was the same even with someone as powerful as Xu Qing. In fact, he could even fiddle with time, and turn the situation around in the blink of an eye.

But... what Xu Qing was detonating wasn't just his fleshly body. Put most precisely, the self-detonation of his fleshly body was only a side-effect. The true core of the self-detonation was... his soul!

His soul ignited as easily as a piece of paper, and then... was ripped to shreds. A burst of energy that could shake heaven and earth erupted from his soul. It was unstoppable and irreversible. A shuddering boom surpassed all the thunder that existed that moment in Revered Ancient.

In an instant, the bright light of the explosion turned the sky over the imperial capital as bright as day. That daytime spread rapidly to cover the entire region.

It was like something that could swallow up night, which was essentially the opposite of the empress' god authority. The world was filled with radiance and light, but at the same time, the darkness was extreme. The boundless black fog contained the deepest abyss in Revered Ancient. Terrifying howls echoed out from the black fog that came from the self-detonation of Xu Qing's soul.

And just barely visible within that roiling black smoke was a very ancient tunnel. Within the tunnel were innumerable doors. Some were large, some were small. They came in all sorts of shapes. But every single one of them was profoundly ancient.

The howling was coming from within those doors. As the sound of it grew increasingly shocking, the doors started shaking. Then cracking sounds rang out that could shake the ancient past, and struck the hearts and minds of all living beings.

Whatever entities were inside those doors were frantically trying to break out. They wanted to emerge from the doors!

At the same time, a terrifying aura spread.

Even more shocking was that, in the depths of the tunnel of doors, it was just barely possible to see... a chair!

It was exactly the same thing witnessed by Master Shengyun's father Chu Tianqun all those years ago. That image had caused him to scream in agony and terror. He had no idea what those doors were, but they had terrified him. And what was even more shocking and unimaginable was the chair that he saw at the end of that horrifying tunnel.

This was that same chair. Who could possibly qualify to sit on that chair, at the end of that tunnel of terrifying doors?

Chu Tianqun never found an answer to that question.

But Zi Qing had an idea of the answer. And thus, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan sighed. He looked at the black fog that resulted from Xu Qing's self-detonation. He looked at the doors and the chair at the end of the tunnel.

Then he softly said, "It's not mine. But neither is it lil' bro's."

His ultimate objective was that chair!

When he discovered it years ago, he had many speculations about it. For one thing, he knew it had nothing to do with the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan. One thing he did know, however, was that it connected to one of his major goals.

And that was to become a True God!

In fact, it was even possible that it could be used to surpass the True God level and reach the level of God Lord. He wanted to acquire that mysterious chair for himself, then use the destiny aura of the returned Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, fuse it with his throne when he became the Emperor of Violet and Cyan, and then use it to reach a higher level as a god.



By blessing the entire Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, he could reach the highest of heights. That was the entire reason he had come to the godly ascension ceremony. That was his objective. Only by completing all of the early objectives could he lay the foundation to complete his final objective. And thus, he stitched Xu Qing back together, cut away his time, and amended his fate.

The chair was integrally fused with Xu Qing's soul, and contained insoluble karma, which meant that taking it away with force would be very difficult. And thus unfolded the events of this day....

Zi Qing wanted Xu Qing to accept the title of Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan because that would be like them together going forward.

But Xu Qing had ended up doing something he couldn't perceive within time. He broke the deadlock.

Zi Qing shook his head. Given what was playing out, his only option was to take the chair with force, even though that meant there would be complications. He reached out with his right hand toward the spot where Xu Qing's flesh and soul had detonated. And he shoved his hand into the black fog.

That hand, like time itself, could stretch very far. It went into the tunnel, past the doors with their intense banging, all the way to the very end. There, it opened to grab the chair.

But then....

An ethereal daoist chant echoed within the tunnel.

*“Command the free spirit; a body of golden light; reflect upon the body; accept a myriad variations; eradicate magics and eradicate the respected; five motions bring celebration; thousands of gods offer worship; make use of the thunder; ghosts and demons tremble in fear; the form of the pure fiend dies.”*

Along with the chant came an aura that locked onto Xu Qing's soul and used it as a guide. After the self-detonation, that aura found a specific object, connected to it, and drew it out.

It was a beam of golden light! And it came out because of the daoist chant! The blinding golden light had been covered with countless dao inscriptions, which glittered brightly as they sealed this object away from any form of omniscience! And the golden light pulsed with a level of destruction that could suppress all other terrifying forces.

It was an iron skewer!

Guiding the skewer was a spirit. It was none other than Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior.

His daoist name was Master Freespirit! The daoist chant had contained the following words: 'command the free spirit.'

Before Xu Qing came to the imperial capital, Master Seventh took the iron skewer and refined it. After Xu Qing got it back, it had been significantly upgraded. But in the end, it was still weak.

As of this moment, the daoist chant had unlocked it, revealing its true might to the world. It was like a long, sharp thorn surrounded by thunder and lightning.

And it shot through the tunnel toward Zi Qing's hand as it stretched toward the chair. It could pierce time, shatter mutagen, and shake godly authority. It moved with speed that could overlook natural and magical laws. Its might could strike fear into the hearts of countless so-called gods.

Cultivators couldn't sense it, but gods would be startled by it!

In the blink of an eye, it reached Zi Qing's hand. And then, without the slightest pause, it struck with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force, and mightiness that was designed to target gods.

It... pierced through Zi Qing's hand.

The hand exploded. The palm ignited. The bones and flesh of the fingers shattered. God blood fell. Outside of the tunnel and outside of the fog, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan's hand was shredded into ash, and large amounts of god blood sprayed everywhere. His expression was profoundly serious.

Turning his head, he looked... in the direction of the continent of South Phoenix.

"So, there's still a God-Extinguishing Thorn left in the world!"

*Chapter 966: The First Emperor of Revered Ancient*

Very few people in modern times in Revered Ancient had ever heard about the God-Extinguishing Thorns. It was even hard to find mention of them in ancient records.

Information could only be found in fragments of classic works that had been passed down from person to person over the years. And of course, there were certain people from ancient times who knew of them.

They were a weapon invented by the Summer Immortals back when they came from Deep Earth and fought the Brilliant Heaven Godfolk who ruled Revered Ancient. They weren't necessarily very dangerous to cultivators. But when used on gods... they could extinguish godsource!

Even then, considering the rare materials and mysterious methods that went into creating them, back when they were used, only twenty-four had ever been created. Each and every one was stained with vast quantities of Brilliant Heaven Godfolk blood, and as a result, if a god even got a whiff of the presence of one, they would be shocked.

During the final battle between the Summer Immortals and the Brilliant Heaven gods, most of the God-Exterminating Thorns were destroyed. Those that survived were left stabbed into the body of the Brilliant Heaven god emperor. They served as sealing devices, and were left behind in the abyss that contained the Revered Ancient of that time. There were some people who had come to call that location the abyss of gods.

In later generations, there were no God-Exterminating Thorns in the world. And because the Summer Immortals left, the creation method was lost. Until today. Just now, Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior had unleashed the might of a God-Exterminating Thorn.

That was the reason for Zi Qing's shock.

"Sadly, that wasn't the full might of a God-Exterminating Thorn," he said coolly as he looked in the direction of South Phoenix. "Well done, Master Seventh! Lil' bro destroyed his soul, something which is beyond my mastery of time, in the hopes of severing karma. And you used yourself as the measuring stick to call out to my last breath of energy that I exhaled when I died. By tapping into the most profound ancientness, you attempted to sever karma. Unfortunately... the karma between my lil' bro and I can't be severed that way!"

The Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan lifted his left hand and reached toward the black fog that resulted from Xu Qing's self-detonation.

That action caused the fog to rumble as the power of time appeared. Apparently, he was planning to pull aside the fog and delve into time itself.

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When Xu Qing's soul detonated, something very dramatic happened in the lands of the Firemoon Darkheaven people, which provoked shock amongst many of the cultivators there.

The dramatic event occurred... as Sir Firedark was giving a dao lecture to fellow members of his species. Seemingly out of nowhere, he exploded. Blood sprayed everywhere. Sir Firedark wasn't even able to finish his sentence. Flesh and blood erupted everywhere. His soul shattered.

It was life substitution. The only thing that remained was a discarnate soul that he had ensconced in the god temple there. As a result, he survived the life substitution, and it was possible that he could be resurrected in the future.[1]

Something similarly shocking was happening in South Phoenix.

On the spot where Peerless City once stood, in the formation made by hundreds of thousands of Seven Blood Eyes cultivators, Master Seventh's right hand pressed down onto the forehead of the silver giant.

Intense rumbling broke out. Because of imperceptible connections of fate, as well as the guidance of reincarnation, it ensured that the fluctuations caused by Xu Qing's self-detonation didn't just cause Sir Firedark to explode. Evidence of time interference became visible on the silver person. Horrifying cracks spread across the surface of the person, which grew deeper by the moment. The silver person seemed to be on the verge of collapsing.

At the most critical moment, the hundreds of thousands of Seven Blood Eyes cultivators went into a dao chant.

*"Oh boundless exalted celestial, provide comfort to the physical form; the apprentice's spiritual and physical souls, along with the five yin organs are in the dark underworld; azure dragon and white tiger join hands to fight; vermilion bird and black turtle provide defense of the true and real."*

As their voices drifted out, wild colors flashed in heaven and earth. Winds screamed. At the same time, Flame Phoenix let loose a piercing cry, which shattered the clouds and caused nourishing rain to fall.

Master Seventh was also chanting something as he pushed his hand down onto the silver person's forehead. At the same time, he bit the tip of his tongue and spat out some of his own dao blood. It landed on the silver person, isolating it from outside forces.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the cracks on the silver person stopped worsening. Although it didn't seem like the existing damage could be fixed, it was no longer about to collapse.

Master Seventh looked up and spoke in a voice full of ghastly killing intent.

"Years ago I made a deal with the Summer Immortal Palace. Afterward, I walked through time, sitting by and watching people live and die, allowing fate to run its course.

