

Villain 961

Chapter 961: The Dao Chang Realm, a blowout of opportunities

There was a significant contrast between the way of heaven and the way of humanity. The true way of heaven nurtured all things and beings without expecting anything in return.

However, the way of humanity tended to cause harm and provide more than necessary. After all, humans were inherently selfish and driven by selfish desires. They consistently prioritized themselves in all matters.

“To follow the way of heaven means genuinely nurturing all living beings without seeking anything in return.”

Certainly, if Gu Changge wished to do so, he could. The realm he occupied required no external support; a single thought could bring blessings to all living beings. Having completely refined the demon lord’s true blood, Gu Changge essentially no longer needed to deliberately consume the essence to empower himself.

During his transformation into a human being, he also contemplated utilizing the way of humanity to achieve enlightenment and transcendence. The way of humanity and the way of heaven complemented each other, offering numerous opportunities for success. Because whether it was the way of heaven or the way of humanity, fundamentally, it was the evolution of the concept of Dao.

Once standing at the culmination of all tangible and intangible things, he deduced the principles of Daoism, restrained laws, and formulated the essence of Daoism. With nowhere else to go on his current path, the only option was to adhere to the original plan, break free from the initial constraints, and truly ascend.

“My path could be that of humanity, or of heaven, or of the world—countless paths, myriad ways—but it is merely my contemplation. As long as I contemplate, I can create a new path, a new law, a new order of causality...”

Gu Changge spoke softly, his thoughts gradually retracting. Whether it was the way of humanity or the way of heaven, he had gained a profound understanding of their essence.

Tracing back to its origin, Dao had no concept at all; it simply existed without constraints, until it became a concept. Just as the real world of mountains and seas was self-contained, with its destiny stable and prosperous, there was no need for interference.

In reality, this process didn't take long. At most, hundreds or thousands of years would bring about a remarkable, blowout-like change.

"A hundred years or a thousand years may not seem long, but for me, it can serve as a foundation to establish the concept of the way of heaven."

"The fate of all beings is intertwined with the future destiny of the real world of mountains and seas. Fate may be unpredictable, but fortune can be found. In that case, I shall make a grand wish today: if all beings thrive, so shall I."

"Today, the real world of mountains and seas shall change its name to the Dao Chang Realm."

Gu Changge contemplated the myriad beings in the real world of mountains and seas, then with a wave of his sleeve, he gathered the accumulated fortune and sealed the Dao Chang Realm. As he recited two magnificent and ancient mantras, they shimmered brightly in the void, descending into the depths of the sky like an infinite universe.

It marked the first time in history that the name of a true world had been altered. When the real world was conceived and born, it was bestowed with a true name, carrying profound significance, making it seemingly immutable.

But today, Gu Changge, fueled by the collective wishes of all living beings, made a mighty decree to rename the Mountain and Sea Realm as the Dao Chang Realm. With the wishes of all beings as its source of power, he would assertively reshape its foundation.

In a sense, the stronger the sentient beings, the stronger the Dao Chang True Realm would naturally become.

"Dao Chang Realm, so audacious. Is this a plan to re-establish this real world and forge a new path?"

The ancestor of the Gu family suddenly rose from his seat in the Gu family's ancestral hall, his eyes shining with astonishment as he muttered to himself, finding it hard to believe all of this. In terms of his cultivation level, he knew he could never achieve such a feat of renaming the real world. He

reckoned that only his distant ancestor possessed such abilities. However, he understood that such a profound act would likely involve immense cause and effect.

Ordinary individuals would have been crushed long ago, not even leaving behind their souls. The name of the real world held extraordinary significance from its very inception, and in a way, it predetermined the future fate of this world.

For instance, the name “Mountain and Sea Realm,” while evoking a sense of vastness and expansiveness, was too simple and ordinary in the vastness of the real world. Over his long lifespan, the ancestor of the Gu family had witnessed numerous worlds like this—Cloud Realms, River Realms, and so on.

In simple terms, within the immense real world, such a plain name lacked the grandeur to bear significant fortune. Since Gu Changge had changed the name of the Mountain and Sea Realm to the Dao Chang Realm, he must have carefully considered the myriad consequences.

“Is it your belief that the real world of mountains and seas won’t endure the looming weight of the future and will collapse prematurely, prompting this grandiose name change?” The ancestor of the Gu family was stunned.

In that moment, a rolling wave of luck blanketed the entire sky. The boundless Dao of light surged forth, stars filling the heavens, and the vast universe converging. Across every universe, cultivators and creatures alike felt the astounding shift. It seemed as though an endless stream of fortune was gathering from every corner of the world, inundating all.

The heavens and earth reverberated with thunder, myriad rays of light interwoven, and countless auspicious hues converging like rivers. Ordinary cultivators may not have comprehended the significance of this phenomenon, but those steeped in ancient wisdom sensed the remarkable change.

Among them was Wang Xiaoniu’s Master, an old man clad in Daoist robes named Jiu Jianxian. He could be deemed the foremost powerhouse conceived and born since the era of the real world of mountains and seas, having reached the half-step Dao Realm. The sheer magnitude of luck within him was unfathomable. Those who reached such heights were individuals blessed with boundless opportunities and unparalleled talent throughout the ages.

“I faintly glimpse the path ahead, a glimmer of light emerging. Perhaps it’s a sign of impending good fortune for me...” In this moment, he too was astonished, not just by the transformations

occurring in the real world of mountains and seas, but also by the subtle shifts within his own cultivation.

Having stood at the threshold of the half-step Dao Realm for countless years, he had almost begun to doubt the possibility of further progress. Yet, with the sky ablaze with fortune and blessings reaching every living being, he could faintly discern a ray of hope.

How could this not uplift him? He simply wanted to gaze up at the sky and smile.

“Such benevolence, this old man truly has no way to repay.”

“It’s not just me; I fear it will be difficult for the entire populace and all spirits to repay.”

The old man in the Daoist robe eventually regained his composure, yet his eyes still betrayed his excitement and astonishment as he bowed towards the endless void.

If Gu Changge hadn’t taken this action, he wouldn’t have known when he’d ever have the opportunity to reach a higher realm.

On this day, for the entire Mountain and Sea True World—no, the now-renamed Dao Chang Realm—held extraordinary significance. Almost every living being, even those who had never delved into cultivation, felt its effects.

Of course, the more advanced a person was, the greater the impact, as Gu Changge’s actions aligned with the way of heaven, which nurtured all without seeking anything in return. Thus, the more prosperous the Dao Chang Realm’s fortune, the stronger this world would become.

Gu Changge had effectively reinstated the concept of the Dao of Heaven, essentially becoming the new Dao of Heaven in this realm. Regardless of whether it was the self-centered way of mortals or the altruistic way of heaven, it all stemmed from him. He merely followed his original thoughts and employed the way of heaven as a tool to strengthen himself.

Ultimately, whether it was the self-centered path of mortals or the altruistic way of heaven, if it benefited him, he didn’t hesitate to pursue it.

“Before calamity strikes, there will be countless powerhouses in the Dao Chang Realm. The more of these powerhouses there are, the stronger I will become as the embodiment of the Dao of Heaven.”

“In a sense, I’ve harnessed the power of the Dao of Heaven and integrated it into my own strengths.”

“This could also be deemed my incarnation of heaven.”

Gu Changge’s gaze was profound as he once again swept his hand, seizing the fortune from all races in the heavens. His robe billowed, the fortunes swirling around him, hinting at the emergence of a new world. The winds whispered, thunder rumbled, divine light flickered, and the essence of chaos permeated the air.

It was as if he were reopening the primordial chaos, as the aura of the river of time faded away.

However, reality proved otherwise. Successive treasures of divine weapons were birthed within this space at Gu Changge’s mere thought. Among them were palm-sized small pots, gathering the essence of heaven, earth, sun, and moon, capable of nurturing sacred medicinal plants. There were also white jade holy bottles, able to condense divine medicine and reshape bones, along with the twin swords of the stars, the order of mountains and rivers, the battle spear of gods and demons, and a rusty bronze ancient ring. Various fist-sized light clusters, shrouded in mystery and exuding a supreme aura, also emerged.

With another sweep of his sleeves, Gu Changge drew in some solitary souls wandering in unknown realms and cast them into these light orbs. Among them were reclusive powerhouses and near-fallen dignitaries. Some had their memories sealed by him, while others had “mission” memories implanted.

Furthermore, Gu Changge gathered wisps of innate chaotic energy, shaping them into saplings, seeds, golden scrolls, and shooting stars, and added them to the light clusters. These artifacts rivaled even the seven palm-heavenly artifacts once collected by Gu Changge in the upper realm. Some fortunate items even bore the imprint of Gu Changge’s eccentric tastes.

Clattering sounds echoed as the long river of time blurred, accompanied by the gentle lapping of waves, creating a mesmerizing sight. After contemplating for a while, Gu Changge decided not to scatter these creations into the long river of time. Instead, he flicked his sleeves and scattered them across various locations in the Dao Chang Realm.

Divine light streaked across the sky, descending from the deepest reaches of the universe like a torrential rain of opportunities. If tossed into the long river of time, there would inevitably be unforeseen accidents, potentially altering the past or future events. Hence, Gu Changge opted to test them within the Dao Chang Realm first, before considering any alterations to the entire timeline.

At that moment, the brilliance of the sky scattered like heavy snow across all universes and regions. Some cultivators with remarkable cultivation bases had already sensed the shifts in luck, yet they remained puzzled by the cause. They glanced upward but felt nothing out of the ordinary.

Throughout the universe, the appearance of these lights triggered significant changes in the previously stable fate. In various locations, fortune pools, immortal mountains, treasure lands, and even ancient ruins emerged.

The surging luck within the entire Dao Chang Realm inexplicably swelled at this moment. In a region where martial arts thrived, a very ordinary boy was practicing boxing in the secluded back mountain. However, he accidentally encountered a ferocious tiger and fled for his life, only to stumble into an icy-cold pool.

The pool water was crystal clear and bone-chilling, and as the young man fell into it, it seemed to awaken some powerful presence.

Buzz!!!

In the depths of the pool, a bell containing an innate aura materialized. This bell exuded an aura of heaven's suppression and harbored countless mysteries and pathways of Daoism. It promptly entered the young man's sea of consciousness.

An astonishing aura emanated from the boy, frightening the tigers away from the cold pool. Subsequently, he found himself flooded with memories, prompting him to turn away from martial arts and pursue Daoism.

Meanwhile, in an unremarkable sect, an equally ordinary outer disciple tended to the elder's medicine field, watering and weeding as he went. Suddenly, he stumbled upon a small green bottle emitting a faint glow. Curious, he reached for it, only to feel a searing burn in his palm, causing him to hastily release it. In an instant, the bottle vanished, leaving behind a sensation akin to a hallucination.

Simultaneously, in another location, within a prominent family, a girl bullied by her aunt resorted to feigning madness to evade mistreatment by a malicious servant. Hiding alone in a corner, nibbling on stale, tough steamed buns, her eyes gleamed with determination as she muttered about avenging her biological mother and exacting retribution on those who tormented her.

Suddenly, she noticed a faint golden light emanating from the tattered book she used to prop up the table corner. Setting aside her cold bun, she hastily retrieved the book, and the faint golden light surged directly between her eyebrows.

“Ruthless good fortune,” she chanted the ancient words in her mind.

This was a supreme divine skill that could aid her in condensing her demon body and achieving an immortal form, far surpassing the skills cultivated by the family’s core members.

Similar scenes unfolded across various locations. Throughout the vast expanse of the Dao Chang Realm, amazing visions of varying degrees manifested, bestowing different fortunes upon different individuals.

Some received assistance from their ancestors, while others gained access to divine techniques enabling them to assume others’ identities and wield potent power. Some acquired summoning divine weapons capable of calling upon powerful allies for aid.

Fortunes overflowed, and a myriad of adventures sprang forth like mushrooms after rain.

Chapter 962: Gu Xian’er’s whereabouts, it’s time to prepare the second gift

The tumultuous stream of luck surged through various universes like a river flowing into the sea, causing the entire Dao Chang Realm to undergo incredibly astonishing changes.

The most immediate beneficiaries were the unparalleled figures of all races and traditions, although they were not entirely clear about the significance of these events. However, they understood that the more prosperous the Dao Chang’s luck in the real world, the more advantageous it would be for them.

Dao realm beings like Ming and Jiu Jianxian grasped this intuitively. Their cultivation had already reached a point where progress seemed impossible. Yet, the inexplicable surge in luck between heaven and earth hinted at a loosening of their bottleneck state.

While pleasantly surprised, they also felt a deep emotional resonance, knowing that their luck was undoubtedly substantial, paving the way for their current status. Luck was intricately linked to one's strength, a symbiotic relationship. The more prosperous the Dao Chang real world's luck became, the stronger they would naturally grow.

At this juncture, even the thought of abandoning this real world was out of the question. Meanwhile, in many places, luck had become disordered due to the opportunities Gu Changge had casually bestowed.

Some individuals with divine powers attempted to discern the cause through secret methods, only to find that incredible luck was transpiring in various universes and regions incessantly. Though their current cultivation remained largely unchanged, their future prospects undoubtedly soared.

These individuals blessed with great fortune emerged continuously, akin to mushrooms after a rain. To them, it signaled the dawn of a bright and prosperous era beyond compare.

Such scenes had unfolded in various places over the years. After Gu Changge initiated a deluge of opportunities, he refrained from further intervention, allowing these fortunate adventurers to flourish and grow.

