

Grasping 266

Chapter 266(1): Enter the Dragon Pond and Ascend the Sea of Clouds!

In the forbidden area of the Luo Yun Province, the Dragon Pond.

The atmosphere was starting to go dim and dark. However, it was not because it was getting late but because of the dark mist evaporating from the pond, forming the murky clouds which blocked the light of the sun.

The trees and grass of the place withered. Only a strong, nauseating stench of blood permeated the air.

But when Ning Fan inhaled it into his lungs, he felt like he had just received a good rain after a long drought and his demon power increased by a bit.

With just a single breath, one would be able to increase a tiny strand of their demon power. If an ordinary Peak Nascent Soul Realm cultivator jumps into the Dragon Pond, it would not be hard to break through to the Divine Transformation Realm within a hundred years!

However, the prerequisite was that one had to be able to remain within the pond and persist for a hundred years.

It was frequent to find dead cultivators inside the pond because of the immense demon power which crushed their bodies. Therefore, the stench of blood pervaded the pond and lasted up until now.

Ning Fan wore an austere look.

So this inky and bottomless pond before my eyes is the Dragon Pond that will cause a sensation among the demons of the Luo Yun Tribe upon hearing its name!

The Dragon Pond! If one succeeds, they could attain Divine Transformation in one attempt, but if one fails, their bodies would be crushed, being buried under the pond forever!

Invariably, risks and rewards always go hand in hand!

“The depth of this Dragon Pond is unfathomable. However, the deeper you go, the stronger the demon power of the pond. Likewise, the time needed for you to absorb the demon power and advance into the Divine Transformation Realm will become shorter. Above the depth of nine thousand zhang*, the color of the pond is black. Below that level, the pond will turn into a pond of blood. There resides the bones of the cultivators that lost their lives throughout the years. It was said that there exists a yellow spring even deeper below the blood pond where a dragon corpse was buried. The presence of the dragon corpse connected the earth veins, creating great momentum. Therefore, it was called the Dragon Pond.”

“Regarding the details, this old man does not know much. With my current Mid Divine Transformation Realm and with the help of the power of bestowal, I can at most dive under twelve thousand zhang*. As for ordinary Peak Nascent Soul Realm cultivators, they can usually only reach a thousand zhang*. At this level, they will be able to achieve the breakthrough to the Divine Transformation Realm if nothing goes wrong. Among those Peak Nascent Soul Realm cultivators who died within this pond in the past, some were too confident of themselves and dived deeper into the pond while some were stealthily killed by the ‘dark beast’ hiding in the pond... Lu Bei, be sure to remember this! The affairs of the world are ever-changing, always act according to your capability!”

“Mm.”

Ning Fan closed his eyes. Before he came, he had already done some research about the Dragon Pond.

He did not immediately enter the pond but stood beside there with his hands clasped behind his back without moving a single muscle for three full days. Not even a breeze would be able to affect him.

Three days later, when his aura arrived at his peak condition, he took a step forward, turning into a trace of purple light and dived into the pond!

I must achieve a breakthrough in the Dragon Pond!

Ning Fan had been waiting for far too long to finally make this leap.

The purple light stopped at a thousand zhang* below the pond and slowly congealed into Ning Fan's shadow. The viscous and stinky liquid of the pond caused his brows to be knitted tightly together. However, in order to attain greater power, enduring temporary discomfort was still possible.

At his current location, his speed of refining his demon power was nearly three times faster as compared to the outer world.

For demon cultivators in the outer world, they would need to at least meditate in seclusion for two to three hundred years in order to accumulate enough demon power to progress towards the bottleneck of the Divine Transformation Realm.

In this place, however, a demon cultivator with tolerable natural potential would be able to touch the bottleneck within just tens of years!

If one goes deeper into the pond, the speed would be even faster.

Attaining the Divine Transformation Realm within ten years was definitely not an empty promise. In order to achieve that, Ning Fan just has to dive deep enough and arrive at a more suitable level.

But this place gave him a vague sense of threat. It was faintly discernible, as if someone was watching him in the dark. Perhaps it was the 'dark beast' mentioned by Lu Daochen.

Ning Fan spread his spirit sense. However, even with the strength of his sword sense, the coverage of his spirit sense was confined within one hundred zhang*. It was completely unable to go any further.

The sticky liquid of the pond seemed to be able to screen one's senses. As a matter of fact, only Ning Fan was capable of sensing the vicinity of a hundred zhang* around him. Common Peak Nascent Soul Realm cultivators could only sense three zhang* around them. Even Lu Daochen was only able to sense as far as seventy zhang*.

Well, it was because they didn't possess sword sense.

Ning Fan frowned again.

The demon power at this level might be concentrated, but it is still far from being unbearable to me.

He made a leap, turning into a purple light and plunged further downwards.