"When Master Sixth died, I felt pain, but could only sigh. When humankind experienced ups and downs, I could only watch indifferently. It was the same even when the empress achieved godly ascension and Swordsage perished. There was no karma between myself and them.

"Zi Qing, when you sought to restore your kingdom, using the empress's ceremony to shirk your tribulation and present a sacrifice to the broken face with no harm to yourself,

I had no reason to interfere. And that is because I have no karmic connection to any of it.

“But, you shouldn’t have plotted against my apprentice! My apprentices *are* my karma. They kowtowed to me. I accepted their three cups of tea, the teas of gratitude, the past, and faith. I promised to keep them safe. And therefore... as long as I’m around, no one is allowed to touch them!

“Zi Qing, because you plotted against my apprentice, and are not willing to sever that karma, then... I had no choice but to conspire against your imperial authority! You don’t want to sever the karma? Fine! Let’s end this!”

Master Seventh looked very awe-inspiring as he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand. Then, only a few breaths of time turned into tens of thousands of them as he pointed up into the dome of heaven.

Then he spoke in a voice like heavenly thunder.

*“In the half-sixty-year-cycle past lived he named Xu Zi; he died on this spot and meditated before death; his last energy is now commanded by the Summer; Immortal guides the energy to this spot; hasten as if by laws amended!” [2]*

As he summoned the last energy of the person named Xu Zi, the world went wild, and a boundless energy sprang up, eventually converging in Master Seventh’s left hand. It was a densely-packed conglomeration of violet energy. As soon as he had it, he pushed it into the chest of the silver person.

Then he spoke something like a chant of law.

“Execute!”

That one word caused the mountains in Revered Ancient to tremble. In all regions, dazzling light rose up from various mountains and rivers as an enormous spell formation chart was revealed. The chart filled all of Revered Ancient as it began to move.

Then, in the canopy of heaven over the imperial capital of humankind, a saber formed. And it slashed down toward the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan!

Zi Qing shivered as he looked up at the descending blade. No one but a True God could stop that saber! The reason was that the saber wasn’t aiming to sever life or the soul. Rather... it was severing the destiny aura and imperial authority of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan.

The slash of the saber caused all living beings in the Heaveneater Region to be shaken to the core. The destiny aura of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, which coiled in the air above the region in the form of a violet dragon, let loose a howl of agony.

It was cut completely in two! And something else split in half. It was the throne that represented the Emperor of Violet and Cyan in the imperial palace there! Half of the destiny aura and imperial authority was severed, and it was pulled through the void in the direction of the continent of South Phoenix.

In the air above the imperial capital of humankind, the Crown Prince of Violet and Cyan's face was ashen as he slowly looked up. A few breaths of time passed, and Zi Qing's complexion returned to normal.

"Just what I would expect of the first Ancient Emperor of Revered Ancient," he said coolly. "Falling prey to your scheme has been an honor. However, this action of yours has revealed how weak you are. You... are really just an old man. The heaven of Revered Ancient wasn't yours in the past, and it's not yours now. As for you, lil' bro, you can have half of the imperial authority. But take care of it! Next time we meet, I'm going to take it back."

With that, he looked away from the continent of South Phoenix and back at the dissipating cloud of black fog. Then he took a step and disappeared over the horizon.

Shortly after, he reappeared in the Heaveneater Region, within the violet dragon of destiny aura that had recently been cut in half. Using the destiny aura, he remolded his body and formed an imperial robe and crown. As the countless commoners of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan bowed, as did the government officials, and as the Torchlight agents looked on with shining eyes, he walked into the imperial palace and sat on the throne.

The moment he did, shouts of praise rang out from everywhere in the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan.

"Congratulations to our emperor on ascending the throne of our sovereign kingdom!"

As those voices rang out, the broken face of the god in the sky looked at the Heaveneater Region and opened his eyes. The entire Heaveneater Region rumbled as life was reversed, mutagen overflowed, and the aura of a god abounded. Then a statue of the broken face appeared in the public square outside of the imperial palace. It was the only statue like it in all of the Revered Ancient mainland!

At the same time, the fluctuations of a god altar began to roll out of Zi Qing. He was rising directly to Altar God!

Shortly after, he smiled. *Things are going to be very interesting going forward.*

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At the same time, above the formation with hundreds of thousands of Seven Blood Eyes cultivators in South Phoenix, Master Seventh's ancient eyes flickered as he unleashed one last bit of magic.

"Return!"

His voice contained a sensation of a very mysterious ceremony, something that could shake life and death and tap into fate. An instant later, the mounds of flesh in the formation rose up and flew toward the silver person. That flesh pulsed with a terrifying aura that went beyond anything in the world, and didn't exist within the timescape.

It was... Eminent Desolation's flesh. As it entered the silver person, the silver person trembled, then slowly shrank down. Silver light turned into skin, until finally...

It became a fleshly body. It looked exactly like Xu Qing! However, it was more complete and thorough!

"Awaken, my apprentice!" Master Seventh said, his voice hoarse and full of exhaustion.

A few breaths of time passed. Xu Qing opened his eyes.

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*"The dao is void; without scriptures, one cannot grasp the dao; the dao exists in scripture. Without a teacher, one cannot understand its truths.*

*"Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity is the great founder. All humans owe him a single bow of respect.*

*"Heaven, earth, celestial, terrestrial. They bear the weight of all. All humans owe them three bows of respect.*

*"However amazing the Ancient Emperor was, he did not show you favor. Heaven and earth, and all other living beings in this sea of suffering, have done nothing to save you.*

*"Only Master will ascend to heaven and descend to hell for you. Only he will show you favor. Only he will save you. Only he will expend all effort so that you can walk a great dao. Therefore, you owe him nine bows of respect!"[3]*

1. In [chapter 911](#), it was explained that when Sir Firedark and Xu Qing fought, the loser would have to give a drop of soul blood that could be used as a life-saving item in a moment of crisis. Firedark outright stated the same in [chapter 913](#). 📖

2. This version of the chant is the same as before, except the name is changed. In this case, the Xu is the same surname as Xu Qing's surname. The Zi is the 'surname' from Zi Qing, which is also the character for 'violet.' It's unclear what this means, although I

thought of a few possibilities. In the Chinese comments, I saw all of the exact same possibilities that I thought of, with none backed by enough evidence or logic to seemingly take the cake as the prevailing possibility. Does it mean that Zi Qing's real name is Xu Zi? Is it supposed to be a combination of the names Zi Qing and Xu Qing? Is it referring to Xu Qing (remember, based on what has been revealed in the past couple chapters, he also died in Peerless City, just as Zi Qing did in his previous life). Or does it mean something else? There is no explanation about this at the moment. ☹️

3. The apprenticeship ceremony was in chapter 263. ☹️

*Chapter 967: After Waking Up (part 1)*

Five months later, in the north of South Phoenix, the sun burned hot in the sky. Golden streams of light fell like sharp swords, stabbing mercilessly into the depths of the Forbidden Sea. The sea sizzled and angry waves surged out, its wild fury suffocating. A strong wind blew, seemingly intent on shoving the entire Forbidden Sea over the horizon. The sound of the waves and the cries of the sea beasts was outright shocking to any who could hear it. It was as if the sound itself wanted to bury any listeners at the bottom of the sea. Mutagen surged along with the waves, bending the light waves and turning everything hazy. Compared to it, everything else on the Forbidden Sea seemed as insignificant as dust.

At the moment, a lone ship was visible on the horizon, where the sky met the sea. Huang Yan lay in the boat amidst the haze and the mutagen and the waves. Patting his belly, he let loose a long sigh and looked down toward the bottom of the sea.

"You can really make a big commotion," he said, sounding somewhat emotional.

As the waves crashed, a three-meter-thick vine splashed out from the water, pulsing with fluctuations of excitement. A moment later, it sank back down into the water and dropped down toward the bottom.

Far under the sea, it was as dark as ink, with no light. Everything was pitch-black and freezing cold. However, the vine emanated faint starlight that formed the only source of brightness in the depths. As it raced down, the water seemed to part for the vine, and it sucked up the mutagen like nourishing food. Ordinary sea beasts could sense what was happening, and quickly raced away.

Nothing posed an obstacle for the vine as it shot to the sea floor, illuminating everything around it with the starlight. Thanks to the starlight, it was soon possible to see a massive trench amidst all the black sand. It was so dark and mysterious that the starlight couldn't penetrate it, and it emanated an unusual pressure.

A person floated cross-legged above the trench. He wore a violet gown covered in complex designs, and had long, violet hair. Apparently, the Forbidden Sea didn't affect him at all, as he floated there in a very natural manner. His facial features were



astoundingly beautiful, and he had skin so fair it sparkled in the starlight. His eyes were like deep lakes, and his gaze was so sharp and penetrating that few people would dare to look into it. There was something heroic and wise about his bearing, and his sharply angled eyebrows would provoke reverence in any who saw him. His entire person glittered like a heavenly body!

He was none other than Xu Qing! He looked profoundly calm as he floated cross-legged above the trench. In his right hand he held the vine. One end of the vine floated to and fro in the sea, sending out amiable fluctuations. The other end... was inside the trench, struggling.

A short time later, Xu Qing yanked on the vine, whereupon a howl of agony could be heard from within the trench. Something terrifying was tied to the end of the vine!

It was an old woman wearing a gown of fish bones, whose body was covered in tentacles. Her face was extremely wrinkled, and largely rotting. However, her golden eyes were terrifying, and when she breathed, she exhaled mutagen full of strong godliness. Emerging from the woman's back, jutting out of the fish skeleton robe, was a massive scarlet tongue covered with innumerable deceased souls. All of them howled in anguish.

The tentacles covering her had eyes that were also golden, and all of them were open and looking at Xu Qing. That said, many of the tentacles were severed, and the old woman was even missing much of her body. She was not mighty like she had been in the past, and in fact, in Xu Qing's presence, she trembled.