Now, upholding the concept of the way of heaven, Gu Changge blessed all beings without expecting anything in return, knowing that these fortunate individuals would eventually bring him unexpected surprises in the future. However, for Gu Changge, time was of the essence.

The looming darkness continued to surge from the boundary embankment like relentless waves, shrouding the sky and obscuring the sun, casting endless shadows. Many peerless figures sensed the oppressive atmosphere and pinned their hopes on the unpredictable Ni Chen.

During this period, Ni Chen remained in seclusion, rapidly advancing his cultivation with the assistance of all sentient beings. Within a few months, he ascended from the realm of quasi-immortal king to that of immortal king, stunning and thrilling peerless figures of all races.

In their eyes, as the Daoist of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance, Ni Chen bore immense responsibilities and carried the hopes of many. His diligent cultivation in such dire circumstances resonated with the belief that he was born to confront the impending calamity.

Despite the scrutiny from all quarters, Ni Chen showed no signs of slowing down. While dedicating himself to intense cultivation, he also engaged in battles against veteran immortal kings from various races to hone his Daoism.

To all living beings, Ni Chen's cultivation speed transcended mere awe; it was nothing short of unbelievable. If they hadn't witnessed it firsthand, they would never have believed that such rapid breakthroughs were possible.

In comparison, their own cultivation progress over the years seemed sluggish, barely comparable. Yet, considering that Ni Chen was a variable acknowledged by the ancestor of the Gu family, Gu Changge, and others, his extraordinary aptitude seemed only natural.

Many peerless figures also speculated that the numerous individuals blessed with great luck during this period might potentially influence Ni Chen and pose competition in the future. However, even considering this, they still believed that those fortunate individuals paled in comparison to Ni Chen.

The concept of luck was so elusive that even they struggled to fully comprehend it. During this time, Gu Changge closely monitored the changes in luck within the Dao Chang Realm, expressing satisfaction with the outcomes.

When Wang Ziji approached him, casually mentioning Ni Chen's situation, Gu Changge reassured her, indicating that he had already devised a plan. As for the matter entrusted to Wang Ziji by the two immortal kings of the Wang family, Gu Changge was already aware of it.

Ni Chen believed he had covered his tracks thoroughly, leaving no trace behind. Yet, he had underestimated Gu Changge's perceptiveness. Gu Changge had noticed "Wang Wushang" when Ni Chen and Wang Ziji encountered him outside the Human Ancestor Hall a few years prior.

Although he initially paid little attention, considering "Wang Wushang" to be a person of minor significance, Gu Changge's perception shifted when unknown variables began to emerge.

When "Wang Wushang" faced the quasi-immortal king's calamity, Gu Changge meticulously deduced the various factors at play, prompting him to take notice and follow the unfolding events closely.

In the vast expanse of the heavens, certain real worlds would give rise to individuals with peculiar talents during their evolutionary process. Hence, initially, beings with higher cultivation levels than "Wang Wushang" might not discern any abnormalities, considering it an unsurprising occurrence.

“Wang Wushang” himself possessed formidable luck, making his future difficult to deduce or spy on. However, Ming and the ancestor of the Gu family refrained from probing into “Wang Wushang’s” origins due to a hidden motive behind Gu Changge’s actions.

Perhaps “Wang Wushang” himself remained unaware of this secret reasoning, believing it to be a manifestation of divine will. Yet, from another perspective, for the current Dao Chang Realm, Gu Changge’s intentions indeed seemed like divine will. By shielding “Wang Wushang,” Gu Changge ensured that no one else could discern any abnormal clues about him.

Not even Gu Wuwang, the ancestor of the Gu family who had survived the third decline, could accomplish this feat. Wang Ziji, upon hearing Gu Changge’s response, wasn’t surprised. She even smiled knowingly, feeling validated in her assumptions.

Was there truly anyone in this world capable of eluding Gu Changge’s scrutiny? However, Wang Ziji harbored little affection for “Wang Wushang”; in fact, she felt somewhat cold and repelled by him, indifferent to his fate.

Her inquiry to Gu Changge wasn’t solely motivated by concern for the Wang family; rather, she harbored some apprehension about the possibility of Gu Changge overlooking the situation.

After Wang Ziji departed, Gu Changge unexpectedly encountered Shen Xian’er, Gu Xian’er’s own sister, who approached him with inquiries about her sibling.

In reality, much like numerous members of the Gu family, she too harbored a curiosity regarding Gu Xian’er’s current whereabouts. Her biological parents grew increasingly anxious and had journeyed to Peach Village in search of answers, but even Tao Yao was now missing. The remaining villagers were unaware of Gu Xian’er’s location.

Due to past events, Gu Xian’er’s parents had become somewhat estranged from Gu Changge. Despite Gu Xian’er’s persistent efforts to speak favorably of Gu Changge, their relationship remained strained. They speculated that Gu Changge, with his great powers, might possess information about Gu Xian’er’s whereabouts, prompting them to send Shen Xian’er to inquire.

“Cousin... cousin...” Shen Xian’er, appearing to be in her twenties, wore a simple plain long dress and no makeup. Her hair cascaded like clouds, framing delicate and beautiful features strikingly similar to Gu Xian’er’s. Standing before Gu Changge, she clenched her hands tightly, exhibiting a sense of uncertainty in addressing him.

She hesitated momentarily, ultimately opting to address him as “cousin,” akin to her sister, considering their shared bloodline. During her time in the Heavenly Lan Realm, her interactions with Gu Changge were limited to a few conversations. Now, Gu Changge’s status far surpassed what it had been back then. Even her enigmatic master displayed deference in Gu Changge’s presence.

“Xian’er, there’s no need to be so cautious around me. Just be yourself. You could learn a thing or two from your sister in that regard. She’s not as reserved as you are,” Gu Changge remarked, seated on a stone bench beside a boiling teapot emanating scalding heat.

With a gentle gesture, he opened the teapot, casually adding some tea leaves as he observed the woman before him, offering a warm smile.

The courtyard exuded a simple and elegant charm, devoid of ostentation, even in its surrounding decor. Perhaps it was Gu Changge’s gentle demeanor and relaxed tone that eased much of the tension in Shen Xianer’s heart.

“Yes... yes, cousin,” she responded, though her demeanor still betrayed a hint of unease despite Gu Changge’s encouragement.

Unperturbed, Gu Changge surmised the purpose of Shen Xian’er’s visit and gestured for her to take a seat on a nearby stone bench.

“You’re here to inquire about your sister’s whereabouts, aren’t you?” he asked casually while preparing tea, as if discussing a family matter with an acquaintance.

Shen Xian’er lowered her gaze, unable to meet Gu Changge’s eyes as she confirmed his assumption.

“Well, my sister has been missing for quite some time now, and my parents are deeply concerned. They wish to know if she’s safe or if she’s trapped somewhere,” she explained, her voice tinged with worry.

In truth, not only were her parents worried, but her master also shared the same concern, attempting to deduce Gu Xian’er’s whereabouts to no avail. The fruitless search left them feeling despondent and helpless.

Shen Xian'er couldn't shake the realization that Ming had taken her under his wing likely due to her resemblance to her elder sister, Gu Xian'er. Initially, she hadn't grasped the significance of Ming's mention of a "lord" who bore a striking resemblance to her. However, upon reflection, she recognized that the "lord" referenced was likely her sister.

Reflecting on these thoughts, Shen Xian'er found herself entangled in a complex web of emotions, tinged with a hint of bitterness.

She had always harbored ambitions of surpassing her sister, but now she found herself relegated to the role of her sister's substitute. Were it not for Gu Xian'er, she wouldn't have garnered the attention of someone like Ming or been accepted as his apprentice. Achieving such cultivation prowess at her age would have been inconceivable, let alone establishing contact with Gu Changge and addressing him as cousin.

"You don't need to fret over your sister. When the time is right, she'll return safe and sound. There's no immediate danger," Gu Changge reassured her, his words laced with understanding as he met her gaze.

Sensing the depth of Shen Xian'er's emotions, Gu Changge didn't elaborate further. He recognized that such feelings were only natural; after all, no one could claim to be entirely selfless or devoid of desire.

"As long as she's out of harm's way," Shen Xian'er replied, her relief evident in her voice. Despite her envy towards her sister, she harbored no ill will towards her and had no intention of causing her any trouble. Family ties ran deep, and she knew herself well enough not to betray that bond.

With a nod from Gu Changge, the conversation came to a natural close, and he focused on preparing tea. While he hadn't actively sought to ascertain Gu Xian'er's whereabouts, he trusted in her resilience. As the former lord of the Mountain and Sea Realm, guided by the auspices of the big red bird, she was fated to navigate through both fortune and adversity.

As Shen Xian'er prepared to take her leave, Gu Changge insisted she stay and enjoy a cup of tea before departing. Being Gu Xian'er's younger sister granted her certain privileges, and if extending a bit of luck to her could offer some solace, then why not?

After taking a sip of the tea, Shen Xian'er immediately sensed something amiss, her eyes widening in surprise, mirroring her sister's expression.

“Cousin...this...,” she began, realizing the tea she had just consumed couldn’t possibly be ordinary.

Gu Changge merely smiled in response, offering no explanation, and encouraged her to return home and refine it. This cup of tea was akin to the great fortune bestowed upon those individuals with extraordinary luck, a life-altering gift.

Understanding the significance, gratitude filled Shen Xian’er’s eyes as she rose to accept Gu Changge’s generous gesture.

Once Shen Xian’er had departed, Gu Changge too left the courtyard. Though the mountain he now stood upon lacked grandeur, it held a striking resemblance to the Demonic Mountain where he once resided, a detail that would not escape the notice of Chan Hongyi and Tao Yao.

“It’s about time to prepare another significant gift for that fellow,” Gu Changge muttered to himself, gazing out at the mountains and sea veiled in clouds with a slight shake of his head.

Chapter 963: Maximizing the use of waste, leaving opportunities for them

Gu Changge intended to prepare a second gift for Gu Xian’er, one substantial enough to see her through any future calamity. Even in the face of disaster, if she were to perish, she could ensure that her true essence would endure when confronted with insurmountable challenges. This gesture could be seen as some recompense for Gu Changge’s longstanding debt to her.

Departing from the mountains, Gu Changge returned to the current headquarters of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance. It was once the ruins of the Immortal Palace but had been painstakingly rebuilt by a cadre of survivors from the Immortal Palace, at considerable expense, now serving as the Alliance’s nerve center. Here, representatives from all races and factions of orthodoxy had convened, with the sprawling islands arranged in a constellation-like pattern.

The flux of fortune perpetually wafted in, converging and intertwining high above. Even the most ancient of universes appeared as mere specks of dust in comparison. Each continent lay far apart; even a true immortal would not be able to traverse them in a lifetime without the aid of formidable divine power.

This achievement was the culmination of the collective efforts of numerous unparalleled figures. They had reconstructed the ancestral grounds, erecting various structures and pavilions infused with potent spiritual energy. Skilled cultivators of ancient formations had engraved vast arrays, bridging heaven and earth to harness boundless power. Such measures were taken to bolster the Alliance’s resilience against future catastrophes.

Upon Gu Changge's return, he promptly dispatched agents to procure rare materials. The Heaven-Slaying Alliance now comprised a total of 108 islands, each condensed from myriad universes and teeming with diverse creations. Countless eons' worth of immortal resources were contained within them. Thus, upon receiving Gu Changge's directive, many set out in search of these materials, adhering to his specifications.

On the central island, Gu Changge erected an altar to conduct a refining ritual. Utilizing the vitality of all living beings as the fire's fuel, he harnessed the celestial energy from the stars above, transforming the altar into a crucible of heaven and earth. Into this vessel, he cast various rare materials.

Numerous eminent figures looked on, surprised by Gu Changge's rare appearance. Typically elusive, he rarely made himself visible, leaving many curious about his current endeavor. Even individuals like Ming and the patriarch of the Gu family found themselves intrigued, eager to discern what Gu Changge, at his current level, sought to refine.

Flames roared and ascended into the heavens, illuminating the surroundings with a brilliant light. The thunderous sound of the heavens opening reverberated, shaking both the immortal domain and the celestial realm.

"Is my lord attempting to forge a genuine Dao weapon?"

"I've heard tales of Daoist weapons transcending even the arsenal of the immortal emperor. They're said to be imbued with the essence of the Dao of Origin, reaching unfathomable heights beyond innate creations."

"Legend has it that the refinement of such Dao weapons must be approached with caution, as it risks depleting the Dao's essence and the energy of the tangible world."

Throughout the universe, cultivators were astonished and intrigued by the spectacle. Some eminent figures couldn't resist speculating, drawing upon the accounts they'd heard. Even the patriarch of the Gu family appeared in the distance, his surprise evident as he observed the proceedings.

Gu Changge employed a vast array of materials, including remnants of quasi-immortal emperor weapons from past conflicts. These materials, once rare and capable of enhancement through the strength of their wielder, had been shattered and lost in battles long gone.

Among the array of materials, Ming also procured a complete World Stone and Chaos Immortal Gold for him. Additionally, there were Void Immortal Gold, Dark Immortal Gold, Five Elements Immortal Gold, Nine-Color Immortal Gold, Bright Immortal Gold, and countless others.

Each piece of immortal gold had the potential to be refined into a divine weapon surpassing the quasi-immortal emperor level, with only a scant few pieces found in each universe.

With these materials prepared, Gu Changge commenced the weapon's refinement. Brilliant light shot into the sky, accompanied by the rumbling of the Dao.

Boom!