Two thousand zhang*. Three thousand zhang*...Nine thousand zhang*!

At the level of nine thousand zhang* below the pond, the pond seemed to be divided by a distinct boundary. There was the black pond above and the blood-red pond below. The liquid of the pond above that level was black whereas it became blood-red underneath him.

The speed of refining one's demon power at that degree of depth was almost 6 times faster compared to the outside world. If one stays here, they could possibly achieve a breakthrough within 50 years!

The demon power that gushed into Ning Fan's body caused him to feel a little uneasy. But that feeling of uneasiness instantly dissipated as soon as he activated the Jade Green Shield which was at the Second Level of the Jade Life Body Refining Realm.

"At this place, I can only achieve Divine Transformation Realm in forty years. But if I go even deeper, the time span will be shorter than this..."

The further he went downwards, the more he felt that he was being watched by the dark beasts. Apparently, there were thousands of pairs of shadowy eyes looking at him from top to bottom. Just the thought of that would make one's hair stand on end.

Just as he was trying to cross the boundary and enter the blood-red pond, a dark shadow which was sharp like a blade pierced right at his dantian. Eerily, it passed through the defense of his Jade Green Shield with ease.

This black light is too fast! Moreover, it seemed to be able to disregard any form of defense other than demonic techniques.

"General's Armor, appear!"

Ning Fan's eyes narrowed coldly. A silver general armor covered his body. When the ray of black light collided against his silver mail, it trembled violently. A massive force was delivered onto Ning Fan's abdomen but it did not manage to shatter his armor. On the contrary, the repulsive force of the collision knocked the black creature which emanated black light unconscious.

As the light from its body ceased to glow, a black miniature beast could be seen. It had a pair of wings on its back with razor-sharp fangs that were dripping with poison.

It probably is the dark beast that was spying on me just now.

A mere tiny beast like that was actually a Nascent Soul Realm beast. Because of its capabilities of breaking through one's defenses and its abnormally fast speed, quite a lot of cultivators were caught off guard and had been killed by them.

Obviously, the beast which tried to sneak attack Ning Fan did not expect that he had a Profound Earth Grade general armor as protection. The ferocity within its eyes diminished and it turned to its back, intending to flee.

However, just before it could move half a step away, Ning Fan had already bent his hand and gave it a slap. His demon power quaked, nearly smashing the dark beast into pieces.

He then opened his palm wide and captured the dark beast into his grasp.

Looking at this beast, Ning Fan's eyes turned grim.

These beasts are really annoying... The dark beasts at this level might only be at the Early Nascent Soul Realm, but if I go deeper, there could be Mid, Late and Peak Nascent Soul Realm dark beasts or even dark beasts that have attained the Divine Transformation Realm. If that's the case, I suppose my armor won't be able to withstand their attacks anymore. With the presence of the dark beasts, it'll be extremely dangerous for me to go deeper than nine thousand zhang* on my own.

The people whom I can call out to guard me are only the female corpse and Stone Warrior. Unfortunately, the two of them don't possess any demon power nor demonic techniques. I'm afraid

they can't withstand the attacks of the beasts. Moreover, under the sneak-attacks of the dark beasts, they might be injured and their lives might possibly be threatened.

"As such, I suppose this is the deepest I can go... Besides, I still have to be on guard every single moment..."

Ning Fan exerted strength in his palm, making the dark beast perish.

The whole body of this small beast carried poison, including its demon blood... I don't think I can easily assimilate such venomous blood...

Just as he was hesitating, the small and exquisite Golden Flame Chariot inside his storage pouch quivered gently, as if it was extremely excited.

"Black Dragon Tomb! This qi... It can't be wrong. This has to be the Black Dragon Tomb! Hey, you malefic being, this brother warns you. Quickly let me out. I can sense that this is the Black Dragon Tomb, a good place for me to greatly enhance my cultivation level. If you refuse to do so, I will go all-out to fight you!"

Ning Fan's eyes flashed with surprise. The creature which was blabbering within the storage pouch was of course the chariot spirit of the Golden Flame Chariot, the Black Dragon.

Judging by his words, he seemed to know the Dragon Pond quite well as he even called it the Black Dragon Tomb.

Speaking of which, this black dragon is a fighter which possesses demon power. Good or bad, this creature is still a Mid Divine Transformation Realm demon. If I have this dragon around me, I think I won't have to be afraid of the dark beasts...

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His eyes glinted with resolution as if he had made up his mind. With a slap on his storage pouch, a golden chariot the size of his hand appeared on his palm.

Within the chariot, a dark shadow of a dragon moved around enthusiastically and scanned the surroundings. After confirming that this place really was the Black Dragon Tomb, he became especially excited, dreadfully longing to jump out from the chariot and begin to improve his demon power or even reform his demon body!