She was Joine! She was one of the gods worshiped in the Merfolk Isles in the past. Although she was called a god, the truth was that she was just a godly entity. She had no godfire, and not much godly authority.[1]

At the moment, Xu Qing was using her as bait. And astonishingly, Xu Qing was using the sageheaven god vine as a fishing line.

"You're not letting off enough godliness," he said coolly. He flicked the vine forcefully, provoking a shriek from Joine as he tossed her back down into the trench.

Joine unleashed stronger fluctuations this time, and much more intense godliness. It led to a much better effect than before. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, the sound of heavy breathing emanated from the trench. It was like heavenly thunder that sent the water flowing away in all directions.

Then, another howl erupted, whereupon Xu Qing yanked back on the vine again. The vine went taut, then started quivering, as if something had bitten onto it. Xu Qing pulled on it with great force.

Xu Qing's eyes glittered coldly as veins bulged on his right arm. As a result, his arm gleamed like mercury, and terrifying fleshly body power pulsed out. The vine emerged from the trench, pulling with it a rotting creature that resembled a lizard.

It was a god-river dragon! It resembled a lizard, except far more fierce and vicious. And it emanated the rot of death.[2]

Godly entities like this weren't very common in the Forbidden Sea, and were extremely rare in shallow waters. They generally stayed very deep down. It was only when they looked for food that they would venture into the open, where they would eat just about anything alive.

Whenever a god-river dragon appeared, they brought catastrophe and death to whatever islands they targeted. In fact, many species that inhabited the Forbidden Sea called them 'lizards from the Underworld River.' This specimen was extraordinary even among god-river dragons. It was fully 30,000 meters long, with scales that radiated the light of the netherworld. Deceased souls were visible all over it, which were its victims, and it radiated a terrifying aura as it kept its jaws clamped onto Joine.

Joine howled in anguish as the god-river dragon ripped off a section of her body. However, the vine and its razor-sharp teeth had latched onto the dragon, making it impossible for it to free itself.

Having been dragged out into the open, it unleashed its aura, causing the Forbidden Sea to seethe. The waves on the surface grew larger, and the sky dimmed, all while massive winds swept back and forth.

Smoldering God fluctuations rolled off it. They were comparable to a three-world Smoldering God!

As it howled furiously at Xu Qing, the power of its three dead worlds bolstered it, making its overall aura even more terrifying. It lunged in Xu Qing's direction, and though it could hardly open its mouth, compared to a human, it was massive. In fact, the opening of its mouth created a huge whirlpool.

All sea beasts in the area who could sense what was happening trembled in fear.

Xu Qing calmly rose to a standing position. He looked like a towering pine tree, emanating dignity and might. He strode forth like a dragon or tiger as he reached toward the snarling god-river dragon. As the dragon roared and opened its mouth wide, Xu Qing's left hand clenched into a fist, and his entire person pulsed with the will of an emperor.

Undying Emperor's Fist!

He launched a fist strike. The sea shattered as a destructive pulse spread out in all directions. Then the fist slammed into the god-river dragon's head.

A muffled thump pulsed across the sea floor, which was followed by a shriek of pain from the dragon as its skull was cracked and many of its teeth shattered. In fact, its head couldn't stand up to the blow, and it was sent spinning backward, blood spilling out everywhere.

That said, this was an extraordinary god-river dragon, and despite being injured, it still managed to lash its tail out in a devastating attack. Its tail was covered with bone spurs that the seawater did nothing to hinder. As the tail swept toward Xu Qing, he gripped the vine and stared forward unflinchingly. The tail bore down on him with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force. Then something unimaginable happened. frëewebnovel.com

Xu Qing remained in place, unmoving.

But the incoming god-river dragon shivered as if it had slammed into an immovable mountain. Much of it shattered. The spurs covering it crumbled. Intense pain spread through it thanks to Xu Qing's terrifying fleshly body. The dragon emanated a sense of intense terror, then spun in place to flee. Unfortunately, the sageheaven god vine was still embedded into the flesh in its mouth. As long as Xu Qing held the other end of the vine, there was no way it could escape.

Xu Qing stepped forward, alighting onto the head of the god-river dragon. Then he pulled hard on the vine.

A howl of anguish echoed out. The 30,000-meter-long dragon had no choice but to lift its head and shoot toward the surface of the water.

Shortly after, it burst madly out into the open. The sea caved as water sprayed everywhere. As the dragon filled the sky, it cast a huge shadow down on the boat in which Huang Yan sat.

Water sprayed all over Huang Yan. Huang Yan was not very happy about that.

Up in the sky, Xu Qing stood on the dragon's head, where he reached out with his left hand toward the sun. Even with the naked eye, it was possible to see the sun rippling as a result.

Xu Qing's fleshly body then seemed to seize some of the radiance of the sun, so that he himself became like a sun, shining with dazzling light. Boundless light and heat radiated off him as he then pressed his hand onto the dragon's head.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out as the god-river dragon trembled and howled. An instant later, its corpse dropped down into the water, where it lay floating, completely still.

A massive tsunami rolled out in all directions.

As Xu Qing stood on the head of the corpse, dazzling motes of godliness spread out from the dragon and merged into him. From a distance, it looked like a seven-colored halo of stars and moons was floating around him. He truly looked like a god.

“This Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic is anything but simple,” he said as he stepped off the corpse of the dragon and onto the boat with Huang Yan.

He relaxed his grip on the vine, which threw Joine onto the ship and then circled exultingly around the area. Joine, who was still missing half her body, trembled.

Also trembling was Little Shadow. It had been resting, but seeing that Xu Qing was back, it cast a very specific sound out into the surrounding water.

“*C-c-crunch. C-c-crunch!*” A moment passed. “Milord... no... reaction. I’m obedient... continuing now....”[3]

1. Joine was mentioned in too many chapters to list them all as references. Here are some highlights. The island named after her was first mentioned in chapter 111. She “awoke” and was described physically in chapter 121, and the Captain got some of her flesh in chapter 125. And don’t forget that Xu Qing’s spirit cruiser resembled Joine, as described in chapter 551.1. 📖

2. The ‘god-river dragon’ is also a dinosaur name, specifically, styxosaurus. I’m continuing to abide by my previous decision to not use the Latin-based dinosaur names. Given the author’s proclivity for wordplay, I’d like to accurately render the Chinese characters in these ‘dragons’ as much as possible. 📖

3. The “*C-c-crunch. C-c-crunch!*” is a reference to how the shadow used that specific sound earlier in the story, specifically in chapters 171 and 174. 📖

*Chapter 967: After Waking Up (part 2)*

Huang Yan wiped the water from his face and looked at the trembling Joine. “Poor Joine. Ever since you caught her, you’ve spent months using her as bait. Every time her body grows back, she loses it again....”

Then he looked at Little Shadow as it made its crunching sounds. “And poor Little Shadow. It’s been *c-c-crunch, c-c-crunching* for months now too. Sadly, it’s just not working. The giant and the bronze chariot you’re looking for are nowhere to be found.

“But poorest of all is me!” Huang Yan glared at Xu Qing. “Your Master is having a great time in seclusion, and tasked me with following you around.... I miss Elder Sister. I haven’t left her like this in a long time. She definitely misses having me around.”[1]

Xu Qing was apparently used to Huang Yan complaining like this. Inspecting his fleshly body, he said, "I'm just following Master's orders, Second Brother-in-Law."

Huang Yan sighed and hung his head dejectedly. Taking out a jade slip that he had been using to record the conversation, he sent the recording to a certain someone. Then he just sat there looking gloomy. About a dozen breaths of time passed, whereupon Huang Yan blinked a few times and suddenly looked very enthusiastic. Chuckling, he said, "Alright, we're good now. I sent the message. I really have no choice in this. Your Second Elder Sister is just too petty sometimes. After all, her status in the family isn't very high, and she's sort of insecure. That's why I have to care for her in this way."

"Ohhhhh," said Xu Qing. Over the past few months, Huang Yan had 'cared' for her in this way every few days.

"As you've seen, Xu Qing," Huang Yan said proudly, "my status in the family is the highest in all of South Phoenix! Believe me, I'm just too charming! Your Second Elder Sister is constantly being clingy. It's like she's scared I won't pay enough attention to her. Whether she goes out on errands or to do missions for your Master, she's always begging me to come with her.

"It's really been getting on my nerves over the past few years. Luckily, Master Seventh realized what was happening. We're all men, right? He understands me! And that's why he gave me this little bit of freedom!"

Huang Yan looked very pleased with himself. However, though he made it seem like he had a very high position in the family, the reality was he seemed more like one of the prisoners Xu Qing had dealt with in the Seven Blood Eyes cell blocks years ago.

"So, where are we going next? If you don't have somewhere specific in mind, I have a suggestion.... Believe me, the place I have in mind is incomparably spectacular. Just thinking about it makes my blood start pumping faster...."

Huang Yan looked furtively left and right to make sure they were alone.

Xu Qing shook his head. "I'm planning to go to the border of the outer sea region to take a look around."

The Forbidden Sea was divided into the inner sea and the outer sea. The inner sea was huge, and was where most of the intelligent species lived. It could be dangerous, but as long as you were cautious, it was safe to explore. But the outer sea... was a desolate place full of mysteries. Legend had it that there were many gods sleeping out there.

"Oh, there? That'll work." Huang Yan seemed a bit disappointed, but then he thought of something and said, "Oh, right. When you were down there tempering your fleshly body, some news about humankind came in. You got promoted, ya little punk!"

Xu Qing looked at Huang Yan.

“The empress issued a decree naming Ningyan as the crown prince,” Huang Yan continued. “That lucky little bastard. He went to sleep, and when he woke up, the emperor had turned into an empress, and he became the crown prince. From what I heard, he’s still confused by it all! frēewebnovel.com

“Anyway, you’re now the tutor of the crown prince! And you’re the region lord of the Holytide Region *and* the Nightspirit Region! If that brat Ningyan eventually ascends the throne, you’ll be the grand imperial preceptor!” [2]

Xu Qing wasn’t surprised to hear that Ningyan had been made the crown prince. After all... the empress only had two children. One was Ningyan, and the other was Eleventh Prince. Eleventh Prince obviously wasn’t a suitable choice. Everything that happened during the ancestral sacrifices had been done for the sake of his mother. But he had done some things that the government officials would never be able to forget. Selecting Ningyan was much more reasonable.