Chaos energy filled the space, permeating the surroundings with the world's power in a scene of awe-inspiring terror. Gu Changge liquefied a massive World Stone, imbuing it with a heavy and majestic aura.

These liquid streams undulated, a vast purple aura cascading down within the Dao's flames. The innate essence within them stirred to life, consuming the liquefied World Stone.

Hiss!

Gu Changge liquefied the Dark Immortal Gold, Five Elements Immortal Gold, Bright Immortal Gold, Seven Color Immortal Gold, and more. Then, he inscribed top-tier Dao runes, transforming them into intricate chains of order resembling spider webs. As the materials flowed, they grew increasingly radiant.

Next, Gu Changge stoked the flames of the Great Dao, remelting all the divine artifacts he had amassed over the years, including the Supreme Dao Map and the Seven Heavenly Palm Artifacts. This process took several years to complete.

In this space, brilliance pierced the heavens, accompanied by myriad visions. Countless gods and demons shrieked, their presence imbued with a terrifying aura that seemed poised to rend the world asunder. Eventually, the area became shrouded in a deep and vast cosmic power.

"Using various original immortal substances as the foundation, refining them into a crucible of sand..."

Upon witnessing the scene clearly, the patriarch of the Gu family couldn't help but narrow his eyes in profound shock. He had assumed Gu Changge might be crafting a supreme Daoist weapon. However, he was astonished to see these divine materials transformed into a crucible of sand.

Though the crystal shimmered with nine colors and exuded boundless mysteries, true sand wasn't typically considered a weapon.

"No, could this be primordial matter? The pure substance present at the dawn of creation?"

The patriarch of the Gu family struggled to conceal his astonishment. With a vast knowledge gleaned from ancient texts, he was familiar with many enigmatic substances in the world. However, he couldn't be certain without witnessing it firsthand.

The flowing brilliance seemed imbued with a lifelike essence, capable of both creation and destruction, brimming with untold levels of power. Though exceedingly rare, it shimmered quietly like a galaxy, reflecting a magnificent yet hazy vastness.

Resembling grains of crystallized world essence, it encapsulated the most ancient truths, purer than Dao itself, hinting at an essence detached from the origin.

"Is he intending to cultivate something using this substance?" The patriarch of the Gu family was astonished, vaguely discerning Gu Changge's intentions.

In the next moment, crystal nine-colored sand materialized, each grain emitting a chaotic halo. Amidst it, a small seedling, as slender as a thumb, sprouted from the ground, encircled by primordial purple aura.

"Behold the image of the primordial, the root of the world tree, and the celestial harmony—it shall be named Hongmeng Myriad Root," Gu Changge declared, observing the scene. He had nurtured this young seedling using the rhizome of the Epoch Tree.

"Hongmeng Myriad Root?" The patriarch of the Gu family was stunned. Though he hadn't interacted with it directly, he sensed the immense fortune contained within. Its value was likely beyond measure, far surpassing the present adventures of fortune within the Dao Chang Realm.

Even the patriarch couldn't suppress his excitement. Clusters of luck descended and enveloped the young seedling, foreshadowing a baptism by thunder. Yet, amidst the depths of the world, auspicious scenes emerged to bless it.

Others present lacked the patriarch's insight and couldn't fully discern Gu Changge's creation. However, they too felt the astonishing fortune. Despite their awe, they possessed enough self-awareness to understand that such a thing was beyond their reach.

The following day, Ni Chen, engrossed in his cultivation, was abruptly summoned by Gu Changge. Entrusting him with the majestic root and nine-colored sand that had taken considerable time to condense, Gu Changge explained that this remarkable creation could potentially grow into a towering tree capable of dominating the skies and sweeping through the universe without hindrance.

Naturally, Ni Chen was profoundly shocked, never expecting such supreme fortune to fall into his hands. However, Gu Changge also issued a warning, stating that anyone could attempt to seize the treasure. Only those destined for it could possess it, and if Ni Chen couldn't safeguard it, he shouldn't blame others for claiming it.

"Considering your recent actions within the Heaven-Slaying Alliance, I believe you possess the necessary abilities. Do not disappoint me," Gu Changge remarked, bequeathing the primordial root to Ni Chen without facing him.

This test caught Ni Chen off guard, yet simultaneously dispelled any lingering doubts and worries he may have harbored. He promptly assured Gu Changge of his commitment to guarding and nurturing the treasure with utmost care.

"Fear not, Leader. I shall strive to meet your lofty expectations," Ni Chen declared solemnly, offering a respectful salute.

Despite his suspicions that this may be a test orchestrated by Gu Changge, Ni Chen couldn't shake the nagging doubt of whether there might be something peculiar about the primordial root. Thus, before Gu Changge departed, Ni Chen resolved to inspect it closely.

Once Ni Chen had left, Gu Changge seized the opportunity to spread word that the Hongmeng Myriad Root contained the profound truths of the Dao realm, suggesting that possession of it could grant entry into this realm of enlightenment.

The dissemination of this news naturally stirred concern among all factions. Even Jiu Jianxian, with one foot in the Dao realm, couldn't remain indifferent. He couldn't fathom Gu Changge's motive for bestowing this treasure upon "Wang Wushang" only to then publicize its existence.

"Is this a test for him? If he fails to safeguard it, will it be fair game for others?" Jiu Jianxian pondered, his mind racing with possibilities.

If even someone like Jiu Jianxian entertained such thoughts and felt moved, it was inevitable that other ancient cultivators would do the same. As long as Ni Chen's life wasn't in jeopardy, there seemed to be no issue.

After all, it would be inconceivable for Gu Changge to undermine himself afterward, right?

The growth of the Hongmeng Myriad Root relied heavily on the nourishment of profound luck. Though Gu Changge could readily plunder luck, doing so would disrupt established fate trajectories and impact the prosperity of the entire Dao Chang Realm.

Thus, from his current standpoint, it made sense for Ni Chen to nurture the root, maximizing its potential utility.

This development interrupted Ni Chen's tentative cultivation plans. However, upon uncovering the mysteries of the Hongmeng Myriad Root and the nine-colored sand, he became even more determined to harness its potential. Yet, refining it proved to be a daunting task beyond his current capabilities.

Fortunately, as he cultivated, he found that he could channel his progress back into the root, imbuing it with immense power. Gu Changge's repeated generosity left Ni Chen at a loss for words.

Of course, amidst the bounty came challenges. Many sought to seize the Hongmeng Myriad Root, forcing Ni Chen to expend considerable effort and ingenuity to protect it.

...

Gu Changge stood atop a mountain peak, raising his hand, causing ripples to appear before him, and a portal to split open. Stepping through, he vanished in an instant.

Upon reappearing, he found himself in a vast and boundless void. Chaos reigned, with no discernible directions or landmarks, as if he had entered uncharted territory.

In this realm, the passage of time and space remained imperceptible, devoid of any laws or regulations—a truly lawless and unrestricted expanse.

Within the vast Dao Chang Realm, Gu Changge had only discovered this solitary place, shrouded in numerous mysteries that potentially held the secret to the realm's genesis. If its origins were truly traced, it would predate even the birth of the Dao Chang Realm itself.

Rumble!

Upon landing in this realm, Gu Changge set to work, initiating his actions. A surge of spiritual energy akin to an overwhelming wave completely engulfed the space. Subsequently, an endless divine light soared into the heavens, akin to an unquenchable divine fire, incinerating every inch of space.

In this realm devoid of time, space, and even traces of Daoism, even the most ancient cultivators of the Underworld's Dao Realm would hesitate to tread lightly. Yet, Gu Changge paid no heed, focusing solely on the transformations unfolding before him.

This process persisted for an extended period until the space was refined into the palm of Gu Changge, transforming it into a world within his grasp. However, this world remained in its rudimentary form, prompting Gu Changge to continue its condensation.

Utilizing the original substance of the realm as fuel, he painstakingly burned and condensed it, gradually shaping it from the size of a fist to that of a seed.

“Creating a genuine seed is truly no easy feat,” Gu Changge remarked, his brow furrowed as he gazed upon the speck of light.

“Even for those blessed with great fortune, ascending to the Dao realm step by step takes considerable time and effort, with no guarantee of success. If the Dao Chang Realm is to ascend swiftly, it requires a fortuitous opportunity. It's a shame that such a vast real world can only be condensed to this extent...”

With a slight frown, Gu Changge contemplated the diminutive yet significant creation before him.

At that moment, the seed floated within Gu Changge's palm, oscillating with a mesmerizing array of mystical scenes that transcended the bounds of eternal time and space. Yet, in his discerning eyes, it remained merely a prototype, not the genuine seed of the real world.

No one in this realm had ever beheld the true seed of the real world. Its origin was shrouded in extreme mystery and unpredictability, conceived and birthed by the chaotic collision of countless moments.

Cultivating a genuine world seed was an impossibility. As long as the real world existed, it could naturally evolve and give rise to all celestial phenomena, forming a vast universe and spawning countless worlds.

Thus, what Gu Changge condensed was merely the embryonic form of the real world's seeds, still far removed from its true evolution.

Within this space, he partitioned the object into several segments. Upon his departure, these segments transformed into beams of light, descending upon familiar individuals such as Yue Mingkong, Jiang Chuchu, Wang Ziji, and Yin Mei.

This act could be seen as Gu Changge's final great boon to them—an assurance of their safe passage into the Dao realm in the future. Though the journey might be arduous, spanning countless reincarnations across endless years, Gu Changge had laid the groundwork for their eventual success.

Chapter 964: What does the world have to do with him? His real body is gone

Gu Changge stood amidst the boundless void, observing as the rays of light cascaded like a gentle rain, each one infusing into the bodies of their respective recipients.

Yue Mingkong remained secluded in her cultivation, enveloped in an aura of emptiness, oblivious to the celestial gift bestowed upon her. Meanwhile, Jiang Chuchu, sensing a subtle intuition stirring within her heart, cast a glance toward the direction of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance's current location.

In this vast world, everyone hastened in their cultivation endeavors, and they were no exception. Endowed with great fortune and intimately connected to Gu Changge, their luck surged in tandem with the Dao Chang Realm's fortunes. In terms of cultivation speed alone, they had already outpaced many, yet time remained their only constraint.

Observing this scene, Gu Changge slowly closed his eyes, his vast consciousness expanding outward. In an instant, countless voids were traversed, spanning the entirety of the ancient world and enshrouding the Dao Chang Realm.

“It appears she’s no longer within the Dao Chang Realm,” Gu Changge mused as he attempted to locate a particular individual’s aura.

Yet, despite his divine senses sweeping across every corner of the universe, the girl remained elusive. The individual he sought, Barbara, was a wildling from the barbarian world. Deliberately leaving his will upon her, Gu Changge intended to utilize her for future purposes.

As Gu Changge had anticipated, Barbara had indeed departed from the Dao Chang Realm and found herself in another world.

Observing the shift in Barbara’s destiny, Gu Changge deduced her origins but refrained from revealing the truth to her, opting instead to observe the unfolding events.

Barbara hailed not from the Dao Chang Realm but from beyond the boundless sea. Yet, in Gu Changge’s eyes, she appeared as a hapless pawn, ensnared in a web of illusions and deceit.

The revered grandfather she admired was merely her guardian, unwittingly guiding her to repeat the same mistakes across lifetimes. Meanwhile, the father figure who treated her as his own daughter was but a marionette manipulated by the barbarian god—an entity she devoutly worshipped, unaware of its true nature as a pawn and servant to another.

Each incarnation served but to veil her past and nurture her burgeoning demonic heart. Gu Changge recognized this as a trial for Barbara, one that would culminate in her eventual awakening and liberation from the illusion.

However, the cruelty of her plight weighed heavily upon Gu Changge. As he peered into her future, witnessing her transformation into a formidable female devil destined to challenge the heavens, his intrigue heightened.

Yet, in the Dao Chang Realm’s current state, luck alone proved insufficient to support the growth and emergence of a character with such a fate. Thus, Gu Changge made the decision to allow Barbara to mature independently, believing that she must confront the harsh truths of her existence and break free from the illusions that bound her.

It fell upon her to tear asunder the veil of lies and confront the brutal reality that awaited her.

Meanwhile, Gu Changge harbored a desire to employ Barbara as bait, using her to lure out the individual orchestrating events from behind the scenes, leading her to the Dao Chang Realm.

“It appears she has torn asunder the illusion and shattered the lies she once lived by with her own hands,” Gu Changge remarked, though he did not dwell too heavily on the matter. When he initially sought suitable candidates, it was merely an experiment—an endeavor to see how far Barbara would progress in her journey, dependent solely on her own destiny.

Gu Changge intervened in her life only when necessary, resolving occasional troubles that crossed her path. His recent investigation into the Dao Chang Realm served a specific purpose—to ascertain whether others had long ago discovered its location.

“It seems that epochs ago, individuals from the real world were already aware of the Dao Chang realm’s existence. The mastermind behind Barbara possesses extraordinary capabilities to deploy such schemes,” Gu Changge mused, his gaze growing deeper with contemplation.

Upon his return to the Heaven-Slaying Alliance, Gu Changge left behind instructions, preparing to depart for the boundless sea. He had no intention of lingering, awaiting the arrival of the group of “hunters” from beyond the sea. With his own strength, he could traverse the boundless sea unaided, though it would take time to discern the coordinates of the real world.

Gu Changge was never one to indulge in altruistic pursuits or entertain delusions of grandeur regarding his role in preserving the world. His actions were driven solely by his own motives, unconcerned with the broader implications. His establishment of the concept of the Dao of Heaven and the renaming of the Dao Chang Realm were merely tools to ensure the protection of those he held dear.