However, the pitiable black dragon had already been attached to the chariot after being turned into a chariot spirit. Unless he obtained permission from Ning Fan with his spirit sense, there was no way he could leave the chariot...

“Let me out! This Elder Brother knows you are afraid that I might acquire the inheritance in this place and break through to the Void Refinement Realm. You are afraid that I will outclass you! You envy me! You malefic being, I am warning you again! If you don’t let me out, I will really go serious on you! This Elder Brother will be really scary when I’m angry!”

“Silence!”

Ning Fan activated the demon seal and immediately, the black dragon wailed in agony. His snotty demeanor died away and his mouth ceased to utter any excessive words.

“Arghhh! Please have mercy! Master, please have mercy on me! This little brother is too elated to the degree of forgetting my position... I’m truly guilty about it!”

“Hmmp! Don’t ask why you died next time you speak insolently again! Let me ask you. What is the Black Dragon Tomb?!”

Thump

The black dragon’s heart pounded heavily.

How careless am I to have mentioned the Black Dragon Tomb... I was too excited just now and made a slip of the tongue...

That was actually the secret of the Black Dragon Race. Only he who was once a young master of the race could know about it. Ordinary demons had no idea of what it was!

“Er... This Elder Brother does not know what you’re talking about?”

“Three breaths! If you don’t tell me the truth, you’ll die!” Ning Fan said, feeling lazy to prolong the nonsensical conversation with the black dragon anymore.

The first breath went by!

The secondary breath went by!

Just as the third breath was about to come, the black dragon gave in.

With his teeth gritted together, he reluctantly said, “Fine! Isn’t it just about the Black Dragon Pond? There’s no big deal in telling you about it! At the end of the day, other than the members of the Black Dragon Race, no one would be able to gain the slightest advantage from this place...” The black dragon spoke, feeling pleased with himself.

Apparently, my luck isn’t that bad after everything that had happened. Being degraded as a sinful dragon and had my claws chopped off. Being turned into a chariot spirit. I originally thought I’m really out of luck. But now, here comes a chance for me to get a break. I actually discovered the Black Dragon Tomb!

“Get to the point!” Ning Fan exerted the strength in his palm. The black dragon’s demon soul within the golden chariot was on the verge of collapsing. Instantly, he became terrified again.

“No. Don’t do it! Let’s not hurt each other’s feelings! This Elder Brother will tell you everything I know! This Black Dragon Tomb is actually the tomb of a senior of my Black Dragon Race who possesses the royal bloodline. Due to the unique terrain of this place, a secret art was used to connect his dragon veins

with the earth veins, turning it into a dragon cave which retains his corpse as well as his blood essence for the descendants of the race to devour and absorb... However, only the members of my race will be able to obtain the inheritance. Common people can't do that! Hehe. If the senior who was buried here is a Heavenly Demon, then I'm truly lucky. Hahaha. If I absorb his demon corpse and demon blood, I will be able to at least break through to the Void Fragmentation Realm with ease!" His black dragon's eyes flashed with eagerness.

"A royalty of the Black Dragon Race..."

Ning Fan frowned. From the Demon Codex, he had come across some information about the Dragon Race. It originally had numerous branches. But after the great cataclysm of heaven and earth, other than the Immemorial Thunder Dragon Race, no one from the other Dragon Races had managed to awaken the royal bloodline...

However, before the great calamity, the Black Dragon Race was once stronger than the Thunder Dragon Race.

That is to say, this Dragon pond existed long before Lu Wu went into slumber and the collapse of heaven and earth?

Will there be the corpse of a royalty of the Black Dragon Race lying below?

The boundary of the Second World is weak. It can at most allow Divine Transformation Realm beings to enter. In other words, even if there really is a corpse of the Black Dragon Race's royalty, that being's cultivation level can only be below the Half-Step Void Refinement Realm.

As such, it is certainly impossible to have a Heavenly Demon's corpse as what the black dragon mentioned. At best, there can only be a Divine Transformation Realm demon corpse...

Perhaps the black dragon was bound to be disappointed.

However, since this place was the tomb of his race, he should presumably know the methods how to deal with the dark beasts.

“Do you have any means to face the dark beasts?” Ning Fan asked in a deep tone.

“Dark beasts? Just them? They are just my snacks. As long as I reveal myself, all of them have to flee!”
The black dragon proudly replied.

“Very well! Then, I will cultivate here and you will be responsible in guarding me. If anything goes wrong, I will activate the Demon Seal and take your life! You are permitted to come out now!”

Ning Fan touched the golden chariot with his finger. The black dragon trembled and flew out from the chariot, transforming into a physical dragon with a massive body.

After keeping the golden chariot, Ning Fan stepped above the black dragon and ordered, “Go further down!”

“No problem. It’s all on me!”