As for why it happened so quickly, there were clues to be had. Of course, ‘crown prince incense,’ that had been merely paving the way for what was to come.

*Given the empress’ talents, I bet she saw then what was going to happen.*

As the ship cut through the water, Xu Qing thought back to the events of five months ago.

After what happened in the imperial capital of humankind, a boundless mist of mutagen covered the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan that had appeared in the Heaveneater Region, making it impossible to know what was happening inside. However, based on information available, humankind knew that there was a terrifying aura inside the Heaveneater Region. Apparently... the citizens of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan who had returned were all mutating.

“Eminent Desolation was pleased, and provided it as a gift,” the empress had said.

It was easy to imagine what would happen when the mist cleared from the Heaveneater Region. Whatever came out of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan was going to be terrifying.

Xu Qing’s face was grim, and his heart was uneasy. Because he had half of the imperial authority of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, he could sense what was happening. And he could sense something calling out to him. It was the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan calling him.

Meanwhile, Chen Erniu had left the imperial capital. A few months ago, he sent word that he was on his way back. However, he hadn’t arrived yet, as he chose to visit an old

friend in Garmentfolk lands on the way. Presumably, he was still having fun with the Garmentfolk girl and his old right hand.

Plumdark had arrived in South Phoenix some months earlier. After seeing that Xu Qing was in good health, she spent about half a month with him. Then, feeling quite worn out, she sighed and left. She was taking her lamp to Dark Serenity's palace of operations beneath Sea-Sealing County. There, at the phoenix palace, she would accept her legacy from her past life.

In addition to all that, now that the empress had become a god, humankind had risen to prominence in the east of Revered Ancient. Minor species everywhere trembled in fear, and the vast majority chose to become subsidiary species. That was especially true of the regions that had previously contained lone counties belonging to humankind.

There were no major obstacles and no unforeseen circumstances. No blood was shed as humans once again took control of those regions. As a result, if you included the regions of Holytide and Nightspirit, humans controlled ten regions.

Sometimes, just being strong was a big enough threat to get things done.

Of course, there was little need to mention what happened between humans and the Firemoons. They became official allies, and jointly controlled the entire eastern section of Revered Ancient. Together, they would defend against any covetous enemies.

At the same time, humans who had been isolated and oppressed in foreign lands for countless years were found by King Firecrusher and the other military forces, and were brought back to human lands.

As for Xu Qing, when he woke up five months earlier, he used his secret key to open his special dimensional space that he had created when he first became a swordsage. Before self-detonating, he had put Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior and some other important items, such as the violet crystal, into that dimensional space. The technique for creating the secret key and the dimensional space had been taught to Xu Qing in Sea-Sealing County by the swordsage known as Ailing Ghost, and was specifically designed for swordsages to use to store things. Normally speaking, there were actually two keys that could open such spaces. One key belonged to the swordsage, while the other was in the possession of the palace lord. Other than those two people, no one could open the dimensional space. [3]

As for Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior, he handed him over to Plumdark to keep her safe while she worked on her legacy.

As Huang Yan had said, Master Seventh chose to go into seclusion. Before doing so, he had a discussion with Xu Qing. He explained many things regarding this new body of Xu Qing's. It was created using a heaven-defying Summer Immortal magic, with the materials being the flesh of the broken face combined with immortal mercury. It had

nearly limitless potential. How much of that potential was unlocked would depend on Xu Qing. He would need to use it in endless battles, constantly seek enlightenment, and gain experience in deadly situations.

Because the body's personhood was so terrifyingly high, it was going to be difficult for Xu Qing's soul to fuse perfectly with it. Master Seventh thus left two sealing marks in it. He also gave Xu Qing a special technique.

It was the Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic.

By cultivating that magic, it was possible to produce streams of profound sun immortal light, which would be very helpful to the process of fusing his soul with the body.

According to Master Seventh, the technique had once belonged to one of the nine Summer Immortals who came from Deep Earth to Brilliant Heaven, and ended up dying when fighting the god emperor. Before perishing, he passed on that technique. Cultivating it to completion would lead to terrifying results.

Therefore, Xu Qing had two purposes for his sea journey.

The first was to hunt and kill godly entities as a way to become familiar with the defensive capabilities of his fleshly body, to get used to the combination of this body and his godly authority, and to improve his battle prowess by using the profound sun immortal light. Through all of that, he would become more familiar with the body.

His second purpose was to try to find the giant and the chariot from which he acquired his golden crow technique. His reason for looking for the chariot and the giant was that things weren't going very well with the profound sun immortal light.

After a while, it caused Xu Qing to think about the golden crow. After all, the fundamental basis of the Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic was to steal the glory of the sun and turn it into immortal light. By doing so, he would convert his body into a profound sun, like a furnace that burned himself and burned heaven and earth. It was actually similar to the golden crow.

Therefore, Xu Qing wanted to find the chariot, sit in it, and command the giant. He wanted to follow the same journey as the golden crow when it became a sun and flew through the sky looking down on Revered Ancient. Hopefully that would provide some enlightenment about the 'profound sun' aspect.

Thus, he roved the Forbidden Sea. That was why Little Shadow was constantly making the crunching sounds. Xu Qing hadn't forgotten that Little Shadow had once drawn out the giant and chariot with that same sound. Sadly, even after trying the same thing for months, he hadn't experienced any success.



*I suppose the giant is sleeping at the bottom of the Forbidden Sea. I need to check more locations....*

After glancing at the shadow, Xu Qing took out a sea chart and made a notation.

That was when Huang Yan, who had been sitting there looking very relaxed, looked at his jade slip. It was vibrating. He took it out and checked it, then gasped.

“Xu Qing, something big happened! I have to leave for a bit. This is major! I’m talking heaven-shaking and earth-shattering!” Huang Yan suddenly looked very nervous. “I have to take the lead in this matter. If I don’t act quickly, a tempest is going to rock the continent of South Phoenix!”

1. Just a reminder that Huang Yan always called her ‘Elder Sister.’ I know I probably don’t need to explain this, and in fact, I think I said the same thing hundreds of chapters ago, but in Chinese ‘sister’ does not necessarily have the familial connotations that English does. For instance, as I mentioned in a footnote a long time ago, my brother-in-law has dated women who are older than him, and both he and Madam Deathblade and my mother-in-law will call those women “older sisters” or perhaps “big sisters.” So for Huang Yan to refer to her in this way isn’t unusual at all. ☞

2. The title here is slightly different from what I previously translated as imperial preceptor, but it means essentially the same thing. To make things simple, I’m simply going to use imperial preceptor plus the word ‘grand’ so that it sounds a bit more impressive. ☞

3. Xu Qing created the secret key and the special dimensional space in chapter 400. ☞

*Chapter 968: The Flame of Love (part 1)*

‘Heaven-shaking and earth-shattering’ was certainly a description.

Of course, different people had different concepts of what ‘heaven’ was.

For example, to the empress, ‘heaven’ was humankind. Everything shē did was for hēr people. And in a time period in which humans were not flourishing, shē was fighting an uphill battle.

To Xu Qing, ‘heaven’ consisted of all the people he had come to care about on his journey. There was Sergeant Thunder, Grandmaster Bai, his Master, Erniu, Plumdark, Ling’er, and others.... That ‘heaven’ also contained things connected to those people, for example, Sea-Sealing County, Seven Blood Eyes, or the Holytide Region. Those things brought meaning to his life, and were a foundational element of his personal human nature. They were like an anchor that enabled him to stay connected to his human nature even when using godly nature.

That was even more the case considering that his new fleshly body was made from the flesh of the broken face. He was now more like a god than ever, and therefore, the brightness of human nature was incredibly important.

It was no surprise that Huang Yan had his own 'heaven' in his heart....

Years ago, he had been soaring proudly through the sky when he casually looked down and caught sight of something stunning. He saw a figure on the Forbidden Sea brandishing a huge sword. That became his 'heaven and earth.' It became his world. His everything.

Because of that, he joined Seven Blood Eyes as a clone, not concerning himself at all with status or identity as he pursued the object of his desire. He experienced setbacks, but always kept moving forward. He was proud, but for the sake of that person, he could be humble. He was strong, but for that person, he could be weak. For his entire life, he had refused to offer sacrifices to the broken face. He didn't concern himself with the lives or deaths of other living beings. As the 'South Phoenix,' and in fact, one of the only members of the Phoenix species, he had always held his head high.

But there was one person that could cause him to bow his head. That was because his heart had been touched. It was the only time it happened in his entire life.

Therefore, after Huang Yan said what he said moments ago, Xu Qing had already guessed what was going on.

Second Elder Sister was angry.

"No," Huang Yan said forcefully. "NO! We have to get moving right now!"

Taking a deep breath, he transformed into Flame Phoenix, causing the Forbidden Sea to turn dark. His massive form could only be described as sky-obscuring and sun-blocking. Where he went, wild colors flashed in heaven and earth. When his feathers rippled, winds screamed.

The majestic ruler of South Phoenix raced across the Forbidden Sea.

Xu Qing had been around to watch as love developed between Huang Yan and Second Elder Sister. And therefore, he quickly flew up into the sky to follow.

Moving with the speed of lightning bolts, the two of them disappeared over the horizon. Their target destination was an island some distance away.

*"As you know," Huang Yan projected to Xu Qing, "every few decades Seven Blood Eyes holds the Grand Competition. Last time it was in the Merfolk Isles, and you and I both participated. Well the Grand Competition is happening again, and this time, Elder Sister is officiating. This time, the training is being held in Lobsterfolk territory. Just now, Elder*

*Sister sent me a voice message indicating that the Lobsterfolk summoned their god, which is really just a godly entity.” [1][2]*

To truly powerful experts, godly entities weren't a very big deal. Over the past few months, Xu Qing had killed seven or eight of them. And if Huang Yan took action, he could wipe one out with a single breath.