As long as the Dao Chang Realm remained untouched by other real worlds, it would continue to prosper and grow in power. Though the looming threat of the “hunters” posed a potential catastrophe for the realm, Gu Changge regarded them as insignificant nuisances, easily crushed beneath his heel.

Gu Changge paid little heed to the group of “hunters,” merely mentioning them to sow panic among the tribes at the opportune moment. Leaving behind a will served as ample deterrent against their approach.

His current focus lay in expanding the influence of the Heaven-Slaying Alliance throughout the boundless sea, ensuring its continual prosperity and growth. To achieve this, he contemplated seeking out the remaining real worlds, with intentions either to occupy or assimilate them into the alliance's domain.

Though such actions might tarnish his reputation, Gu Changge cared little for the opinions of others, content to be viewed as the enigmatic and capricious demon lord. His past actions demonstrated a willingness to commit even the most ruthless deeds, a trait that inspired both fear and awe among the populace.

In preparation for his departure from the Dao Chang Realm, Gu Changge had arranged various matters, entrusting the Gu family's ancestor with the management of Heaven-Slaying Alliance affairs. While Gu Wuwang remained unaware of certain intricacies, Gu Changge viewed every member of the Gu family as a valuable asset, strategically positioning them in his grand scheme.

Additionally, Gu Changge manipulated and calculated the follow-up actions concerning the so-called Daoist Ni Chen, confident that no troubles would arise from his endeavors.

Before his departure, Wang Ziji approached Gu Changge once more, expressing her intent to seclude herself for intense cultivation. Despite her lovesickness, she disregarded many details, planning to seek solace in his presence if longing overwhelmed her.

As Wang Ziji embarked on her seclusion, Gu Changge found himself surrounded by few familiar faces within the Dao Chang Realm. Even Lin Qiuhan, whom he had brought from the lower realm, remained secluded, dedicating herself to alchemical pursuits.

Prior to his departure, Gu Changge visited Green Mountain Village, concealing the fact that his true form no longer resided in the real world from even the Gu family's ancestors and associates.

Chapter 965: The royal family of Spiritual Realm, which can be opened after a million times

After Gu Changge departed from the Immortal Domain, he took a step forward, and the long river of time flowed beneath his feet as if time itself shifted, revealing scenes of universe dissolution.

In a mere instant, he arrived at the edge of numerous shattered universes, traversing across the vast battlefield. The scene was now dim, with countless strands of chaos intermingling to form a vast chaotic sea, with myriad star fragments scattered and floating within it.

The desolate world stretched endlessly, barren and frigid, devoid of any hint of vitality. Not a single living creature could be found within it. Even the heavens and earth lay in ruin, with horrifying voids gaping open, from which various divine lights emanated into the sky, with corpses drifting up and down, each possessing the faintest trace of true immortality.

Furthermore, numerous corpses of immortal kings littered the landscape, their tattered remains exuding a potent aura of destruction. They had fallen to terrifying creatures during their lifetimes.

This was merely a desolate ancient battlefield, originating from an unknown era, washed out from the chaos and exposed to the outside world.

Various peculiar creatures dwelling in the vastness were feasting upon the corpses of those immortal kings. Some resembled crows, while others appeared as vultures or hound-like beasts. Yet, their ability to effortlessly tear apart the immortal king corpses showcased their terrifying strength.

Even an immortal king in their prime, when faced with such a group of bizarre creatures, could only cautiously avoid them, unwilling to provoke their ire.

Standing atop the boundary embankment, Gu Changge beheld wave after wave of darkness rushing toward him, akin to an endless sea, with mist shrouding the far reaches of the world.

An indescribable oppressive atmosphere cloaked the sky above the world, making every breath a struggle.

However, within Gu Changge's field of vision, one could discern the constantly unfolding fortune in the Dao Chang Realm, shining like a brilliant beacon amidst the darkness of the night, particularly striking.

After some contemplation, he disregarded the creatures tearing apart immortal king corpses for sustenance on the ancient battlefield and proceeded forward, departing from that place and venturing into the vast expanse.

The turbulent waves and ceaseless forces of the world's motion, now subdued by his power, gradually subsided and grew tranquil. One portion of the ancient world bobbed up and down within it, emitting a deep rumble.

In Gu Changge's perception, these worlds were devoid of life, shrouded in silence and coldness. Many ancient realms of existence were nurtured within the boundless sea. However, only a select few worlds were deemed worthy of advancement to reality in the end.

Over the course of countless years, these ancient worlds faced collapse and catastrophe, overwhelmed by the aura from beyond the boundless sea, eventually succumbing to chaos and darkness. The vast and unseen ruins of these ancient worlds overlapped one another, forming barriers that hindered predecessors from traversing the vast expanse.

Nevertheless, Gu Changge paid little heed to these obstacles, his gaze fixed on the depths of the darkness, a faint golden light glimmering in his eyes.

“Is the Dao Chang Realm truly so close? Excellent, it saves me a great deal of trouble...”

A great Dao materialized beneath his feet, solidifying into a pathway that spanned the vastness.

Spatial orientation held no sway in this expansive realm, and in some areas, it was an entirely lawless and desolate expanse, devoid of the constraints of time and space. Even an Ancient Cultivator in the Dao Realm struggled to pinpoint the exact locations of certain areas without precise coordinates.

Hence, prior to the onset of catastrophe, many ancient ethnic groups within the Dao Chang Realm viewed escaping to the vastness as a choice akin to a dead end. They were uncertain of where to venture within the vast expanse and where they could possibly settle next. Even if there were individuals within their ethnic groups who had achieved great heights, finding a safe haven in the boundless realm remained a daunting prospect.

Even the patriarch of the Gu family hesitated, unsure whether he could safeguard the entire clan. Until the very last moment, he refrained from making such a weighty decision. Furthermore, even if clear spatial coordinates and routes were provided, the vast expanse harbored numerous dangers, enigmatic and unpredictable. Even Gu Wuwang, the Gu family's patriarch, couldn't guarantee a safe passage, let alone for the rest of his kin.

Many years prior, on the opposite side of the Dao Chang Realm, ancestors of the imperial clan observed abnormalities, growing wary and contemplating relocation. Gu Changge was privy to their plans but disregarded them, knowing they would struggle to find a new abode. The real world, bereft of the protection of the true spirit, stood as a radiant beacon amidst the dark vastness, serving as a guiding light for beings navigating the expanse.

....

The mist swirled, and the shattered ancient world resembled rolling broken clouds. Crushed beneath the weight of the ancient warship, it crumbled like mountains and rivers, emitting a terrifying rumble that shook the heavens and the earth.

Numerous powerful individuals of the Spiritual Realm reclined on this boundless ancient warship, ensconced within their own chambers and palaces. Amidst the chaotic mist, figures loomed tall, akin to ancient gods from mythologies past, their skin golden and ancient lines etched between their brows.

Remarkably large, the ancient warship resembled a boundless continent, containing its own universe within. Palaces, pavilions, mountains, rivers, and lakes adorned its surface, with various terrains distributed across its expanse.

In addition to the powerful figures seated cross-legged at the forefront, countless creatures inhabited the vast expanse behind them. The majority hailed from ancient realms tethered to the Spiritual Realm, while many others belonged to slave groups. For generations, they had inhabited this colossal, boundless ancient warship, drifting through the vastness, tasked with maintaining its operation and repairing damaged runes.

For these creatures, this place served as their homeland, boasting vast mountains, rivers, and boundless territories. Islands, lakes, cities, and ruling classes dotted the landscape, mirroring the world of cultivators.

However, in the grand scheme of the vastness, this ancient warship was but a mere vessel traversing the expanse. Though it contained its own universe and operated under its own laws, its influence remained limited, unable to create significant ripples.

To the beings journeying through the boundless sea, clouds and mists undulated everywhere, concealing countless creatures and worlds within. Each flower, each leaf, represented its own world—nothing more, nothing less.

Clang, clang, clang...

In an inconspicuous blacksmith's shop tucked away in a corner of the city, the dull sound of heavy hammers reverberated incessantly. As red-hot iron met ice-cold water, a piercing sound of tempering filled the air, momentarily dispersing the fog.

Beside the water-soaked tempering pool stood a young figure, sleeves rolled up to reveal bronze-toned arms, repeating words under his breath.

"Ninety-nine thousand and ninety-one, ninety-nine thousand and ninety-two, ninety-nine thousand and ninety-three..."

With each swing of the heavy hammer in his hand, he counted aloud, the words a steady rhythm in his mouth.

This young figure bore resemblance to the human race, with gray pupils and a fine layer of metallic scales adorning his hands.

On the other hand, the figures milling around him appeared to belong to various races upon closer inspection. Their bodies and bone structures were taller than those of ordinary humans, bearing the distinctive traits of their respective races.

These figures seemed accustomed to the scene unfolding before them. Many would pause in front of the blacksmith shop to admire the forged iron objects—simple knives, long swords, bows and arrows, war spears, shields, and the like—but would soon depart without making a purchase.

After hundreds of thousands of repetitions, the figure tirelessly hammering and tempering the iron tool finally ceased. His hair, long and disheveled, nearly obscured his face, which bore scorched black marks. Unconcerned, he turned in the tempering pool, scooped up water, and casually washed his face.

"I heard the royal family of the Spiritual Realm is recruiting master craftsmen from the ghost clan and formation masters from the Heavenly clan. I wonder what they're planning to build this time..."

"Over the years, many from the Ghost clan and Heavenly clan have been enlisted, yet few have returned. Rumor has it they've been working on repairs."

"But something feels off to me. My parents mentioned this sort of thing before..."

“Hush, lower your voice. Do you not fear the spiritual beings overhearing? Mind your words, lest you attract unwanted attention and face repercussions.”

As the murmured conversations of passing shadows reached his ears, the young figure washing his face froze, his hands halting mid-motion. Beneath the tangled strands of his long hair, his eyes seemed to chill, their depths growing colder.

“Brother Chu, it’s time to eat...”

At that moment, the curtain behind the blacksmith shop suddenly lifted. A young girl with delicate features darted back and forth, calling out to the young figure.

“Coming.”

Upon hearing her, the figure snapped back to reality, acknowledging her call. He then washed his hands, grabbed a nearby handkerchief to wipe them clean, and followed the girl.

On the other side of the curtain lay a moderately sized courtyard, where laundry hung drying and poultry roamed in captivity, infusing the space with vitality.

Seated in a rocking chair, a burly old man with a disheveled appearance cracked peanuts leisurely.

“Master.”

The young figure addressed him respectfully, settling down at a nearby dining table and reaching for his chopsticks, prepared to eat.

“Your mind is troubled...”

The burly old man cast a glance at the young figure, seeming to perceive his inner turmoil in an instant. He shook his head slightly and straightened up.

“Master...”

The young figure fell silent for a moment.

Beneath the tangle of his long hair, those eyes suddenly emitted a chilling light, and his voice dripped with bone-chilling coldness. “You’re aware of what’s happening beyond these walls...”

The burly old man nodded solemnly. “As your master, I’m well aware that the royal family of the Spiritual Realm is recruiting members of my Ghost clan and the Heavenly clan far and wide. They’ve done this periodically, but as of late, the frequency has increased.”

“Master, you understand that this is a conspiracy, and you know its inevitable outcome. Why do you allow it to continue?”

“For generations, my Ghost Clan and Heavenly Clan have served the Spiritual Royal Family faithfully. We’ve labored to construct armies and formations for them, only to be betrayed in the end. They slaughtered my Ghost Clan under the guise of conscription—all to conceal a shocking secret and prevent the revelation of their treachery.”

“The Spiritual royal family’s cruelty knows no bounds.”

At this moment, the young figure could barely contain his fury, each word dripping with loathing.

“Senior Brother Chu...”

The weight of these words left the girl beside him stunned, her expression shifting to one of sorrow as she grasped the magnitude of the situation.

Who would have imagined that the very place they called home for generations was nothing more than a cage? Their ancestors and descendants were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, endlessly constructing formations for the Spiritual royal family and filling in the gaps.

To silence any who dared to speak the truth, the Spiritual royal family spared no one, even slaughtering those who repaired the formations. Unbeknownst to them, the Ghost Clan and Heavenly Clan unwittingly contributed to the construction of a massive sacrificial array for the Spiritual royal family.

The day when all living beings in this world would become sacrifices loomed ominously, its arrival uncertain but undoubtedly imminent.

“This is the fated destiny of our family, one we cannot escape.”

Upon hearing this, the burly old man’s expression mirrored the sadness etched on the faces of the others as he shook his head in resignation.

Breaking free from the grip of the Spiritual royal family? As the most formidable member of the Ghost clan, he understood all too well the formidable influence wielded by the Spiritual royal family.

Throughout countless epochs, among the ancestors who had uncovered the truth, there were plenty who stood as the strongest of their era. Yet, what came of it? It was akin to tossing a stone into the depths of the sea—no ripple in sight.

Even with the foreknowledge of the inevitable outcome, what could they possibly do? Resisting the might of the Spiritual royal family was nearly impossible.

“Chu Lian, it’s not that your master doesn’t care, but that I’m powerless to act,” the robust old man sighed.

Chu Lian, his adopted disciple, hailed from a lineage of master craftsmen in the Ghost clan and great masters in the Heavenly clan. However, both parents had been forcefully taken by the Spiritual royal family years ago, leaving behind no trace or news.