The black dragon agreed with certainty while feeling ecstatic inwardly.

“This malefic being wants to cultivate in this place?! Haha. Good! Very good! During this period of time, I will capture all the dark beasts around this tomb and obtain the inheritance from the deceased royalty, seizing the opportunity to advance into the Void Refinement Realm. As soon as I achieve the breakthrough, no matter how strong the Demon Seal is, it can’t control a demon beast who has a big cultivation level gap over its castor. When the time comes, I’ll definitely be able to break free from his grasp!”

Suddenly, the black dragon was filled with hope and optimism about his future.

However, just as he traversed the blood pond and entered the yellow spring at the bottom, all his hopes were crushed, leaving only disappointment within him.

Thirty thousand zhang* below the pond - the Land of the Yellow Spring!

Multitudes of human bones were piled up on this land. The set of skeletons that come out on top among the pile of bones belonged to a dead black dragon which was already half decomposed.

By the look of the dragon blood, this black dragon should be just half a step away from advancing into the Void Refinement Realm when it was alive back then. It was not much different from Ning Fan's expectations.

Glass breaking sound

The black dragon's wonderful dream was smashed to pieces.

"Just a Divine Transformation Realm dragon's corpse?! It's not a Heavenly Demon?! F**k! I rejoiced too soon! If that's the case, even if I devour this dragon corpse as well as its demon blood, I can only break through to the peak stage of the Divine Transformation Realm!"

"The dragon blood is mine. The decayed corpse is yours!"

Ning Fan smiled and leaped from the back of the black dragon. With a wave of his sleeve, droplets of black, shiny dragon blood filled with overflowing demon power were attracted into his hands. Without a second thought, he gulped down every last one of them.

The black dragon was perplexed and was mentally crushed.

"Originally, I can only attain the Peak Divine Transformation Realm after devouring the dragon corpse and the dragon blood. Now, I can only break through to the Late Divine Transformation Realm! I'll kill you!"

"If you make any more noises, I'll take the dragon corpse for myself too!"

Ning Fan's eyes turned slightly grim and triggered the Demon Seal. Instantaneously, the black dragon felt an acute pain from his Sea of Consciousness, crying out for his parents like a child.

Anyhow, I didn't help this malefic being for nothing. Finally, I've gotten the dragon corpse as a reward. Whether it's rotten or not, it's still better than having nothing! I'll bear it! I'll eat it!

After eating this dragon corpse, I'll assimilate every last bit of the demon power and strive to attain the Late Divine Transformation Realm. With the dark beasts as nourishment, perhaps I still have hopes of attaining the Peak Divine Transformation Realm and even break through to the Void Refinement Realm!

The black dragon muttered inwardly. As soon as he thought about that possibility, his eyes shone with confidence again. The dejected feeling was completely gone.

His dragon eyes scanned around the surroundings and spotted nearly a dozen dark beasts at the Early Divine Transformation Realm hiding in the dark.

Aiyo. These are truly delicious rations!

In the dark, there were more than just thousands of pairs of eyes spying on Ning Fan. But as soon as they caught sight of the black dragon, each and every one of them shivered uncontrollably with fear.

The black dragon were the dark beasts' predator!

Therefore, it was just a natural instinct of the dark beasts to fear the black dragon. Moreover, the dark beasts could not even display ten percent of their power in the presence of the black dragon!

At thirty thousand zhang* deep below the pond, the demon power nearly stuffed Ning Fan's body to the extent of nearly exploding.

If his body refining realm had not broken through to the Second Level of the Jade Life Realm, if he did not have the protection of the royal Fu Li Bloodline, he would certainly be unable to adapt to the immense demon power of the area.

At this place, his cultivation speed was more than 30 times faster than the outside world!

In other words, it was not difficult for him to achieve Divine Transformation Realm within ten years!

After seeing that the black dragon was naturally oppressive towards the dark beasts, he set his mind at rest.

With the Demon Seal, unless the black dragon is stronger than me by a major cultivation realm, he would not dare to play any tricks.

Safety is no longer an issue with the presence of this dragon. The only worrisome matter is whether or not he will advance into the Void Refinement Realm in one attempt after devouring too many dark beasts...

“There’s nothing to fear! The blood of the dark beasts contain poison which can only be purified by the black dragons. I shall wait for this black dragon to consume as many dark beasts as possible and cleanse the poison from the blood. Then, I shall seize the purified demon power and consume it myself. In that case, this dragon’s cultivation realm can be constrained...”

Ning Fan’s eyes glittered with cold light. After giving multiple orders to the black dragon to restrict his movements, he sat down in a lotus position. With a pat on his storage pouch, he fished out the Blue Flame Grass and the Demon Marshal’s golden blood.