But the fact that Elder Sister was angry changed everything.

Xu Qing nodded and kept a very serious expression on his face. “We'd better speed up!”

“That's my bro!” shouted Huang Yan as he accelerated in Flame Phoenix form.

As they sped along, Xu Qing's godsource surged, filling his body and making him shine with golden light. When it combined with the silver color within him, it made him seem like a godly devil. That, of course, was what happened because of the fact that his body was made from the flesh of the broken face. The body had actually been created first with immortal mercury, and then combined with the flesh.

With the Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic, he was accelerating the fusion process with his soul, which involved slowly assimilating all of the immortal mercury. When it was all gone, and he had no immortal mercury within him, then his soul would be fully fused.

As for the fleshly body made from the broken face's flesh, this brought some astonishing transformations that weren't limited to a flesh-and-blood upgrade.

His void soil was now completely golden. What was more, the golden void soil now had four shimmering god talismans on it. One was a life essence talisman, the others were godly authority talismans. The life essence talisman was made from his dao of mages, dao of emperors, and all of the cultivator techniques he had learned. The most dominant of all of them were his Xeno-Immortal School techniques.

Surrounding his void soil was an astonishing ring, which formed the border. It was a xeno-immortal lineament!

As for his three god authority talismans, they represented the violet moon, the misfortune, and the god curse. They weren't very different from before. The biggest difference to his void soil was to the godly authority lineaments that he had yet to gain enlightenment of and use.

Before, there had been 100 of them. But right now, that number had increased... to over 1,000! In the past, Xu Qing had sensed that if he could ever gain full enlightenment of all 100 of them, he would be at the peak of Void Returning.

But now....

If Xu Qing's life essence lineament had formed the limit of his void soil, then the 1,000 lineaments brought by the broken face just raised the upper limit of his cultivation base. Now he sensed that if he could cause all 1,000 of them to shine brightly, he would break through from Void Returning and into Smoldering God. And he would be an unrivaled and unequaled Smoldering God. That said, it was also going to make his cultivation a lot more difficult.

Thankfully, there were other transformations to Xu Qing. As of now, there was no such thing as spirit power to him. In terms of levels, spirit power was so weak to his new body that it essentially didn't exist. Instead, what flowed through Xu Qing was pure godsource power!

As a result, it wasn't just his void soil that was golden. His sea of consciousness had become a golden god sea. All of those things raised his potential. In terms of his defenses, they were terrifying. freewebnovel.com

Because his body and soul weren't fused, if his fleshly body got too strong, it could put negative pressure on his soul. Therefore, Master Seventh had left two sealing marks on him. One was an Imperial Sovereign sealing mark, the other was a Quasi-Immortal sealing mark.

As Xu Qing cultivated the Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic, and continued to fuse his body and soul, the two sealing marks would naturally unseal. In the end, when they completely unraveled, his fleshly body power would be equivalent to a True God! That was equivalent to a Summer Immortal!

Before going into seclusion, Master Seventh had explained to Xu Qing that the broken face of Eminent Desolation had failed to break into the Living God level, and was stuck at what was essentially the peak of God Paragon. If one of his arms became an independent entity, it would be as mighty as an ordinary God Paragon, and even a mere finger would be as strong as a God Lord.

Compared to the boundlessness of the broken face, the body Xu Qing had was barely more than a scrap of flesh. As a result, it could only unleash the power of a True God or Summer Immortal.

With those two sealing marks in place, Xu Qing's soul wouldn't be influenced by the broken face's flesh. And even with the seals in place, his fleshly body power was at an astounding level. Nothing beneath an Imperial Sovereign could even harm him.

After having fought several godly entities, Xu Qing had verified that. His fleshly body defenses were beyond comparison.

For example, when that god-river dragon lashed its tail at him, Xu Qing remained as unshakable as a mountain. And when the tail hit, it shattered.

Unfortunately, that only related to his fleshly body, meaning that his cultivation base didn't receive any benefits. That said, his fleshly body was now so strong that the difference between his battle prowess was vastly beyond what it had been before.

The past several months of training had enabled Xu Qing to confirm the exact level of his battle prowess. He could kill four-world Smoldering Gods. As for those with five worlds or more... it would be difficult for him to cause trouble for them. That said, they wouldn't be able to harm him.

Therefore, Xu Qing knew that his most important task right now was to assimilate godly authority to make himself more deadly! At the same time, he had to cultivate the Profound Sun Immortal Light Magic and work on removing the sealing marks.

*I need to fight. I need to gain enlightenment. And I need experience in deadly situations.*

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, Xu Qing and Huang Yan were just about to arrive at Lobster Island.

Huang Yan cast his senses about, and after confirming that Elder Sister was safe, he transformed back into the form of a human fatty.

"By the way, this spot was picked for the training because of its connection to Torchlight. It's one of Torchlight's secret bases on the Forbidden Sea. After Seven Blood Eyes found out about it, they picked it for the event."

Xu Qing didn't react in any way to Huang Yan's words. After detonating his soul and being resurrected, he had reached the point where talk of Torchlight and Zi Qing didn't elicit an emotional reaction from him. It wasn't just his facial expression. He felt that way deep in his heart. He was like a deep sea with no waves on it. But if such feelings did erupt, they would do so with killing intent.

That was how Xu Qing had always been since he was young. The situation with Zi Qing had been the only exception. But that exception had been resolved.

Xu Qing's calm mental state was back. It was with complete calm that he looked at Flame Phoenix in Huang Yan form.

Huang Yan cleared his throat. "Elder Sister doesn't like it when I look like a big bird. She prefers *this* handsome and dashing look."

Huang Yan patted his belly, causing his flesh to jiggle a few times.

Xu Qing chuckled and then looked off into the distance.

1. The Chinese characters for Lobsterfolk does not include the most common characters for 'lobster,' and in fact, it's a more general term that can refer to a variety of clawed crustaceans. For the sake of simplicity, I'm just going to go with the lobster interpretation. 🦞

2. Huang Yan actually gave Xu Qing all of the background information about the Grand Competition in chapter 111. The actual event started some chapters after that. 🦞

### *Chapter 968: The Flame of Love (part 2)*

The sea seemed endless, but of course, that was only relatively speaking. At the moment, Xu Qing and Huang Yan were close enough to the island that they could sense everything happening there. Lobster Island was shaped like a starfish, and it was possible to hear someone playing a flute there.

At the same time, numerous Seven Blood Eyes disciples were in the midst of their training. Some fought and killed. Some looted treasure. It just depended on their personalities. Regardless, the majority conformed to the style of the Seventh Peak, which meant that they kept their true strength hidden in the hopes of encountering good fortune. All of this was very similar to the time Xu Qing participated in the training at the Merfolk Isles. Looking down at the action caused him to reminisce about the past.

Meanwhile, some distance away in the Forbidden Sea, apparently in response to the call of the flute, a huge wave was rushing like a tsunami toward the island.

Within that wave was some enormous entity. As it neared, a terrifying aura built up, covering the island, influencing the dome of heaven, and causing a huge vortex to pick up overhead. All of the Seven Blood Eyes disciples on the island suddenly felt uneasy.

Located directly in the path of the wave was something huge that was very similar to Master Seventh's dreadnaught. It was shaped like a gigantic sword. That, of course, conformed perfectly to Second Elder Sister's sense of style.

Second Elder Sister stood on the dreadnaught clad in a suit of armor, looking very valiant and formidable. Eyes cold, she glared at the incoming wave.

"Screw off!" she growled.

A thousand red sparks lit up within the wave. They looked like numerous pairs of eyes. Around that time, a high-pitched sound rang out that could penetrate the soul. The island trembled, the sea churned, and the entity in the wave became visible.

It was a tattered cloth spread across the surface of the water! It covered an area of dozens of kilometers, and was pitch black, like the Forbidden Sea itself. In fact, if you looked at it casually, you would probably assume it was part of the sea. Of course, the well over one thousand sparks burning on it made it stand out from the sea.

Astonishingly, the sparks were actually a host of scarlet lamps. They floated above the tattered cloth, casting light in all directions, and adding a red hue to the cloth.

They also revealed that there were some faint striations on the cloth. The striations looked like the veins of a leaf. And even more gruish was that there was the faint hint of starlight within the crimson. A terrifying aura spread out from it in all directions, giving rise to a dense mist.

The mist looked like a host of innumerable tentacles, some of which stretched toward Lobster Island and some of which shot in Second Elder Sister's direction. However, as the mist tentacles closed in on Second Elder Sister, terrifying flames suddenly erupted off her.

The flames turned into a projection of Flame Phoenix, whose wings flapped. As a result, everything, including the sky and the sea, burst into flames. That was a defensive measure that Huang Yan had put on Second Elder Sister. Because of the flames, the mist was driven away, and the tattered cloth stopped in place.

Second Elder Sister's eyes glowed with cold light as she leaped off of the huge sword and toward the tattered cloth.

Before she could get far... a rotund figure appeared right in front of her and hugged her.

Looking at her tenderly, he cautiously said, "Elder Sister, calm down! You might disturb the baby! I'll handle this."

When he finished, he snapped his fingers. A tiny spark flew out from his fingers. It was like a beating heart, full of boundless agility, as it flew through the darkness toward the tattered cloth. Along the way, it emanated a sound like faint whispering. It was as if the spark itself were telling the world about itself. And as the voices proliferated, an intangible power began to gather in the spark. An instant later, it emanated a level of heat that could shock the world.

The sounds got more intense as well, as if building to a crescendo. Angry howls turned into a sound like a furnace that could burn all of heaven and earth. It landed on the tattered cloth.

An anguished scream echoed out as the cloth burst into flame. The red lamps were also flames. But you can use the word 'flame' to describe very different things. In the blink of an eye, all of the red lamps melted into slag. The tattered cloth burned. The sky burned. The Forbidden Sea burned. Even the air itself burned. Everything burned. In fact, the fire was so terrifying... that even the mutagen ignited.