Hearing this, Chu Lian couldn’t help but sink into a profound sense of powerlessness and frustration. If even the current strongest member of the Ghost clan couldn’t effect change, did that mean they were forever bound by the manipulations of the Spiritual royal family? Were they doomed to this fate?

“No, no... I still possess the light sphere. It assures me that by repeating a single action a million times, I can unlock it, become its master, and wield the power of an entire civilization.”

“Right now, I’m just a hundred thousand repetitions away.”

Suddenly, a spark of hope ignited in Chu Lian's eyes as he remembered something.

Chapter 966: Real or Illusory? The fear of the Bone Ancestor

Chu Lian's emotions churned relentlessly, brimming with profound unwillingness. He yearned to avenge his parents and seek justice for the entire Ghost and Heavenly clans, yet even the mightiest Master of the Ghost clan remained powerless. Having cultivated Daoism for merely thousands of years, what could he possibly achieve? Fight to the death? He lacked the standing to challenge the Spiritual royal family, let alone the many enigmatic ancient figures concealed within its ranks, beings who had existed for untold eons. Even the strongest figures of previous eras had been effortlessly subdued by these ancient beings, leaving no trace of resistance.

Now, Chu Lian could only cling to his last shred of hope—the mysterious light sphere. Its origin eluded him, its nature a mystery. Yet, it whispered promises of unlocking unimaginable power if he repeated a single action a million times.

On a quiet night filled with longing for his parents, Chu Lian ventured alone into the courtyard and then into the depths of the back mountain. Suddenly, a shooting star streaked across the sky, followed by the mysterious light cluster descending upon him and merging into his consciousness.

Initially startled, Chu Lian quickly composed himself, regarding this enigmatic gift from the heavens with solemn reverence. The mysterious light sphere also assured him that by repeating a single action a million times, he could unlock its secrets and gain the power of an entire civilization.

Thus, during this period, Chu Lian tirelessly refined weapons, inching ever closer to the millionth repetition. He eagerly anticipated the moment when he would finally unlock the secrets within the mysterious light sphere and unleash its unfathomable power.

Could unlocking the power of an entire civilization truly enable him to rival the entire Spiritual royal family? While Chu Lian remained uncertain, the secretive history of the Spiritual royal family clouded his understanding. Yet, in his view, the power of an entire civilization should rightfully stand as the apex of all beings, signifying invincibility.

“Success means aiding the world, failure means standing alone. Against the Spiritual royal family, our options are limited. If you wish to safeguard our entire clan, you must possess the strength to challenge them...”

The burly old man, Tian Yezi, shook his head, noting Chu Lian's silence. Assuming he couldn't grasp the gravity of the situation, Tian Yezi sighed inwardly. Once the strongest member of the

Ghost clan in a bygone era, Tian Yezi had long since retired and possessed limited knowledge of current affairs. Were it not for the friendship between Chu Lian's parents and himself, adopting Chu Lian would have been inconceivable. Faced with the conspiracy of the entire Spiritual royal family, what good would understanding it do? His only recourse now was to protect the Ghost clan members under his care.

"Master, why do you think the Spiritual royal family erects those massive formations? They've been doing so for years. I've heard my grandfather and others say that the Spiritual royal family has long been planning a momentous event..."

The delicate young girl by his side masked her expression, reverting to her former innocence, unable to contain her curiosity. Adopted by Tian Yezi, she was younger than Chu Lian, her parents also esteemed master craftsmen of the Ghost clan.

The craftsmanship of the Ghost Clan and Heavenly Clan was truly extraordinary; even their name hinted at their origins. Bestowed with unparalleled talent by the divine, they possessed the ability to craft the most potent magic weapons and establish formidable divine circles. Yet, how had they come to be subjugated by the Spiritual Royal Clan? This was a truth beyond their reach.

"The Spiritual royal family seeks salvation for their kin..." Tian Yezi gently patted the girl's head in response, offering no further explanation. Resuming his place in the rocking chair, he gazed up at the azure sky above.

Not a single cloud marred the clear weather—a rarity in these lands. Yet, for the inhabitants of this realm, little did they know that their world was naught but a cage. Was it reality, or a mere illusion? Perhaps it was the grand formation erected by the ancestors of the Ghost clan with their own hands.

Amidst the boundless expanse and the perpetual rolling mist aboard the ancient warship, the Bone Ancestor, motionless since boarding, suddenly opened his eyes. Originally a skeletal figure with empty eye sockets, he now emanated a dazzling and intense light, akin to a lit candle.

Meanwhile, the other figures seated cross-legged at the ship's bow remained shrouded in thick fog.

At the sudden movement of the Bone Ancestor, the others on the ancient warship were startled awake, their gazes filled with fear as they turned to him.

"Do you ever get the feeling you're being watched from somewhere?" The Bone Ancestor's tone, unlike his previous crazed laughter, now brimmed with caution as he surveyed the vast expanse veiled in endless fog.

In this expansive realm, numerous unknown creatures of varied and grotesque forms, humanoid and otherwise, seemed bound within its confines, ceaselessly reaching out in an attempt to grasp the ancient warship's edge and ascend. Yet, each time they were crushed by the ship's might, their piercing screams echoed before they vanished into oblivion.

Such occurrences were routine, hardly worth the Bone Ancestor's caution to rouse him from his deep slumber.

Observing the Bone Ancestor's demeanor, the other Spiritual Realm powerhouses wore uncertain expressions, puzzled by his unease. Why did such a formidable being display signs of discomfort? What looming horror could possibly elicit such a reaction?

"Could it be that a great terror lies ahead, awaiting us?" one pondered aloud. "But we're so close to the Newborn Realm—shouldn't we press on?"

The complexion of an ancient cultivator from the Spiritual Realm who had attained Dao Realm status turned ashen as he made a decisive choice. Sensing the possibility of impending danger, he rose and informed his senior brother of his intention to change course, opting to evacuate the area.

Facing such a formidable threat head-on would yield unimaginable consequences. If even a figure as powerful and fearsome as the Bone Ancestor displayed unease, it only served to underscore the gravity of the looming terror ahead.

"Impossible..."

Cloaked in tattered black robes, the Bone Ancestor felt an escalating unease wash over him, sending shivers down his spine. Could it be possible that, at his level, he could encounter entities in this world that truly unnerved him?

"Unless it's an existence beyond the ancestral realm... Even the weakest should have attained the seventh decline..."

The Bone Ancestor's complexion contorted in shock. Despite his self-proclaimed title of Ancestor, he was regarded as a "lunatic" by those within the realm of chaos. In truth, he had only reached the level of the sixth decline, still far from attaining ancestral status.

“Curses! Could this be the domain of another lunatic? Did those fools purposefully lead me here?”

Fury ignited within the Bone Ancestor, his eyes flashing with a murderous intent directed at the Spiritual Realm inhabitants.

“The vast expanse trembles... Have we unwittingly trespassed into the domain of an indescribable horror?”

At that moment, a gaunt, monkey-like figure emerged—a being known to many Spiritual Realm powerhouses as the eldest brother. Startled from his slumber, he rushed from his cave dwelling, his normally composed visage betraying shock.

For even he, after countless years navigating the chaos, had never witnessed a scene quite like this. It was a rare occurrence, reserved for encounters with the unspeakable horrors that lurked within the confines of the vastness.

Should one inadvertently cross paths with such beings, not even the Bone Ancestor would be able to evade their grasp.

Rumble!

In that moment, the entire expanse churned like boiling sea water, emitting a terrifying three-colored fog. Black, white, and gray intertwined endlessly, filling the air with an apocalyptic aura.

“Three-colored extinction light? Has the real world been depleted here? Or has it been obliterated by someone?”

“Cease immediately! Do not proceed any further. You must reroute!”

Witnessing the scene, the gaunt figure’s expression morphed drastically. He swiftly commanded the individual in charge of steering the ancient warship to alter its course, steering clear of the area engulfed by the endless fog ahead. His scalp prickled with unease, never anticipating the spread of the three-colored extinction light—a sure sign of impending annihilation.

When calamity loomed and the great reckoning commenced, a three-colored divine light would descend, its unstoppable nature signaling the onset of catastrophic destruction. Even Dao Realm entities quivered with fear in the face of such a reckoning, dreading their own annihilation.

Though the impending calamity was not yet confirmed, the appearance of the three-colored divine light suggested an imminent great reckoning. Would any beings endure beneath the shadow of such cataclysmic judgment?

“It’s too late... a bunch of fools,” the Bone Ancestor sneered, his gaze icy as he wished for their demise.

In response, the vast fog began to recede, halting the galloping ancient warship as an unfathomable force held it in place. The ship’s external formations and barriers showed signs of collapse, compelling them to remain frozen within this domain.

Rumble!

Abruptly, the fog withdrew, and the expanse quaked violently. From the darkness emerged a brilliant ray of golden light, akin to the radiant sun of Eternal Day, forming a celestial pathway extending towards the heavens.

A young man materialized upon this pathway, his gait deliberate as he approached with an air of calmness and a hint of enigma, casting a gaze downward at the onlookers.

Chapter 967: I will really crush you to death, wandering Lord of the Forbidden Land

The vast expanse resembled boiling water, continuously emitting a three-colored, terrifying fog, while time and space seemed to freeze in its grip. The myriad strange creatures inhabiting the boundless sea vanished like snow meeting a scorching sun, leaving no trace behind.

In this enigmatic and unfamiliar domain, an extraordinarily youthful figure emerged without warning. This sight sent shivers down the spines of the experts from the Spiritual Realm aboard the ancient warship. Each felt as though they faced a formidable adversary, their senses tingling with apprehension, immobilizing them with fear.

Though they dubbed themselves “hunters,” traversing the boundless sea in search of a suitable real world and making sacrifices, they were not fools. Deliberately avoiding the terrifying forbidden zones chronicled in ancient records and texts, as well as ancient real worlds with longstanding existence, was a matter of survival—not a display of cowardice, but an acknowledgment of the strong preying upon the weak, the simplest rule of existence in this vast expanse.

For everyone to survive, adherence to such guidelines was paramount. The Bone Ancestor, far mightier than they, could freely board the ship and consume their kin at will, leaving them no room for resistance or dissent.

Upon confirming the boundless coordinates of the “Mountain and Sea Realm” and recognizing its status as a fledgling real world with a significantly inferior background, they converged upon it eagerly, akin to sharks drawn to blood.

Clearly, the young man before them was beyond their capacity to challenge.

“How should we address you? We stumbled upon this place inadvertently, with no intention to cause disturbance.”

“If Fellow Daoist holds me accountable, I am prepared to make amends and earnestly request your forgiveness.”

The Bone Ancestor found himself in a state of perplexity, unable to discern the true nature of the young man before him despite his formidable cultivation. He could only allow the young man to remain and regard them with a hint of puzzlement.

Suppressing his unease, he spoke humbly, maintaining a demeanor of utmost deference. Since the onset of this encounter, an overwhelming sense of dread had enveloped him, as if he were being scrutinized by an indescribably terrifying entity, rendering him quivering and immobile.

For him, this sensation evoked a distant memory, akin to a return to his pre-cultivation days. Confronted by destructive cultivators, he felt as insignificant as an ant, capable of being extinguished with but a flick of their wrist.

He had believed he had left behind such feelings along with his past, yet here he was, experiencing them once more.

At that moment, the sensation intensified, growing more palpable with each passing moment. Under the young man’s gaze, Bone Ancestor’s unease and fear became increasingly pronounced.

“The depths of his cultivation are inscrutable, likely far surpassing my own. I cannot ascertain how many levels he has attained.”

“It’s highly probable he stands at the seventh decline, a true ancestral realm existence, or perhaps even beyond.”

Various conjectures raced through Bone Ancestor’s mind, simmering with resentment. All he wished for now was to obliterate every last individual from the Spiritual Realm.

He cursed their recklessness; all he had desired was to hitch a ride to locate the coordinates of a nearby real world. Yet, while he dozed off, this group of individuals had inadvertently led him to such a perilous domain.

In the vast expanse, the presence of an ancestral Dao Realm entity held immense significance. Such beings were capable of safeguarding some of the mightiest real worlds, their reign enduring for eons.

In essence, encountering such a being was an exceedingly rare occurrence in the boundless expanse, akin to finding a needle in a haystack.

While many renowned forbidden sites were fixed in location, some particularly formidable and enigmatic ones roamed the boundless sea, their whereabouts unpredictable.

Bone Ancestor vividly recalled a time before several calamities when a supremely potent Realm had existed.

In his quest to harness the power of the real world and merge it with the sole remaining real world, he inadvertently stumbled upon a drifting, mysterious forbidden place. In the blink of an eye, the most formidable realm was devoured whole, leaving not even a trace behind. Even the mightiest, on the cusp of transcending to the eighth decline, perished before they could flee.

The boundless sea teemed with peril, its dangers no mere fiction. Even Bone Ancestor dared not venture into certain uncharted territories. Now, in Bone Ancestor’s eyes, the young man before him posed a threat akin to those masters of forbidden realms. The recent appearance of the three-color world-extinction fog served as compelling evidence.

While this place might have been the site of a potent real world, it was now under the young man’s dominion, transformed into a forbidden zone.

“A member of the Bone race who has surpassed the sixth decline, attaining true Dao realm status—almost in line with Gu Wuwang’s conjecture. Apart from the hunter, there’s also a lunatic in the mix.”

Gu Changge’s gaze took in the vast, ancient warship, his eyes betraying a hint of peculiarity.