13 complete droplets of golden blood and 84 strands of golden blood streaks...I’m afraid these are all the remnants of the Demon Marshal’s blood in the entire Land of Slumber.

As the items appeared, the depressed countenance of the black dragon who was busy catching and killing the dark beasts suddenly brightened up.

“The Demon Marshal’s blood essence?! How did he gather so many of them?! They are really good...”

The black dragon could not imagine where and how Ning Fan obtained so much golden blood.

He audibly swallowed his saliva and bitterly filtered out his greedy thoughts.

No. I can't seize the malefic being's golden blood. They might be good, but the current me is bound by the Demon Seal, I can't oppose him...

"Fine. The golden blood is all yours! This Elder Brother will endure for the time being! I'll just eat the dark beasts with all my might!"

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It took three months for Ning Fan to consume the golden blood.

During that time, Ning Fan did not move nor speak. He sat still in deep meditation as a faint golden light began to radiate from his body. At the same time, there were blue flames blazing within him, gradually refining the golden light.

His demon power increased bit by bit, slowly advancing into the realm of the Divine Transformation Realm.

When the last strand of golden blood was fully assimilated, his demon power had increased to 10147 units!

As his demon power broke through ten thousand units, he also broke through to the borderline of the Divine Transformation Realm. At this very moment, Ning Fan suddenly opened his eyes. With a single thought, he condensed all the golden light and the blue flames into his body, finalizing the refining process.

"My demon power has already reached 10000 units... It's time to begin condensing the demon power and crush the bottleneck of the Divine Transformation Realm..."

With a slap on his storage pouch, he pulled out the General Breaking Pill, the Profound Blood Pill and the Separation and Reunion Pill. Other than the three pills, he also took out the fourth pill - Cloud Forming Pill.

The Cloud Forming Pill was a secret prescription of Lu Daochen. It would be able to raise the chances of success in achieving the breakthrough by 10%.

Consuming the four pellets in front of him would be able to increase 35% of his chances of success. With his demon power which was already more than 10000 units and the two types of intents that he had comprehended in the past, if he still failed in attaining the Divine Transformation Realm, it would be a total humiliation for him.

Within four months, Lu Wan'er had already succeeded in making the phoenix wings. She stood at the side of the Dragon Pond, patiently waiting for the moment when Ning Fan completes his advancement.

Within four months, the demon concubine would occasionally come to pay a visit. Her concern was still of course just about the map of the World Passage.

Within four months, Lu Daochen held a luopan¹ in his hand, displaying a secret art to determine how deep Ning Fan had dived below.

When the luopan showed that Ning Fan was thirty thousand zhang* deep below the yellow spring, Lu Daochen's face was filled with astonishment.

He had no idea what means Ning Fan had that enabled him to dive under such depth. The ferocity of the dark beasts at that level was enough to make him feel dread. It was impossible that he would dare to dive to that level...

“This man's capabilities are still beyond my anticipation... The younger generation is truly fearsome, as the saying goes: the young generation should be feared! Attaining the Divine Transformation Realm within 10 years... I suppose he will really be able to achieve it...”

The first year went by, the second year went by and the third...

When the seventh year came by, within the territory of the Pure Flame Tribe, millions of li were stained with blood. Hundreds of thousands of demons were massacred. The passage connecting the Demon World was opened for the second time!

On the eighth year, a ray of dazzling sunlight shone down from the sky above the Luo Yun Province. A beautiful woman clad in purple robes was leading at least ten delicate and pretty Divine Transformation Realm female demons arrived at the province!

On the ninth year, the flames of war rose within the Land of Slumber. The prince of the Demon Sovereign had launched attacks towards three demon tribes while the Demon Concubine Zi had stormed two, seizing all their maps. Other than the Second Tribe and the Third Tribe which were not being assaulted and still managed to keep their maps with them, the rest of the tribes had all lost theirs.

Under the protection of Demon Concubine Wu Yan, Demon Concubine Zi did not wrest the maps in Ning Fan and Lu Daochen's possession for the time being.

But on the tenth year, the Pure Flame Tribe's target had shifted to the Luo Yun Tribe.

A period of ten years flew by like clouds in the sky.

After ten years of bitter cultivation, Ning Fan's demon power became dense and concentrated. For every second that passed by, he became closer to breaking through.

Throughout the ten years, Ning Fan had not opened his eyes even once. All his focus was completely in advancing through the bottleneck of the Divine Transformation Realm.

In the same year, he finally breached the invisible barrier. His state of mind sank into the Heavenly Dao, appearing in a domain of clouds.

On top of the sea of clouds, there were three gigantic tablets made of stone.

The three massive tablets seemed to have been carved with all the names of the cultivators who had achieved the Divine Transformation Realm throughout the ages. The height of each of the tablets was immeasurably tall, seemingly endless.