Xu Qing was treated to a very rare sight. This part of the Forbidden Sea was no longer black. Everything was melted away, revealing what this area had looked like countless

years in the past. It was blue! It was like a purification! Thanks to that baptism of fire, the impurities and filth were incinerated, leaving behind the pure substructure.

It was Xu Qing's first time seeing Flame Phoenix in action.

It really helped him to understand why Flame Phoenix could exist in a world of gods, and why he could occupy the continent of South Phoenix and be called the southern emperor in Revered Ancient. He did not show respect to gods. He did not sacrifice to them. He was the emperor of South Phoenix!

And now, that emperor was tenderly hugging Second Elder Sister. To him, that spark was like a mere exhalation. In fact, he wasn't even paying attention to the things around him. All of his attention was focused solely on Second Elder Sister.

Meanwhile, Second Elder Sister was glaring at Huang Yan as if she were considering berating him. But then she noticed that Xu Qing was with him, and she held back.

Huang Yan breathed a sigh of relief, and was about to say something, when all of a sudden his eyes hardened and he looked down at the Forbidden Sea.

Xu Qing had been about to bow in greeting to Second Elder Sister when he sensed the same thing. He looked over at the spot where the ashes of the tattered cloth were drifting down into the water.

The fire was already out. However, beneath the surface of the water, there was a piece of cloth roughly the size of a palm. Even after the terrifying flame of purity that Huang Yan had unleashed, it was still around. And it was sinking rapidly down toward the sea floor. It was still burning, but the fact that it had survived up to this point indicated that it was extraordinary.

"Well, isn't that interesting," Huang Yan said thoughtfully.

Xu Qing's eyes shone, partly with surprise and partly with suspicion. "I only glanced at that thing before. Now I realize that there's something familiar about it.... Second Elder Sister. Second Brother-in-Law. Hold on while I go take a closer look."

With that, Xu Qing dropped into the Forbidden Sea and raced down toward that scrap of cloth. At the same time, he threw out the sageheaven god vine, which rapidly grew larger and shot down excitedly like an arrow loosed from a bow.

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed. His sense of surprise from moments ago was because of the clear fluctuations he had felt from the sageheaven god vine. What looked familiar to him were the striations on the tattered cloth....

*It looks very similar to the surface of the sageheaven god vine....*



With such thoughts in mind, Xu Qing sped downward after the god vine and the cloth. After enough time passed for an incense stick to burn, Xu Qing caught up. However...the piece of cloth had reached the limit of how long it could last after being set on fire by Huang Yan.

Even as Xu Qing watched, it burned out of existence. The only thing left behind were a few glimmering bits of starlight.

*That's definitely the aura of the sageheaven god vine. Does that mean that this type of vine was in Revered Ancient even before Feng Lintao came?*

He looked at the sageheaven god vine next to him. It was zipping around begrudgingly as if looking for something. Then, it suddenly shifted into one specific direction and shot off.

Xu Qing followed. He pursued it for several hours before arriving in a very mysterious location that was full of densely packed marine trenches. They almost looked like scars.

The god vine emanated fluctuations of excitement as it shot into one particular trench. Upon reaching the bottom, it started burrowing through the sludge there.

Xu Qing didn't proceed immediately. He stopped at the edge of the trench, relying on his connection to the vine to get a sense of what it was doing.

Eventually, the god vine reached an open area on the other side of the sludge. There, it found an object.

It was a pagoda! A towering but dilapidated pagoda! And around it was wrapped a withered sageheaven god vine. It looked like it had been buried in this spot for many years, as it emanated an extremely ancient aura.[1]

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Around the time that Xu Qing found the pagoda and Huang Yan was in the middle of comforting Second Elder Sister, there were five locations in Revered Ancient where the power of a homing signal shot out into the area beyond the heavens.

Those five homing signals all came from different locations in Revered Ancient. But in each of those spots there was a group of three or four cultivators clad in silver robes and seated cross-legged. They were all from different species, but their clothing was the same and they had similar auras. They all resembled the group of three led by Feng Lintao! They were from the holy lands!

The areas where they sat featured complicated spell formations. As they performed incantation gestures, the spell formations silently rotated and emitted mysterious

threads that somehow connected to the starry sky beyond the Revered Ancient mainland.

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Out in the starry sky, starlight rippled and distorted as numerous celestial objects flew along. Some looked like planets, some looked like land masses, and some looked like mountains. From the look of it, there were well over a hundred of them.

They *were* holy lands!

If there were a pair of eyes that could look down on the starry sky they would see that these holy lands... were all heading toward Revered Ancient.

They formed a line, and they maintained distance between each other. They seemed to be organized into groups.

In the lead position there were five holy lands. Two were terrifyingly huge mountains. One was a boundless land mass. And two were gruish statues. Immense pressure radiated out of them and into the surrounding starry sky, which caused countless asteroids to shatter into dust. They were getting closer and closer to Revered Ancient.

In one of the huge holy lands was a mountain, atop which stood an old man in a golden daoist robe. He looked very similar to a human, except that he had bright red skin.

As he looked at Revered Ancient off in the distance, he muttered in a raspy voice, "I never thought I would live to come back here...."

1. At this point in the story, the author uses a single Chinese character to describe the "pagoda," and that character could be interpreted in different ways, including "tower." In my original translation pass, I interpreted it in that way (tower). Later, the author adds another character to create the word that more specifically means "pagoda," although usually it's used to describe very tall, tower-like pagodas, such as the ones in [these images](#). 📖

*Chapter 969: Heavenly Portents!*

The Forbidden Sea was boundless, and so was the seafloor.

Before the broken face of Eminent Desolation came to Revered Ancient, there wasn't a single powerful expert who would dare to say they controlled the seafloor. At the very most, they might control a certain portion of it.

One reason was that the seafloor just covered too much area. Another reason was that there were simply too many layers of sedimentary rock. And that became more the case the deeper you got into the sea. What was more, you never knew what was underneath

those layers. There could be stunning underwater caves, or there could be even more of the sea.

The truth was that the true depths of the sea contained countless mysteries. And some of the most ancient varieties actually surpassed the Brilliant Heaven Godfolk from back in the day. There were even areas where Grand Emperors wouldn't tread. Therefore, whether it was the Summer Immortals of yesteryear or the Ancient Emperors after them, they all dreamed of controlling the seafloor, but never made that dream into a reality.

Thankfully, even though the seafloor was mysterious and had a history that stretched back countless years, there had never been an instance in which anything from the seafloor posed a threat to the mainland. Gradually, the ancient peoples had just come to accept that it was a very mysterious place.

Eventually, Eminent Desolation came, and the Sea of Endlessness turned into the Forbidden Sea. When the powerful mutagen reached the seafloor, it went from being simply mysterious to being *terrifyingly* mysterious. That was especially true of the outer sea, where it was certain... that unknown gods existed!

Xu Qing had long suspected that the giant and the bronze chariot were capable of going to the outer sea.

The marine trench he had just reached wasn't anywhere near the outer sea. And compared to the seafloor as a whole, it was as minuscule as a single grain of sand on a beach. If the sageheaven god vine hadn't followed its senses here, Xu Qing would never have encountered it randomly, and definitely wouldn't have noticed the pagoda hidden in its silty depths. This place could be called the perfect hiding spot.

By means of his connection to the god vine, Xu Qing spent some time studying the area to check for threats.

It was dark there, but not silent. The cries of unknown beings echoed out from the depths of the sea, low-pitched and lingering. After confirming that there was no immediate danger, Xu Qing followed the god vine into the trench.

It was even darker inside, as if it was a gaping maw ready to mercilessly devour any living thing that came along.

Thanks to his connection to the vine, and the speed Xu Qing was capable of, it only took about fifteen minutes before he reached a tunnel that the god vine had created when burrowing into the trench. The tunnel was slowly filing in.

Without any hesitation, Xu Qing shot into the tunnel. Upon reaching the end, he found the god vine.

If one could look to the bottom of the sea, they would quickly realize that within the sludge at the bottom of this trench was something like a gigantic bubble some 30,000 meters across. There was no sea water in the bubble, nor any sludge. There was just the pagoda with the withered vine wrapped around it. Xu Qing and his god vine were currently just at the edge of the bubble, still inside the sludge.

When looking at the bubble and the pagoda, Xu Qing didn't feel any pressure. It was almost as if they were things from the mortal world. But what was very gruish was that though he could look upon them with his physical eyes, he couldn't see them at all with divine sense.

*You can see them but not sense them?*

Upon realizing how profound this place was, he looked at the god vine next to him. The god vine was pulsing with emotional fluctuations. Clearly, it wanted to rush to the pagoda, but didn't dare to actually do so. It seemed to be filled with a sense of admiration, as if for a family member. Eventually, it made a decision. It approached Xu Qing, nuzzled him a few times, and then decisively shot toward the bubble.

Xu Qing didn't stop it.

The bubble rippled as the vine burrowed into it and headed toward the pagoda. Compared to the bubble, Xu Qing's god vine, which was some three meters thick, was still tiny. That said, it was quite long. Upon reaching the pagoda, it wrapped around it a few times like a snake. Then it made contact with the withered vine.

From the god vine's emotional fluctuations, Xu Qing could sense that it was receiving a legacy. The sensation only lasted for a brief moment before vanishing. Xu Qing looked on with rapt attention for a moment. Upon noticing no further developments, he stepped forward to enter the bubble.

However, that was when a shocking force of resistance surged in the bubble, making it impossible for Xu Qing to enter it. His eyes flashed as his energy and blood surged. Fleshly body power erupted, which he used to forcefully take a step forward. He completed his step, and the touch of his foot caused the bubble to tremble violently. The force of resistance grew stronger, becoming a mountain-toppling, sea-draining power that battered him in the opposite direction.