Upon departing from the Dao Chang Realm, Gu Changge had sensed the movement of this ancient warship and had followed its trail. Yet, aside from this vessel, he also detected the civilization aura of other real worlds in another direction.

While his focus remained on the Dao Chang Realm’s occupants before him, Gu Changge was aware of another group’s presence. However, their distance rendered their arrival to the Dao Chang Realm a distant prospect.

Thus, Gu Changge hastened to this locale first, aiming to recruit suitable subordinates to facilitate his upcoming endeavors.

Though numerous beings populated the ancient battleship, Gu Changge’s focus remained fixed on the Bone Ancestor. Among the assembly of ancient cultivators, this individual boasted the deepest cultivation base, reaching unfathomable depths.

By the vastness’s standards, he was a genuine Dao realm existence, having attained the sixth decline—a rarity indeed. In ancient real worlds, such a figure would be a true master, capable of dictating their rise and fall.

Yet, marked by his tumultuous fate, this figure had long forsaken his past and homeland, morphing into a feared “lunatic” of the boundless sea. In the realm of confusion, such individuals often embodied danger and instilled fear.

The Gu family ancestor in the Dao Chang Realm had sensed this chaotic and frenzied aura early on, instilling profound fear. Recognizing the futility of confrontation, he entertained thoughts of relocating their clan.

However, Gu Changge perceived this figure as the ideal instrument for his designs.

“Where do you hail from?” Gu Changge’s query rippled through the mist beneath his feet. With each step, the churning mist subsided, allowing him to advance steadily toward the ancient warship.

Though his words differed, on a certain level, Gu Changge understood the other's intent through the fluctuations of divine thought. He harbored no intention of divulging his Dao Chang Realm identity just yet. Instead, he adopted the guise of the original demon lord, a taboo figure.

"Bone Ancestor greets Daoist brother. Presently, I am a wanderer of the boundless sea, without a place to call home, hailing from a different real world than their own."

Observing Gu Changge's lack of reproach for their inadvertent intrusion, Bone Ancestor exhaled a sigh of relief. Yet, he extended his hands in a gesture of explanation, expressing his intention to distance himself from the Spiritual Realm.

Though the Spiritual Realm powerhouses quaked with fear, none dared impede Gu Changge's approach. The slender, robust man, in particular, brimmed with unease.

Jie Ao, as formidable as the Bone Ancestor, displayed utmost respect and deference in the presence of this enigmatic figure, refraining from any hint of disrespect. Such behavior spoke volumes about the situation.

Despite his appearance resembling that of a banished immortal—aloof, refined, with the aura of the great Dao emanating around him, and an ethereal countenance—how could one discern his true origin? In the vast expanse, countless civilizations thrived, concealing myriad secrets. It would be folly to judge solely based on outward appearance.

"I am Wan Yanxiu of the Spiritual Realm, and I pay my respects to the lord," he began, his tone respectful. "We did not intrude upon this forbidden area intentionally. Unaware that it belonged to my lord, we merely sought passage through. We dare not show any disrespect to my lord."

With a sigh, Wan Yanxiu adopted a demeanor akin to Bone Ancestor's, promptly lowering his attitude. Though the Spiritual Realm was an ancient real world, it had only recently achieved that status. From Wan Yanxiu's perspective, the Bone Ancestor was an entity beyond comprehension, and this young-looking figure before him could only be stronger.

The other Spiritual Realm powerhouses aboard the ancient battleship mirrored Wan Yanxiu's expression, mingling respect with fear. The Dao Realm ancient cultivator steering the ship regretted venturing into this area, now likened to a perilous forbidden land stretching across the vastness. If they encountered the volatile Lord of the Forbidden Area, escape would be futile; they'd all meet their end here.

“Spiritual Realm?” Gu Changge arched an eyebrow in surprise, his smile faint. “I’ve never heard of such a real world.”

“It’s understandable if you haven’t, my lord,” Wan Yanxiu responded hastily, not daring to conceal anything. “The Spiritual Realm is neither renowned nor powerful. Currently, it faces exhaustion and decline. We traversed the boundless sea in search of a glimmer of hope for our realm.”

Wan Yanxiu’s explanation stemmed from concern that Gu Changge might grow suspicious, hence his transparency. He hoped to avoid any misunderstanding with the enigmatic figure before them.

Simultaneously, Wan Yanxiu chose to be forthright about his realm, aiming to prevent any misconceptions on Gu Changge’s part.

These forbidden areas within the vast expanse were in no way akin to the self-sustaining forbidden areas within real worlds. The masters of these domains often slumbered for countless epochs, yet their awakening heralded unimaginable catastrophe for the surrounding realms. To these masters, the “hunters” and “lunatics” were mere sustenance, akin to food awaiting consumption whenever hunger struck.

Despite Gu Changge’s detached demeanor and refined appearance, there lingered uncertainty about the duration of his slumber and the nature of his true form.

“Already exhausting?” Gu Changge’s smile persisted as his gaze settled on Wan Yanxiu.

As Gu Changge approached the ancient warship, the Spiritual Realm experts involuntarily recoiled, their faces betraying fear.

“Yes, my lord, I do not conceal it. The Spiritual Realm is indeed exhausted, and our fortunes are waning. We have mobilized all our powerhouses and ventured forth...” Wan Yanxiu’s complexion paled, his response swift and candid.

He interpreted Gu Changge’s query as a probe to ascertain the worthiness of devouring the Spiritual Realm behind them. Indeed, a recently awakened forbidden land lord would promptly seek out nearby real worlds to consume, endeavoring to restore their vitality.

Wan Yanxiu's heart brimmed with sorrow; such was the law of the jungle.

Confronting such a formidable presence, any misstep could result in unimaginable destruction for both him and the realm he represented.

The implications of Wan Yanxiu's words weren't lost on the Bone Ancestor. Initially, he hadn't considered this angle, but now, cold sweat dotted his forehead, his heart pounding.

"Is this guy bluntly informing you that their Spiritual Realm is on the brink of exhaustion, fearing being overlooked?" Bone Ancestor mused to himself, contemplating the dire implications. "But if it isn't presented this way, it might be perceived as prey."

His unease intensified as he sensed Gu Changge's gaze once more, a sensation of fear and suffocation enveloping him, like an invisible hand tightening around his throat.

"Is he abandoning the Spiritual Realm and eyeing me as a meal?" Panic gripped Bone Ancestor's heart, his thoughts swirling with dread. He entertained fleeting thoughts of fleeing, consumed by terror.

"Do you believe you can evade me if I decide to kill you?" Gu Changge's voice sliced through Bone Ancestor's turmoil, his tone casual yet menacing. "You'd be wise to dispel such notions in my presence, lest I crush you without a second thought. It's no small feat to nearly reach the seventh stage."

Gu Changge's seemingly clairvoyant insight sent Bone Ancestor's true essence quivering. Never had he imagined encountering such a terrifying entity, one capable of unraveling his deepest secrets with a mere glance.

"Yes... yes, my lord..." Bone Ancestor's voice quivered with submission. He abandoned the title of fellow Daoist, his tone trembling.

At Wan Yanxiu's realization of Bone Ancestor's near-seventh-stage status, his fear and trepidation swelled. He had presumed the Bone Ancestor to be at the fifth stage, but nearing the seventh stage elevated him to an invincible stature in the vast expanse. Even the ancient and eternal powerhouses Wan Yanxiu knew paled in comparison. Yet, could even such a being be effortlessly crushed by the youth before them?

Chapter 968: My Daoist Friend will not die poor, a restless factor

The ancient battleship of the Spiritual Realm, cloaked in black light, resembled a menacing giant beast straddling the expanse. Yet, in this moment, it appeared frozen in place, unable to advance.

The endless mist churned and gradually settled, as if ensnared in a particular void. This vessel was the ancient warship, gathering the power of all epochs of the Spiritual Realm, sacrificed together. Within its depths lay a universe and a world.

Moreover, it had been forged from various rare materials, sufficient to withstand attacks and vanquish ancient cultivators of the Dao Realm, traversing boundless expanses. In the realm beyond, it stood as the most formidable weapon of war, invincible and terrifying to behold.

Gu Changge alighted upon this ancient warship and strolled towards the assembly with unhurried steps, exhibiting a mild curiosity about the vessel, casting a few additional glances.

For the formidable figures from the Spiritual Realm, they felt akin to fish on a chopping board, frozen in place, not daring to make a move. All they could do was await the young man at the forefront to address them.

Wan Yanxiu's brow glistened with cold sweat, his heart fraught with restlessness and terror, apprehensive that Gu Changge might view them as mere prey. In such a scenario, resistance was futile; they could only await their demise.

The Bone Ancestor refrained from speaking too much, feeling a chill down his spine.

"You needn't fear me so," Gu Changge remarked, as if he could discern their every thought, offering a light smile. "It's been quite some time since I encountered other beings in the real world, and it just so happens that I've come across you."

Yet, despite his reassurances, the fear in Wan Yanxiu's, Bone Ancestor's, and others' hearts remained unabated. From their perspective, Gu Changge's words implied he had slumbered here for countless years, awakening only recently. The once-thriving real world had been devoured and reduced to a desolate, silent forbidden domain by his hand.

Naturally, they refrained from uttering a word. A formidable presence like Gu Changge was a forbidden domain unto itself. He roamed the boundless expanse, and wherever he wandered, there lay a forbidden zone.

Journeying across the vast sea, encountering unknown and forbidden territories was the greatest concern.

Clearly, their luck had taken a turn for the worse as they found themselves abruptly standing before Gu Changge.

“Are you the most powerful individual from the Spiritual Realm?” Gu Changge’s gaze settled on Wan Yanxiu once more, after surveying the ancient warship.

In truth, he had little desire to intervene extensively in this calamity that befell the Dao Chang Realm. However, traversing the confusion, he found himself lacking in manpower.

While the Bone Ancestor was suitable, one person alone was insufficient.

The foremost individual from the Spiritual Realm before him had already attained the true Dao realm. Alongside them stood several ancient cultivators of the Daoist realm. Though they had not ascended to the true Dao realm, they were all at the levels of first and second decline, constituting a formidable force.

These individuals regarded him as the master of the forbidden zone, a fact which Gu Changge did not dispute. In any case, he intended to stride forth as a demon lord, unconcerned with his origins.

Faced with Gu Changge’s inquiries, Wan Yanxiu didn’t dare conceal anything; he knew he couldn’t. So, he answered honestly.

It seemed Gu Changge had no intention of consuming them as sustenance. Yet, Wan Yanxiu couldn’t shake off his vigilance, suspecting that their cultivation levels were deemed “too weak” to catch Gu Changge’s attention. At least, a powerhouse like the Bone Ancestor likely met the criteria for being devoured.

The Bone Ancestor’s thoughts mirrored Wan Yanxiu’s. He believed these resurrected masters of the forbidden zone fed on the surrounding real world, a notion supported and verified in the boundless sea. For these realms, such feeding constituted dark turmoil, breeding darkness and destruction.

Gu Changge’s task now likely involved locating the nearest real world to devour, replenishing the blood lost during countless epochs of slumber. Just as myriad thoughts raced through the Bone

Ancestor's mind, Gu Changge posed another question, asking directly about their destination this time.

The Bone Ancestor's heart quivered, realizing his suspicions were correct. All he could do was hope Gu Changge would find a suitable real world; otherwise, he might become the target—an unsettling prospect, indeed.

Being able to ascend to the sixth decline, the Bone Ancestor was no ordinary individual; with a sharp intellect, he could discern many possibilities in an instant.

Wan Yanxiu, being forthright, disclosed that they had discovered the coordinates of a newly formed real world. It wasn't far, and with the ancient warship's speed, they would reach it within a few years at most.

"A newborn realm..." Gu Changge appeared unaware, nodding in surprise at the revelation, though a hint of regret lingered.

The Bone Ancestor immediately grasped his meaning. After all, a newborn realm was fragile, likely lacking in Dao realm cultivators and far inferior to the Spiritual Realm in terms of background. Rather than targeting the fledgling realm, it would be more beneficial to set sights on the Spiritual Realm, potentially paving the way to the ancient real world.

He respectfully addressed Gu Changge, "My lord, these individuals from the Spiritual Realm have traversed the boundless sea for many years, exploring numerous regions. They likely possess coordinates to some ancient real worlds and may even know the locations of powerful realms..."

The Bone Ancestor hoped Gu Changge would direct his attention elsewhere, fearing they might miss their chance. As he spoke, a faint blue flame danced in his empty eye sockets, and he glanced at Wan Yanxiu, who understood his intent.

At this juncture, the best course was to divert trouble to the east, prompting Gu Changge to consider other real worlds and allowing them to slip away. After all, a deceased troublemaker was of no consequence.

Wan Yanxiu spoke respectfully, "My lord, we indeed possess numerous coordinates to ancient real worlds, not far from here. There's even a formidable realm known as Xudan Realm, boasting vast territory and control over many real worlds. Our Spiritual Realm was once a realm under its dominion..."

Xudan Realm resided in the boundless sea, ranking among the most powerful real worlds, with an extensive and profound foundation.

Simultaneously, it served as the central domain for many ancient real worlds. Each era demanded significant turnover of resources and fortune from these realms.

“Xudan Realm?” Gu Changge’s interest piqued upon hearing this. He had been planning to locate the remaining real worlds, and this revelation would save him considerable effort. Furthermore, Xudan Realm boasted considerable power.

This implied that within Xudan Realm, the strongest individuals had reached at least the ancestral Dao realm, surpassing the seventh decline.