Below the tablets stood a Daoist child who was holding a fly-whisk in his hand. As he caught sight of Ning Fan approaching step by step, he uttered with an indifferent tone, "Hmm? A cultivator from the Rain World... 'Sever your mortal coil in the sea of clouds, transform as a deity and ascend the heavens'. This place is the Sea of Clouds. The three stone tablets before your eyes are the Three Tablets of Heavenly Dao. The purple stele is for demon cultivators; the green stele is for divine cultivators while the one in black is for devil cultivators. The Heavenly Dao will only be in harmony when the three tablets coincide with each other. You, the cultivator from the Rain World, will only need to complete the three steps of severing your mortal coil and carve your name on the tablets. Then, you will complete your Divine Transformation..."

As the Daoist child finished speaking, he closed his eyes, holding his head high arrogantly and remained silent. Apparently, he did not intend to converse any further with Ning Fan.

As for the three steps of severing one's mortal coil, he did not give any explanation at all.

"The Divine Tablets of Heavenly Dao. The three steps of severing one's mortal coil... Did I just enter into the Heavenly Dao?"

As Ning Fan inched forward to the tablets and scanned through the three gigantic monuments with his eyes, he was inwardly surprised by the quantity of the names engraved unto them.

There are actually so many Divine Transformation Realm cultivators who once existed in heaven and earth...

If he carves his name unto the stele, he would then obtain the recognition from the Heavenly Dao and become a true Divine Transformation Realm demon cultivator!

If he does not carve his name, he would never be able to complete his Divine Transformation, let alone proceed to Devil Transformation...

“What was Dong Xu trying to tell me in the past... How should I achieve Devil Transformation?”

When he got closer to the steles, he felt like the vast and boundless aura emanated by the steles was going to melt him away.

As his eyes were perusing the tablets, he suddenly noticed that each and every one of the unfamiliar names were actually glowing in different colors.

Red, orange, yellow, emerald green, jade green, blue and purple. Each of the color represented one's luck at the end of their cultivation paths. Most of them were glowing in red, orange, yellow, emerald green and jade green. There were only a minority of the names shone in blue color whereas the names gleaming in purple were extremely rare...

What Ning Fan was truly concerned about were not the purple names but a black name that was mixed up in the list.

He was not interested in it at first but when he took a closer look at it, his expression changed drastically.

Yin Yang Star, Han Yuanji!

“Master! His name is also on the Divine Tablet! It can't be wrong. This name carries Master's unique aura. There is no way I can be wrong!”

“However, why is it black in color? Why is the color of Master's name different from the rest? Don't tell me this is the key to Devil Transformation?!”

His eyes glanced through the three giant tablets again, from the bottom to the top. Occasionally, there would be one black name appearing among ten thousands of names. He shifted his gaze unto the haughty Daoist child. He might look young but his bone age was already more than one thousand years old and his presence radiated Late Divine Transformation Realm aura.

Ning Fan brought his eyes back to focus and cupped his fists.

“Your Excellency, may I ask why the names on the Divine Tablets are glowing in different colors?”

“Huh?! You are able to notice the difference of color of the names?!”

The Daoist child’s eyes widened in amazement.

It was because the colors were the representations of luck. Ordinary cultivators would not be able to notice them at all. Generally speaking, only True Immortals were able to spot them. In the Immortal Mansion that the Daoist child was assigned to, the probability of a Void Fragmentation Realm cultivator to notice luck was pretty low. It could be said that out of ten of them, no one would be able to see it. As for the cultivators who had yet to achieve the Divine Transformation Realm, the probability was even lower. The ratio was nearly zero to ten thousand!

Immediately, the arrogant demeanor of the Daoist child dissipated and he cupped his fists towards Ning Fan as an act of courtesy.

“Fellow Daoist really has an unprecedentedly sharp observation. You’re truly extraordinary! I am a subordinate to the Black Tortoise Star of the Void Realm of the Northern Ocean, acting as a tablet protector of the Tablets Master Immortal Emperor. My Daoist name is Yi Qing. May I know what’s Fellow Daoist’s name?!”

With just a bone age of a thousand years old, this Daoist child, Yi Qing had already attained the Late Divine Transformation Realm. His innate potential was truly outstanding. Even in the Black Tortoise Star, his reputation was also not weak. Among the great talents of the Black Tortoise Star, those whom Yi Qing could place in his eyes were few. But today, Ning Fan had caused that Daoist child’s eyes to light up with interest.

This man is already able to read the color of luck even though he has yet to completely achieve the Divine Transformation. He certainly is unique.

This kind of talented being is definitely worthwhile for me to befriend!

“I’m Ning Fan!”

Ning Fan replied with his fists cupped. Before the Divine Tablets, it would be meaningless to conceal his true name.