Xu Qing frowned and took another step forward. Then a third, fourth, and fifth. The bubble didn't shatter. Instead, as Xu Qing proceeded, it sank inward. As it did, the force of resistance grew disturbingly powerful. After Xu Qing took a sixth step, the force of resistance surged further, creating a crushing backlash attack that caused Xu Qing to shiver. At this point, he had no choice but to back up.

Back in his original position, he looked up at the bubble. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth. It was the first time Xu Qing had been hurt in five months!

*It has Imperial Sovereign might!*

Surprise gleamed in Xu Qing's eyes.

Xu Qing's journey in the Forbidden Sea was for the purpose of tempering his body. Unfortunately, his body's defenses were so powerful that things had gone too smoothly, which was not what he wanted.

After finding this bubble, however, Xu Qing experienced a flicker of excitement for the first time in five months. He studied his god vine briefly to confirm that his actions weren't affecting it negatively. It was absorbing its legacy, and seemed like it needed more time.

Therefore, determination flared in Xu Qing as he took out a Flame Phoenix feather and used divine will to send a message to Huang Yan explaining that he was working on cultivation at the seafloor, and would be coming back later.

Although Huang Yan had been tasked by Master Seventh with being Xu Qing's dao protector, the inner sea wasn't a very dangerous place, and given Xu Qing's battle prowess, he would be fine on his own. What was more, Huang Yan had just reunited with his Elder Sister. Therefore... he quickly agreed, which would give him more time with his Elder Sister.

And thus, three months passed by relatively quickly.

During that time, Xu Qing stayed in the marine trench. He would spend time every day training with the immortal light. Occasionally, he would go out to hunt sea beasts to warm himself up, whereupon he would return to the mysterious bubble to temper his fleshly body. Every time the bubble injured him, he recovered quickly. It was a tempering that turned out to be shockingly effective.

Xu Qing could sense that he was gaining much more control over his body compared to before. What was especially noteworthy was that he was slowly getting used to the force of rejection from the bubble. He was able to take additional steps, slowly but surely. And the backlash attack changed as well. As it turned out, Xu Qing had found the perfect whetstone to hone himself.

The Seven Blood Eyes training event soon ended. Huang Yan returned to South Phoenix with his Elder Sister, and would occasionally check in with Xu Qing using the feather. He was increasingly relieved to realize that Xu Qing really was doing fine.

After three months, the god vine was close to finishing with its legacy.

On one particular day, Xu Qing was in front of the mysterious bubble, tempering his fleshly body. After taking several steps forward, he was about to proceed when he suddenly sensed something from the dilapidated pagoda.

The withered vine there was crumbling into ashes, which were being sucked into Xu Qing's infant god vine. Then it unwrapped from the pagoda as if waking up. After shaking itself out, it turned, shot away from the pagoda, and exited the bubble. It circled around him a few times, nuzzled him gently, and sent forth fluctuations of sadness. It almost seemed like it had just lost a loved one.

Xu Qing reached out and stroked the vine. He had experienced emotions like that in the past.

After the god vine's emotions had stabilized a bit, Xu Qing projected a message with divine will.

*"Can you take me in there?"*

The vine immediately gave an affirmative response.

Xu Qing nodded and sent out Little Shadow. "You stand guard outside. Keep an eye out for anything unusual."

Little Shadow looked slightly indignant. Ever since the damned vine showed up, the shadow had clearly slipped in the standings. After working so hard to try to outdo Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior, it suddenly found that a new favorite had surpassed it. Considering that it had long recovered all of its mental faculties, it now wondered if this was the same feeling Patriarch Golden Vajra Warrior had experienced years ago.

Xu Qing didn't pick up on what Little Shadow was feeling, as he was paying attention to the god vine.

The god vine quickly wrapped around Xu Qing, then carried him toward the bubble.

It was different than when Xu Qing tried to enter the bubble alone. This time, there was no force of rejection; with the vine escorting him, he was able to enter with ease.

Once inside, Xu Qing was visibly moved.

*There's no mutagen here. And this aura....*

The inside of the mysterious bubble was clearly different than what was on the outside.

*There's no spirit power. Instead, it feels like the starry sky.*

As Xu Qing sensed those things, he stepped forward until he was right in front of the door leading into the pagoda.

He reached out and pushed. The door opened quietly, and an ancient sensation emerged, like the mottled light of the setting sun coming out of the ancient past.  
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There were three crystal coffins in the pagoda.

The skeletons inside weren't human. They had tails, as well as horns on their heads. It wasn't possible to see what their bodies had looked like in life, as all that remained were bones. It was clear evidence that no matter how strong someone was, time could make them slowly fade away.

In addition to the coffins and skeletons, there was an altar, atop which rested a chunk of black jade the size of a head. It was covered with cracks.

Meanwhile, the walls inside the pagoda were decorated with a map of a starry sky. It was a star chart.

There was nothing else.

Xu Qing took it all in, thought back to the withered god vine, and then came to the conclusion that this pagoda was a magical flight device used to traverse the starry sky. Some accident must have resulted in it falling into the Forbidden Sea in Revered Ancient. Considering how old it was, and based on the lingering scraps of time Xu Qing could sense, he could only assume that the event occurred in the time before Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity. In other words, it arrived before the broken face came.

*There must have been a survivor!*

Xu Qing's eyes narrowed. If there wasn't, how could the place be so clean? What was more, although it was technically possible that the coffins had been set up before the deaths occurred, it looked more like the result of meticulous work after the fact.

*If I'm right, then countless years ago this pagoda fell here, and the survivor buried his or her companions before leaving the Forbidden Sea.*

There weren't enough details to pinpoint the exact time period involved, which meant that it would be that much harder to track down where that survivor ended up in Revered Ancient. What was more, cultivators could easily alter physical evidence, which would make it even more difficult to ascertain the historical details. But Xu Qing didn't care about that.

After looking around the interior of the pagoda, he felt a bit disappointed. Finally, he took a closer look at the star chart. He didn't recognize it, but he committed it to memory anyway.

Finally, he turned to leave. Just before taking his first step, though, his expression flickered, and he turned to look at the altar, which he had previously inspected, only to find nothing of note.

His gaze came to rest on the chunk of cracked black jade. He sent some soul threads into the jade, whereupon his expression flickered again, and his eyes shone with incredulity.

“Is that...?” Heart rate increasing, he prepared to examine the jade further.

But then, out of nowhere....

Little Shadow sent some very urgent emotional fluctuations to him via their connection. They were fluctuations of terror and confusion!

Along with them came an image. Within that image, it was possible to see the seawater outside the bubble sinking in on itself. It wasn't just sinking down in this location. The effects were far-reaching. Pressure began to build up on the seafloor, and deafening rumbling sounds rose up. Sea beasts everywhere trembled.

Xu Qing's face fell as he burst into motion. After shooting out of the bubble and sensing what was happening, he rocketed upward until he broke past the surface of the water.

Looking around, he could see that there was a formless power descending from the sky, which was causing the surface of the Forbidden Sea to sink down. Up above, the dome of heaven dimmed. Countless lightning bolts raced back and forth, engulfing the Forbidden Sea, the mainland, and all of Revered Ancient. The entire cosmos seemed to be shaking.

In all parts of Revered Ancient, people could look up and see the same supernatural phenomena.

And then, at the highest point in the dome of heaven, five shooting stars appeared. They started out as mere pinpricks, but grew brighter and larger with every moment that passed. Eventually, everyone could see two huge mountains, two statues, and a planet. They brought boundless power, like a tempest from the starry sky, as well as something profoundly ancient, like something from the ancient past that had seen countless vicissitudes of time.

Each of these objects went in a different direction. Specifically, they split up to go to the east, south, west, north, and center!

All of Revered Ancient was shaking. Terrifying pressure weighed down on all species, and living individuals everywhere began to tremble uncontrollably.

Heavenly portents!



In the north of Revered Ancient were endless ice plains that were controlled by the Northfate Kings. There, the eye of a god peered upward.

In the west of Revered Ancient, a cold snort echoed out from the Redland Nobleplexuses.

In the south were the Netherworld Chasmcorpses, where a boundless mist of death rose up.

And in the east... the three gods of the Firemoon Darkheaven people looked up. In the imperial capital of humankind, the empress, clad in an imperial robe and crown, stood outside the imperial palace, looking up with cold eyes. In addition, there were many other gods, some active, some in hiding. All looked up into the canopy of heaven.

In the east of Revered Ancient were some lonely mountains, where Yu Liuchen sat in a bamboo grove sipping tea. He yawned.

“What’s with the racket? Aren’t you worried about waking the Father God?”

Some gods were indifferent. Some gods were happy. Some gods were envious. Some gods were apathetic. Some gods were hungry.

And then there was the Heaveneater Region, which had been covered with a mist of mutagen for months now. In the imperial capital of the Sovereign Kingdom of Violet and Cyan, Zi Qing sat on the throne, a smile on his face.

“From within time, I saw....”

*Chapter 970: Fifth Godly Authority!*

The holy lands were coming! As of this moment, species throughout Revered Ancient reacted. Some trembled, some got excited, some seemed confused. Regardless, at this point in time in Revered Ancient... the holy lands arrived and took center stage.

Ever since the departure of Ancient Emperor Dark Serenity, stories about the holy lands had circulated among the species of Revered Ancient.

The emperors of the species that had left, as well as the chosen they took with them, established numerous holy lands. And in the tens of thousands of years that had passed since then, those holy lands had been vilified by some, but looked to with anticipation by others. Some people believed them to be cowards who had betrayed and abandoned Revered Ancient at a critical moment. Some people thought they embodied hope, and that when they returned, the suffering of Revered Ancient would be turned into the dawn of a new era.

Regardless of the reality, they were coming.

Why were they here? It wasn't clear!

Were they friend or foe? It wasn't clear!

Out over the Forbidden Sea, Xu Qing looked up into the canopy of heaven. *Revered Ancient is like a cage that's easy to enter but hard to leave.*

Ever since running into Feng Lintao and his companions, and thus learning that the holy lands were coming, Xu Qing had been wondering why the holy lands were returning.