Observing Gu Changge’s intrigued expression, the Bone Ancestor and Wan Yanxiu breathed a collective sigh of relief.

“Rest assured, my lord, we’ll uncover all you wish to know,” they assured respectfully, then escorted Gu Changge into the splendid hall beyond.

Wan Yanxiu personally instructed the people of the Spiritual Realm to bring forth an array of rare wines and delicacies.

Deep within the ancient warship lay a world of its own. Though not as grand as the real world, it surpassed many ancient realms in vastness and resource abundance.

Wan Yanxiu and the other ancient cultivators were revered as the ancestors of the Spiritual Realm, their seniority dating back eons. Ordinary clan members rarely glimpsed their faces, let alone interacted with them. Typically, they remained in seclusion to conserve their vital energies.

Today marked the first occasion they commanded the clan to prepare such lavish offerings.

When the Bone Ancestor boarded the ship, Wan Yanxiu refrained from such ostentation. Partly, it was due to the Bone Ancestor’s skeletal visage, which evoked eerie terror. As soon as he set foot on the ship, he consumed one of their clan members.

Wan Yanxiu couldn't control Bone Ancestor's inclinations, thus he dared not issue orders without authorization.

However, the Gu Changge before him was different; he still bore the visage of a human, exuding an aura of immortality. In such circumstances, observing proper etiquette for esteemed guests was imperative.

The hall, though splendid, differed in decor from that of the Dao Chang Realm. Gu Changge paid little heed to such details, taking his seat at the head of the table with natural ease.

Only Wan Yanxiu and the Bone Ancestor were entitled to sit beside him. Even the other Spiritual Realm clan members, despite their status as ancient cultivators, could only stand nearby, serving dishes and drinks.

The clan members tasked with delivering the delicacies were so stunned by the scene that their legs trembled, barely able to stand. Ancestors who were seldom seen emerged and congregated, relegated to serving dishes on the sidelines. Even the most enigmatic Great Patriarch appeared, exhibiting utmost respect.

Who was the young man in white seated at the head?

Such a formidable assembly instilled trembling in their hearts, rendering them unable to lift their gazes. The beautiful dancers of the Spiritual Realm, ordered to perform, found their legs weak and faces pale, their movements awkward and strained as they suppressed their nervousness and fear of error.

This spectacle rendered the Spiritual Realm powerhouses powerless, unable to reprimand these clansmen, as they, too, grappled with anxiety and restlessness.

In their view, Gu Changge's presence was a destabilizing factor, capable of wreaking havoc upon the Spiritual Realm at any moment.

"This wine tastes exquisite..." Gu Changge commented casually, lightly swirling the wine glass.

The pair of glasses were crafted from some rare fairy material, filled with crystal-clear wine of exceptional smoothness. One could even discern stars twinkling within the liquid, creating a mesmerizing spectacle.

Wan Yanxiu's face lit up upon hearing the praise, and he explained with a smile, "This wine is known as Star Wine. If it pleases you, my lord, I can have our clan members bring more jars."

"It's brewed by a genius in our family, who gathers various sources of starlight scattered throughout the vastness. It holds great benefits for Daoist cultivators."

"In addition to Star Wine, she also crafts other rare wines, each with its own unique flavor."

Even for him, these wines were exceedingly rare, difficult to indulge in with just a few sips due to their complex and time-consuming brewing process.

Chapter 969: God's will cut off "Heaven Slaying"? Ming Xiu and Chu Lian

From Wan Yanxiu's perspective, as long as Gu Changge showed interest, navigating the next steps would become much easier. With wine, flattery, and material wealth, they could cater to his preferences, finding a way to alleviate their current troubles and anxieties.

He fretted over Gu Changge because his inclinations were entirely mood-dependent—a sentiment shared by the Bone Ancestor. Like Wan Yanxiu, the Bone Ancestor's preferences hinged on his current disposition.

In the presence of beings more powerful than himself, Wan Yanxiu obediently submitted, akin to a dutiful grandson. Conversely, when confronted with weaker entities, he assumed the role of master, holding sway over life and death.

In times of chaos, such dynamics were the norm in the jungle, and Wan Yanxiu could only yield to Gu Changge's threats.

"Star Wine? It's a fitting name, but I'm not one to indulge in alcohol. I drink only occasionally," remarked Gu Changge, casually shaking the wine glass with mild interest.

Wan Yanxiu proved more forthright than anticipated, while the Bone Ancestor displayed a strong will to survive. Individuals reaching this echelon had weathered countless trials and combats, valuing their lives above all else. Dignity and pride could be discarded at a moment's notice.

Though the Bone Ancestor was undoubtedly a lunatic, he had long shed his former self and attachments. Yet, compared to others, he held his life in higher regard, retaining a shred of reason amidst the madness. Even if tasked with sacrificing all dignity and acting as a servant, he would comply.

Any other “lunatic” might have resorted to a fight to the death against Gu Changge. This was a crucial reason why Gu Changge viewed the Bone Ancestor as a valuable asset.

As long as he could intimidate him and wield control over his life, Wan Yanxiu would not dare entertain second thoughts.

“Yes, my lord,” Wan Yanxiu replied respectfully, refraining from further comments. He then dispatched his people to retrieve the ancient jade slips that the Spiritual Realm had accumulated over countless epochs.

These slips contained coordinates to various ancient real worlds scattered throughout the boundless sea. The sea was so vast that even ancient cultivators could spend their entire lives without reaching its borders. Consequently, the slips contained only a few incomplete records.

Gu Changge casually flipped through the jade slips. Though inscribed in the language of the Spiritual Realm, it didn’t hinder his comprehension. According to the records, the Xudan Realm resided within boundless territory, shifting and floating like mist in an unknown expanse, constantly in motion with the wind.

The vast mist shrouded all the real worlds within the boundless sea, preventing anyone from venturing beyond its borders to see what lay beyond.

Differing from his perception of the boundless sea, inhabitants of the boundless referred to it as the boundless world. “Boundless” denoted an expanse both vast and infinite, encompassing everything without end. The true scope of its vastness remained incomprehensible, and its boundaries impossible to determine.

No one could elucidate the origins of the Boundless Realm. However, within its expanse, countless lives and civilizations flourished, and myriad ancient worlds were born and perished. Even a mere ripple in the vastness could bear the weight of creating a world, teeming with life and spirits.

This phenomenon showcased the magnificence of life and stood as an extraordinary miracle. Despite millennia of attempts by civilizations to explore the origins of these lives, all efforts

ultimately ended in abandonment. The mysteries and unknowns of the vast expanse remained beyond human reach.

The birth of each real world represented a grand miracle born from the chaotic collisions of countless moments. The reason for the emergence and disappearance of life remained an inscrutable enigma.

Within this vast world, rules and regulations governed, and the heavens dictated. Every thousand or hundred years brought calamity, subjecting each real world to trials and catastrophes.

Real worlds conceived within the boundless, after enduring trials, could ascend and evolve. A tiny world might transform into a small world, followed by progression to medium-sized, large-scale, ancient, and finally, real worlds.

These hierarchical divisions were universally acknowledged within the boundless world.

Beneath one ancient world lay countless other large, medium, and small worlds, while multiple ancient worlds were linked to a single real world. This hierarchical structure resembled a densely piled pyramid within the boundless expanse.

Standing atop this pyramid like a god was the ancient world, the most potent of all real worlds, governing vast swaths of the boundless realm. Several ancient and newborn real worlds fell under its jurisdiction, while the remainder were even more extensive in number, beyond enumeration.

For instance, the primary domain of the Spiritual Realm was the Xudan Realm, one of the most formidable realms with an unfathomably profound and terrifying foundation. Despite enduring numerous calamities, it showed no signs of decline or exhaustion, even after significant upheaval.

During its zenith, the Spiritual Realm paid tribute to the Xudan Realm after each era. Additionally, other ancient realms within the Xudan Realm's jurisdiction boasted foundations stronger than the Lingxu Realm, yet not inferior.

“Interesting,” Gu Changge remarked, gently setting down the jade slips. A look of intrigue flashed across his face. While he was acquainted with the hierarchical structure of worlds within the boundless sea, he was surprised to find that many real worlds viewed calamities as tests and tribulations imposed by the Heavenly Dao, akin to the heavenly decline faced by cultivators.

In this context, real worlds were compelled to endure calamities as a form of divine decree, rather than seeking to resolve or counterbalance them. Initially, he believed this mindset was unique to Gu Wuwang, the ancestor of the Gu family, but to his astonishment, even records from the Spiritual Realm echoed this sentiment.

The revelation proved exceedingly intriguing.

Either someone intentionally obfuscated the truth or the concept of “Heaven Slaying” had become taboo, rendering it unspeakable. Memories pertaining to this matter were forcibly severed from the recollections of all sentient beings. Did divine will intervene to suppress discussion of “Heaven Slaying”?

However, during his time in the Dao Chang Realm, Gu Wuwang, ancestor of the Gu family, exhibited deep fear toward those two words, though he wasn’t entirely ignorant of the subject.

“It appears that someone is indeed orchestrating a significant maneuver, aiming to erase the memories of ‘Heaven Slayers’ from the minds of all beings. Gu Wuwang was largely unaffected at the time. Could it be because I was at his side?” Gu Changge pondered, a peculiar gleam in his eyes. Few dared to tamper with the minds of countless sentient beings in such a manner. If it were an entity from the original world, Gu Changge would have surely perceived it. Moreover, the timing seemed off, as the time of upheaval had yet to arrive.

“My lord...” Wan Yanxiu interjected, sensing Gu Changge’s cryptic musings, feeling a sense of unease. Could there be discrepancies in the records within the ancient texts? The Bone Ancestor also observed, equally puzzled.

“It’s nothing,” Gu Changge dismissed with a wave of his hand, declining to elaborate further.

As for the coordinates of the Xudan Realm recorded in the jade slips, Gu Changge indeed intended to utilize this realm first. To wield strength in the real world implied the presence of at least one entity in the Ancestral Dao Realm overseeing affairs. While the Xudan Realm’s location represented merely a fraction of the boundless world, within the Xudan real world, coordinates to other transcendent real worlds should also exist.

In the main hall, numerous exquisite individuals from the Spiritual Realm gracefully danced. Following their initial bout of anxiety and panic, they gradually eased into a state of serenity, their movements becoming fluid and elegant.

Once again, Wan Yanxiu dispatched his aides to procure jade slips for Gu Changge's perusal. Uncertain of Gu Changge's duration of slumber or his comprehension of the present Boundless Realm, Wan Yanxiu could only strive to redirect his focus toward other real worlds. Concurrently, Wan Yanxiu attempted to glean insights into Gu Changge's origins, though he treaded cautiously, knowing Gu Changge wouldn't readily divulge such information.

Despite Wan Yanxiu's initial intentions to lead the Spiritual Realm to the newborn real world, where they would conduct a grand ritual to fulfill a longstanding plan, Gu Changge's unexpected appearance thwarted his scheme. Now, Wan Yanxiu found himself compelled to comply with Gu Changge's directives. However, he harbored alternative thoughts. If Gu Changge intended to assail the remaining real worlds, adhering to his commands might present an opportunity for the Spiritual Realm to seize a more potent domain and perpetuate its existence.

"If this enigmatic lord truly plans to assail the remaining real worlds, could this be an opportunity for my Spiritual Realm?" Wan Yanxiu mused, entertaining a bold notion. However, he remained uncertain whether Gu Changge sought to replenish his lost energy and blood from his slumber or harbored another motive.

Various thoughts raced through Wan Yanxiu's mind as he contemplated a daring plan. Yet, he remained unsure whether Gu Changge's intentions involved using the remaining real worlds to replenish his depleted energy and blood or if he harbored a different agenda.

....

"What? Even the Great Patriarch has awakened?"

"What is the identity of that mysterious individual who suddenly emerged? What have you discovered?"

Within the secluded confines of the ancient battleship of the Spiritual Realm, a figure adorned in a golden robe and regal crown presides over a magnificent palace. The figure's visage remains blurred, making it impossible to discern gender, and their voice resonates as if shrouded in dense fog.

The swirling mists, akin to shimmering silver light, cast an ethereal glow, resembling eternal divine fire. Kneeling below, numerous figures from the Spiritual Realm await commands, their expressions a mixture of reverence and apprehension.

“Your Majesty, we are uncertain of the events within the ancestral hall. However, we have gathered information from those responsible for beverage service,” one reports, detailing the occurrences within the hall. “Apart from the awakening of the Great Patriarch, all other ancestors also manifested, displaying profound respect and evident trepidation towards the enigmatic figure.”

The assembled figures recount the events faithfully, withholding no detail under the scrutiny of their emperor, Ling Huang, the paramount ruler of the Spiritual royal family, whose dominion extends throughout this realm.

Upon hearing the report, a hint of uncertainty flickers across Ling Huang’s countenance, reflecting upon the implications. “Our meticulously laid plans are now stalled due to this mysterious individual’s intervention,” Ling Huang muses aloud. “Have our years of preparations been in vain? Are these ancestors truly fearful of this person’s formidable power?”

As the sovereign of the Spiritual Realm, Ling Huang is intimately acquainted with the realm’s long-term schemes, crucial to the future and destiny of all its inhabitants.

For this reason, not only the Spiritual royal family but also other ethnic groups sacrificed too much.

Now, they were only one step away from the success of the big plan, Ling Huang was suddenly told that this matter had to be put on hold for now.

“If that’s the case, then what is the infamy that I have been bearing for so long?”

“Come here, come out of the palace, and disperse your breath.”