There was no way he could hide his identity if he has to go through the three steps of severing his mortal coil and eventually engrave his name on the tablet.

Up until now, no one among the cultivators who came could cause the Daoist child to cast a second glance at them... Ning Fan was the first one!

‘Fellow Daoist is able to recognize one’s luck. I’m afraid when Fellow Daoist carves your name on the tablet, you will need the help of Senior Sister Bei Li to congeal the pen of luck...’

The Daoist child took out a green talisman and muttered a few words.

Thirteen years. For the past thirteen years, no cultivators at the Divine Transformation Realm could identify luck.

The Daoist child had a feeling that the entire Sea of Cloud would be shaken by Ning Fan.

Chapter 267(1): The Ten Steps Bridge; Bei Li.

The Daoist child, Yi Qing came from the Black Tortoise Star in the Void Realm. In the past when Ning Fan consumed the Spirit Refining Grass in the Sinister Sparrow Sect, he accidentally comprehended the ability of Myriad Miles Wander, which stretched his spirit sense into a fine, long line that could penetrate into different worlds, enabling his spirit sense to enter the Void Realm. If it was not because of a person with great capabilities in the Black Tortoise Star who saved him, his spirit sense would have been crushed and he would have died back then...

The Elder Sister with whom the Daoist child was communicating using his telepathy on the talisman was Bei Li...

This place was the Sea of Clouds and the three tablets were built for the cultivators to engrave their names. But before that, one has to go through the Three Steps of Mortal Severance.

What mattered the most to Ning Fan was the black-colored names. He just could not understand why the Old Devil's name would be dyed in black.

There must be a special meaning behind the color black!

“Can I ask Fellow Daoist Yi Qing about how the names on the tablets are being differentiated using colors?”

“To be honest, the colors represent a cultivator's luck... Ordinary cultivators would not be able to notice them during the process of achieving Divine Transformation. Their names often glow in the first five types of colors. If there are exceptional cultivators who could see luck, they will be granted the technique of ‘Congealing Luck into Pen’ and they could condense their luck into a pen to carve their names which would glow in blue or even purple color. Once the carving process is over, the cultivator's luck will receive blessings from the Heavenly Tablet. Those whose names glow in purple color will have at least 10% higher chances of success than common cultivators in ascending to become an immortal!”

Ten percent! Compared to the probability of immortal ascension which was said to be zero in ten thousand, ten percent was an unbelievably great amount.

From Yi Qing's perspective, with the help of the pen condensed from luck, Ning Fan would at least leave a blue name on the tablet which would then raise his luck to the blue level under the blessings of the Heavenly Tablet.

In the future, if he bumps into any opportunities, he might even be able to bring his luck a notch higher, reaching the purple level.

To Yi Qing, a being like Ning Fan was a person who had a high chance of becoming an immortal. A person like him was worthy enough to deserve his respect! Besides, they might already have a predestined fate in the path of cultivation after he ascends to the heavens even though he was just a cultivator from the mortal world.

“Then, what’s the meaning of the color black?”

Ning Fan laughed bitterly inside his heart.

The purple luck is heaven-defying. But sympathetically, my luck has already been stained... Though awakening the Fu Li bloodline brought me lots of benefits, the cost was the contamination of my own luck.

Rumor has it that those who possess black luck will be hopeless in becoming immortals. But if Old Devil could ascend and become an immortal, why can’t I?!

“The black luck...which is also known as ‘Hopeless Immortal’...The individual who has such luck cultivates the path of defiance to the Heavens. The road to becoming an immortal is bumpy, his fortune is extremely weak and the Heaven’s Tribulation is especially formidable. Among the defiant cultivators with black-colored luck, the probability of achieving immortal ascension is zero out of one hundred... Well, it’s nearly impossible that Fellow Daoist will obtain such luck. Even if you have the capability to do so, I strongly not recommend Fellow Daoist to carve a black name on the tablet...”

Yi Qing’s advice was good and earnest. Unfortunately, Ning Fan’s luck could not be in any other colors other than black.

Countless thoughts flooded within his mind.

Judging from the signs of it, the Devil Transformation mentioned by Dong Xu is probably about carving down the ill fate with the pen of luck.

After having the Fu Li bloodline, my luck has been altered and my fate has changed. I suppose I really have to go through the Devil Transformation...

It’s unchangeable but there is also no need to change it. Now, I shall bring my focus in contemplating the three steps of severing my mortal self.

“What are the three steps of the Three Steps of Mortal Severance?” Ning Fan asked.