*I wonder if they have a way to leave....*

As Xu Qing contemplated the situation, he got a voice message from Huang Yan via the feather.

*"Are you seeing this, Xu Qing? It's not just holy lands cultivators who are coming. These are the actual holy lands themselves. It's not a good sign. My guess is that they've figured out a way to leave.*

*"Based on information I've gained from you humans, plus things I know, I can tell you that there are over a hundred holy lands. They organize themselves into four categories. From highest to lowest, they're: heavenly, earthly, celestial, and terrestrial.*

*"Given the aura of the five that just arrived, I'm fairly certain they're terrestrial-level holy lands, in other words, the weakest variety. Holy lands like that make up something like fifty or more of the total number. In terms of the celestial, earthly, and heavenly categories of holy lands, it's hard to say how many there are and which species control them.*

*"That said, the empress can probably confirm that the Dark Serenity holy land was once heavenly-level. But now... who knows if it's still that strong.*

*"Looks to me like, going forward, more and more of the holy lands are going to be coming down. Starting now, Revered Ancient is going to be a chaotic place. For the time being, I'm going to stay here in South Phoenix to watch over things. You keep working on your cultivation in the Forbidden Sea. Just be careful."*

Xu Qing sent a quick response, then looked in the direction of Sea-Sealing County. By means of a unique magic, he could stay in touch with Sea-Sealing County even at great distances, and now he was being asked for instructions about how to treat the holy lands.

Xu Qing thought about it briefly, then replied, *"Stay on guard. Observe only."*

After that, he sighed. But only a moment later, his eyes glittered. Given that he had no idea what the holy lands were doing here, Xu Qing knew that there wasn't much he

could do about the situation. All he could do was keep getting stronger and react to whatever developments occurred.

Therefore, he dropped back down into the water and once again went to the dilapidated pagoda in the marine trench. Before long, he was back in front of the bubble. With the help of the god vine, he returned to the pagoda, where he unhesitatingly sent some soul threads into the cracks in the black jade. A moment later, he retracted the soul threads.

*My senses were accurate. That thing has a vestige of godly authority in it! It's the same type of vestige that exists in my void soil as a faint vestige.*

Just before leaving earlier, Xu Qing had sensed that faint vestige in his void soil flickering slightly. Now he had confirmed his suspicion from earlier thanks to his soul threads.

*The big question is who originally controlled that godly authority.*

Xu Qing's eyes shone as his heart filled with anticipation.

He was well aware that it was going to be extremely difficult to light up all 1,000 of the faint vestiges in his void soil. It would require him to devour a lot more gods, or at least, things connected to gods. That was why it had been so beneficial for him to hunt godly entities and absorb their godliness. Unfortunately, the process had been going very slow.

The fact that he could sense this particular godly authority indicated that he had a big destined opportunity at hand. Therefore, he didn't hesitate at all to sit down cross-legged in front of the black jade and use his soul threads to seek enlightenment.

Time passed.

A few days later, he opened his eyes.

*It seems to be connected to sound in some way....*

Xu Qing still wasn't sure of the details, despite the days spent immersed in what had seemed to be successful enlightenment. He felt like he was looking at flowers in fog, or the moon reflected in water. He wasn't ready to give up though. Instead, he took out the bottle of holy fardark nectar. He swallowed some. All of a sudden, his mind filled with a profound sensation, and he continued to seek enlightenment.

A month passed, slowly but surely.

Xu Qing was deep in meditation, and pulsed with an ethereal sensation. In that mysterious state, he was certain he could hear something.

It was like chanting. It seemed far but near. Then near but far. Apparently, it was describing something, except he couldn't hear it clearly. The echoing chant stirred the godsource within him, causing that faint vestige in his void soil to start flickering more dramatically.

A second month passed.

Xu Qing had now been seeking enlightenment in a sustained manner for two months.

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During the two months that passed, the newly arrived holy lands behaved in different ways.

The holy land that landed in the central part of Revered Ancient exterminated a minor species, but the other four didn't do anything like that. They didn't make contact with any outside forces, and instead sent out teams to collect resources. They seemed interested in gathering mutagen, especially objects that had been deeply infected with mutagen.

Their actions were noted by many. In the west, there was one species that relocated to the spot where the holy land had descended. The reason was that the holy land was filled with members of their own species who had left back in the day.

The most sensational event played out in the central region, after the statue-shaped holy land wiped out the minor species. A month after they arrived, the top species of Revered Ancient, which was extremely mysterious, and operated in the central region, took action. Two gods emerged from their territory and went to the holy land. When they left the holy land, it was dead silent. All living beings in the holy land had been killed. Then the statue crumbled into ashes that vanished into the air.

Afterward, a voice echoed through Revered Ancient.

*"The holy lands may not step into the central regions!"*

That incident shook all of Revered Ancient, and it also shook the other holy lands that had arrived. In the blink of an eye, the holy lands suddenly weren't as untouchable as they had seemed. In fact, the other holy lands started being even more cautious in their actions. The reactions from the various species in Revered Ancient were mixed. Some weren't sure what to think, while others were relieved. Some seemed confused....

Then another event took place that was similar to when the first five holy lands had arrived.

This time, six holy lands descended like falling stars into different locations.

In the days to follow, more events like that occurred. Every so often, a group of holy lands would show up and fall down into Revered Ancient. Whenever the ancient holy lands of different shapes and sizes arrived, rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth. Great pressure would weigh down.

Eventually it reached the point where twenty-three holy lands had arrived.

The strange thing was that all of the holy lands seemed interested in gathering mutagen and mutagen-related objects, and nothing else. It was as if the only purpose of their return was to collect those things.

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In the pagoda at the bottom of the sea, Xu Qing was reaching a critical point in his enlightenment.

The vague chanting got stronger, but at the same time, he still couldn't hear clearly what it was saying.

However, he could tell that the same chant was being repeated. There was an ancient power within the chanting, something extremely domineering that was slowly filling him, entering his mind and replacing his perceptions. From the look of it, it was trying to take away his concept of sound. It almost seemed like it was attempting to enslave him. To strip away his sense of self, and make him a servant of the chant.

It was a very dangerous state to be in. At the same time, there was something very enticing that was taking over his perceptions, subtly attempting to tell him that, as long as he continued, he would gain control over this godly authority.

Suddenly, Xu Qing's eyes opened. They were bloodshot. Godly authority erupted within him. Especially noteworthy was the fact that Hellfei's eye appeared on his forehead, shining with bizarre light. In an instant, Xu Qing gained complete lucidity. Then, without any hesitation, he ended the session of enlightenment.

A sound like a string being snapped echoed within his mind. A tremor passed through him, and he coughed up a massive mouthful of blood. A serious look appeared on his face as he struggled to control his breathing.

*The same feeling of trying to be enslaved!*

He scowled. During the two months that had passed, he had reached this dangerous state every time he tried to seek enlightenment. Without Hellfei's eye, and his extensive experience with altered perceptions, it was highly likely that he wouldn't have survived the first time it happened.

“But why...” he murmured. He had considered that this godly authority might contain some sort of life force of its own, and that it was trying to possess him.

But after numerous experiments, he noticed that the chanting never changed. It always proceeded in exactly the same way. That certainly didn't seem like the behavior of a living thing.

*Don't tell me... that I'm seeking enlightenment in the wrong way?*

When all was said and done, this was technically his first time trying to seek enlightenment of godly authority. All of his current understanding of godly authority was based on pure instinct. He acquired both the violet moon and the misfortune by devouring them, not by seeking enlightenment. As for the godly curse, he had gained it more in the manner of learning a technique.

For the moment, he decided to stop seeking enlightenment, and take a few days to review what he had experienced over the past few months. At a certain point, a tremor passed through him.

*Perhaps my method of seeking enlightenment isn't at the right level. That could explain why I keep dealing with the enslavement attempts. I'm being influenced by the godly authority, except that what I really want is to seize control of it! But how to seize control...?*

After some more thought, his eyes glittered.

*Maybe I shouldn't be listening. Maybe listening is what's allowing me to be influenced.*

With a determined expression, he rose and left the mysterious bubble. This time, instead of getting help from the god vine, he tried to force his way back inside.

After taking a few steps, the mountain-toppling, sea-draining force of resistance slammed into him. Xu Qing ignored it, braced himself, and took another step forward. When the backlash attack hit him, he redirected the force to his ears. All of a sudden, his head thrummed, and intense pain filled him. His ears started to bleed, his eardrums shattered, and his ear bones crumbled.

Xu Qing tumbled backward, the world spinning around him. He could no longer hear. That said, his expression was calm. Enduring the pain, he called on the confused god vine, then hurried back into the pagoda.

The moment he was inside, he sat down cross-legged and sent soul threads into the black jade to seek enlightenment. This time, he wasn't listening. Instead, he was sensing with his mind.

Gradually, he could 'hear' the chanting again. The chanting came from the black jade, but it was also coming from the faint lineament within him, as well as the godsource sea within him. A flash of understanding appeared. All of a sudden, he realized that things were different compared to before. Godsource raged, stimulating his senses. It was as if some sort of shackle had been broken, allowing him to reach a new level.

He understood.

As long as he didn't listen, but 'sensed' instead, then he could still hear. And when he used his senses and stepped into the realm of godliness, he could activate power that came from that state. It was something boundless and primeval that originated in primal-chaos itself. Or perhaps it was a very ancient power that existed in the world.

Cultivators couldn't control or acquire that power. The only way to do so was to use godsource. The reason was that the source of the power was too profound. By seizing it, one acquired the qualifications to use it. And it would form a sealing mark. That... was godly authority.

However, that was only related to using it. To delve into its substructure was something that ordinary gods couldn't do.

The faint lineament that had flickered months ago was calling out to the black jade from Xu Qing's void soil. And now, it started glowing brightly as it turned into a god talisman.

It was Xu Qing's fifth god talisman.

A god talisman of sound!

Control of all sound in the world was an essential element of omniscience.