Ling Huang knew that there was no room for discussion on this matter, and it was impossible to change it.

Although he was the emperor of the Spiritual Royal family, many things had to be decided by the ancestors in the ancestral hall.

The moment his voice fell, Ling Huang’s figure disappeared from the palace.

When she reappeared, the silver radiant fog around her had disappeared, and she turned into an elegant long dress, making her taller, dignified, and beautiful, with a charming face, like a lady in a deep boudoir.

Several confidants followed her, dressed as maids and servants, and quickly disappeared from the Spiritual Royal Capital.

“The world has suffered from Spiritual race for a long time. Over the years, the royal family of the Spiritual realm confiscated others everywhere. In the name of overhauling the palace, they actually searched for the resources of various clans. Except for the Ghost clan and the Heavenly clan, the rest of the clans are suffering unspeakably.”

“Through this road, there are complaints against the Spiritual royal family everywhere. The evil things they have done are simply too numerous to describe. Even if you say a bad word, you must be careful to be beheaded.”

“There are complaints from all races, and they have long wanted to resist. If the Spiritual royal family insists on continuing like this, even if I don’t even need to take revenge, they will fall apart sooner or later...”

At a slightly desolate mountain, a man and a woman were riding a horse and were on their way.

The man looked like he was in his twenties, and his face was giving off a sense of fortitude.

The girl next to him had a beautiful face, with regular facial features, and her eyes were blinking, looking beautiful and bright.

At this moment, hearing the man’s almost self-talking words, the girl showed a bit of helplessness on her face, and couldn’t help but say, “Senior Brother Chu, aren’t you afraid of being heard when you say these words? Before we left, Master warned us, don’t talk nonsense, and be careful of killing people.”

“In this desolate country, you can’t even see a single person, Ming Xiu, what are you worried about?”

This resolute man named Senior Brother Chu was Chu Lian, the disciple of Tian Yezi, the strongest member of the Ghost Clan.

The girl on the side, named Ming Xiu, was his junior sister.

He shook his head and scanned the desolate area in front of him, not afraid of being heard.

Ming Xiu was helpless, if these words were heard by the members of the Spiritual Royal family, she and her senior brother would probably be dragged and beheaded.

With the strength of the two of them, they couldn't even escape.

She also didn't know why Senior Brother Chu seemed to figure it out after being scolded by his master and was not obsessed with revenge.

On the contrary, he proposed to go outside for a walk, to relax or something.

Ming Xiu was a little worried that his senior brother would do something stupid, so she followed him.

Chapter 970: The Ball of Ambitions, Ling Huang of the Spiritual Realm

Along the journey, Chu Lian and Ming Xiu, siblings, witnessed the tragic scenes in various places firsthand. The Spiritual Royal Family of Lingxu oppressed and exploited all clans, demanding tribute on time and increasing taxation. Speculations arose among the clans about the Spiritual royal family hoarding resources, but the brunt of these burdens fell squarely on the various ethnic groups, leaving them in misery.

In Chu Lian's perspective, the Spiritual race had endured suffering for a prolonged period, and a rebellion against the rule of the Spiritual royal family seemed inevitable, perhaps even imminent. This moment felt like another opportunity. However, this time, Chu Lian bid farewell to his mentor and brought along his younger sister for a significant reason. He believed it to be his chance.

Just a few days prior, he had finally completed a million rounds of tempering and successfully unlocked the ball of light, gaining its recognition as its master. Named the ball of ambition, it hailed from a civilization of unknown latitude, crafted by capturing the will of ancient heavens with all the might of that civilization. Endowed with boundless power and fortune, it was considered a treasure of that civilization.

However, despite refining this treasure, that civilization didn't attain immortality. As Chu Lian sought to approach its real location, that once magnificent and prosperous civilization collapsed and faded into the annals of ancient history. The ball of ambition had been adrift since then, searching for a destined individual.

Though Chu Lian belonged to the Ghost clan, not the Spiritual royal family, he had heard tales of the real place. Legends spoke of it as the source of all worldly origins, attributing the calamities experienced by all factions to its origins.

In this expansive world, the civilizations qualified to approach the real place were so formidable and prosperous that their grandeur was beyond imagination. In comparison, the Spiritual Realm paled in significance, as inconsequential as dust. Possessing the treasure left behind by such a civilization infused Chu Lian with confidence. He saw it as a means to overthrow the rule of the Spiritual royal family and finally avenge his parents.

For now, the ball of ambitions bestowed upon Chu Lian various functions to aid in his growth. Among them, the most enigmatic, in his opinion, was the "sign-in" function. By complying with the Ball of Ambition's requirements and signing in at specific locations, Chu Lian could directly obtain valuable items such as cultivation bases, techniques, divine weapons, and elixirs. This function promised rapid improvement in his cultivation, motivating Chu Lian to venture beyond his mentor's guidance into the outside world.

Moreover, the ball of ambition possessed another function: the ability to gather and harness the power of luck. From these reservoirs of luck, it could extract various original substances and energies.

In Chu Lian's perspective, original matter and energy were exceedingly rare and nearly omnipotent resources. Accumulating enough of these substances would enable him to exchange for numerous divine artifacts stored within the ball of ambition. These artifacts, relics of the civilization that crafted the ball of ambitions, boasted immense power and wielded various formidable abilities, such as the world's relics, the Great Seal of the Heavenly Heart, the Profound Banner, and the Chaos Star Sand.

Apart from these functions, the Ball of Ambitions harbored many yet unopened capabilities, fueling Chu Lian's anticipation. "I've only unlocked the first floor of the Ball of Ambitions so far, with eight more floors awaiting discovery. Once I muster the strength to open the third floor, I'll confront the Spiritual royal family with confidence. I wonder what strength I'll possess upon reaching the ninth floor."

Chu Lian exuded confidence. In just two days, the Ball of Ambitions had elevated him from an ordinary cultivator to a master level, rivaling those who had cultivated for millennia. While he still

had a considerable distance to traverse before reaching the pinnacle of the Mortal Realm, not to mention the Immortal Realm beyond, this newfound hope filled him with boundless confidence.

“Ming Xiu, you needn’t worry so much. Senior brother will eventually prove you wrong.” Chu Lian noticed the concern etched on his junior sister’s face and offered reassurance.

“Brother, mind your surroundings. There’s a carriage approaching on the official road ahead. Be cautious; we don’t want them overhearing you,” Ming Xiu admonished, rolling his eyes at his senior brother’s seemingly absent-minded chatter. He acknowledged that this excursion served as a much-needed break; otherwise, people might begin to question their sanity.

Chu Lian also spotted a carriage speeding ahead on the official road. Keen to avoid any trouble and continue to their next destination for signing in, he motioned to his junior sister, and they rode their horses to the side early to let it pass. Judging from the carriage’s ornate exterior and the three-headed cloud-patterned white horse pulling it, it was clear that its occupants were affluent or aristocratic. Numerous guards and maids trailed behind, adding to the entourage’s imposing presence.

Neither Chu Lian nor Ming Xiu wanted to draw attention or cause any complications with their conversation. Despite the Spiritual Market’s longstanding existence, the Spiritual royal family’s enduring rule, and the multitude of ethnic groups supporting it, encounters with its affiliates were unavoidable.

However, within the carriage, a beautiful figure appeared somewhat despondent, her jade hands clenched white beneath her sleeves. Adorned in an elegant noble dress, her hair arranged in a simple bun, she wore no makeup, her features exuding an unparalleled beauty. The two maids accompanying her trembled in fear, their faces drained of color as they knelt on the ground.

“Outside, refer to me as Miss,” she instructed, her tone subdued. “And do not disclose my identity.”

Gradually, she seemed to regain composure from her earlier discontent. She hadn’t anticipated hearing disparaging remarks about the Spiritual royal family shortly after leaving the Spiritual Palace. The vehement criticism and desire to overthrow the royal family incited her fury, nearly prompting her to retaliate physically. Yet, she restrained herself, determined to maintain a low profile during this excursion away from the palace, devoid of any inquiries about the royal family.

On the flip side, why was she unaware of these sentiments? If not for the ancestral decree, how could she willingly accept the current rule of the Spiritual royal family, especially when the world seemed to be in mourning under their governance? However, she felt powerless. As the emperor of

the Spiritual royal family, she was bound to obey her ancestors' commands, devoid of any authority to make significant decisions. Instead, she bore the resentment and hatred of the various ethnic groups, shouldering the blame.

"Yes... yes, miss," the two maids stammered in agreement, their earlier fears lingering. Upon overhearing the conversation outside regarding the Spiritual royal family, they sensed trouble brewing.

Such discussions, even in private, were potentially fatal matters. And yet, here was someone boldly speaking ill of the Spiritual royal family in the presence of its reigning emperor. It was akin to inviting disaster.

Though merely Ling Huang's attendants, the maids possessed formidable cultivation, allowing them to catch every word exchanged between Chu Lian and Ming Xiu from their vantage point. If they could hear it, undoubtedly Ling Huang could as well.

"Miss, permit us to deal with this insolent individual," the maids implored, eager to remove Chu Lian and Ming Xiu from the equation.

Ling Huang waved a dismissive hand, her demeanor calm. "There's no need. I'm not one to harbor grudges. Even if I were to eliminate these two, what purpose would it serve? How would it alter the world's perception?"

Her self-deprecating expression belied her words. The maids paled, silenced by her response, understanding the futility of further discussion.

Such matters involving the secrets of the Spiritual royal family were beyond their purview. As the carriage sped past on the official road, casting up clouds of dust, Ling Huang couldn't help but cast a glance towards Chu Lian and Ming Xiu.

"Hmm?" Ling Huang's sudden frown prompted her to halt the carriage with a moment's deliberation. "Stop," she instructed her attendants, who complied without question.

Chu Lian and Ming Xiu, anticipating the carriage's passage, were taken aback when it unexpectedly halted before them. The attendants behind the carriage maintained impassive expressions, lending an ominous air to the encounter.

Caught off guard, Chu Lian and Ming Xiu exchanged wary glances. “Brother, do you think they heard us?” Ming Xiu whispered, her concern palpable.

Though apprehensive, Chu Lian retained his composure, bolstered by the newfound strength he had acquired in recent days.

Meanwhile, Ling Huang frowned from within the carriage, her expression clouded with doubt. Concealed beneath her sleeves, her fingers absently manipulated a seal, as if engaged in some form of calculation.

“Bring them to me,” Ling Huang eventually decided, her doubt lingering despite her efforts to ascertain the situation.

Despite her formidable cultivation, she found herself unable to deduce the fate of mere mortals.

Though Ling Huang’s initial glance at Chu Lian had been casual, she was surprised to sense a nebulous tumult surrounding him, as if veiled in mist. Intrigued, she instructed her maid to halt the carriage.

However, upon closer scrutiny, Ling Huang realized that Chu Lian’s fate was shrouded in mystery, obscured by an impenetrable fog that defied her attempts at clarity. If not for a significant treasure, his fate would be deemed peculiar. Yet, given her formidable strength, it was inconceivable for such a treasure to elude her notice. After all, aside from the ancestors of the Spiritual royal family, she was the most powerful being in the world. Nothing should have been able to escape her scrutiny.

“Our miss wishes to meet you,” the maid announced as she approached Chu Lian, her presence sending a shiver down his spine. He couldn’t discern their cultivation levels, indicating their superiority over him.

Concerned for his and his sister’s safety, Chu Lian gathered his courage and inquired, “May I know who the two young ladies are?” He understood that any conflict could potentially jeopardize their well-being, prompting him to contemplate utilizing the secret treasure bestowed upon them by their master.

“Our miss awaits you in the carriage; please follow us,” the maids replied dismissively, their indifference palpable. Oblivious to Ling Huang’s intentions, they merely executed her orders without question.

Observing Chu Lian's peculiar fate, Ling Huang's countenance darkened slightly as she contemplated a certain possibility. "Such a fate may signify the variable mentioned in ancient texts—a manifestation beyond conventional aptitude, impervious to talent, with boundless potential for future achievements."

Though she speculated along similar lines, Ling Huang remained uncertain. Throughout the history of the Spiritual Realm, no such variable had ever emerged.

These characters were merely recorded in the annals and had traversed various real worlds. At her current level, Ling Huang's strength had reached a pinnacle, rendering further advancement impossible without some extraordinary opportunity to alter her fate. She viewed other cultivators as devoid of secrets, able to manipulate the past, present, and future like pages in a book within the realm governed by the Spiritual Royal family. Ling Huang's astonishment upon encountering Chu Lian stemmed from his enigmatic nature, a rarity she hadn't encountered outside her peers of similar stature. Unlike others whose secrets she could effortlessly unveil, Chu Lian remained shrouded in obscurity, his present, past, and future veiled in uncertainty.

"If this individual is indeed a variable or anomaly, he will undoubtedly emerge as an extraordinary figure in the future. Perhaps he will topple the rule of our Spiritual royal family and reshape the world," Ling Huang contemplated, her resolve solidifying.

Such a character must be either harnessed or eradicated before he could mature into a serious threat. Ling Huang understood the importance of controlling or neutralizing Chu Lian's potential influence, lest it become a calamity. As she pondered the implications, Ling Huang reaffirmed her decision.

Unfledged variables posed no significant threat to her, yet she couldn't underestimate Chu Lian's latent power or the unforeseen opportunities he might encounter.

"Miss, we have brought him," the maids' voices interrupted Ling Huang's deliberations.

"Please, bring this young man inside," Ling Huang instructed, composed and regal, her demeanor belying the weight of her thoughts.