“*harrumph* About the name-carving session, Fellow Daoist will need to be handled by Elder Sister Bei Li. I can’t make any decision about it. However, regarding the Three Steps of Mortal Severance, I can bring you there now. The three steps are quite difficult for common people but the difficulty isn’t really high. For Fellow Daoist, I believe it’s just as easy as lifting your hands... The first step is called the ‘Ten Steps Bridge’. Ten steps and an illusion, mister must never look back. Crossing the bridge with a hundred steps, one should be unfamiliar to all his past. This bridge is rumored to have been built by the Immortal Sovereign when he established his Dao. Crossing this bridge could bring a lot of benefits to a cultivator’s state of mind.”

“Common cultivators are able to walk for fifteen steps in a day and eventually cross the entire bridge within seven days. As for the illusion of the bridge, it intensifies with the number of seven. On the seventh day, the illusion that a cultivator experiences on the bridge will become more intense, making Divine Transformation Realm cultivators not be able to regain their conscious selves. On the fourteenth day, the power of the illusion will become strong enough to delude a Void Refinement Realm cultivator. On the twenty-first day, even a Void Fragmentation Realm cultivator would face danger from the illusion... Once there was a Void Fragmentation Realm expert who intended to use this bridge as a tool to balance his heart’s illusion and temper his state of mind. However, he ended up staying for more than twenty-one days on the bridge. On the twenty-second day, he was unable to walk out from the bridge anymore. In the end, he was devoured by the illusion... His life perished together with his Dao...”

As Yi Qing was explaining, he was leading Ning Fan to travel across folds of clouds until they saw a bridge made up of mist.

There was a stele with “Ten Steps” engraved on it beside the bridge. Underneath it was a deep pool with a depth that cannot be measured. The body of the bridge was covered with a cloud of purple mist which could transform and produce different kinds of illusions.

“So this is the Ten Steps Bridge... Ten steps and an illusion, mister must never look back...Is this about bidding farewell to one’s past...”

Ning Fan stood beside the stele. As his gaze landed on the stele, they widened with surprise.

The handwriting of the two words is rather familiar...

He recognized it!

Because the handwriting was exactly identical to the handwriting of the four words “A Man of Honor”!

“This Ten Steps Bridge is actually constructed by the peerless True Immortal who wrote the nameless ancient scroll!”

Ning Fan could not resist the feeling of surprise.

According to Yi Qing’s explanation, this bridge was built by the Immemorial Immortal Sovereign. So if the person who built the bridge is the same person who wrote the nameless ancient scroll, it would mean that it was the Immortal Sovereign who wrote the four words - A Man of Honor!

The Immemorial Immortal Sovereign was the master of the Ancient Chaos Emperor. He is the master of a billion worlds. The handwriting of such a supreme being had fallen into my hands...

“I wonder... If I sell the four words, would the sum of money I earn be able to buy the entire Rain World...”

Ning Fan’s expression gradually became calm.

“Fellow Daoist, please board the bridge and sever your mortal self!” The Daoist child said with a clear voice. A path slowly emerged amidst the dense purple mist on the bridge.

Just as the purple mist was scattering to both sides, Ning Fan seized the opportunity and got on the bridge immediately!

When the purple mist covered the bridge once again, Ning Fan felt a great immortal’s prestige pressing against his body. It was as if countless mountains were on his shoulders, making him feel it was hard to move even an inch forward.

The prestige of an Immortal Sovereign! Under such pressure, even if it were the Immortal Emperors of mortal beings, none of them would be able to move a single step!

After trying a few fruitless attempts, Ning Fan shut his eyes, no longer intending to advance forward.

Strands of Late Divine Transformation Realm prestige which were flashing with blood light started to encircle his body.

Just as when the blood light appeared, Ning Fan suddenly reopened his eyes and broke free from the immortal's prestige, making the first step forward!

The Daoist child's countenance changed, silently admiring the rare sight before him.

If he was not wrong, Ning Fan's aura force had attained the Late Divine Transformation Realm even though he had yet to complete the Divine Transformation process.

His aura force is not any weaker than mine!

“As the saying goes, every beginning is always difficult. The first step is always the hardest step for a cultivator to make. For cultivators with ordinary talents, the first step might take them a few hours or even a few days. But a being like him who could take the first step within ten breaths after boarding the bridge... There aren't more than one hundred thousand of them among the millions of Divine Transformation Realm experts in the Four Heavens Immortal World! However, I wonder if this man can continue for how many more steps in a single attempt after moving the first step...”

Yi Qing slightly narrowed his eyes with anticipation. Under his watch, Ning Fan raised his heels and in the blink of an eye and had completed nine steps.

Each of the steps he made compelled the great momentum to become a sword and resist the immortal's prestige using the aura of the sword.

I can only make the nine steps after breaking through the Late Divine Transformation Realm!

Yi Qing reflected within himself.

“Conjuring a sword in nine steps. It was accomplished in one breath. If this man can finish the first tenth step and call out the first illusion, he can be ranked within the top ten thousand experts among the millions of Divine Transformation Realm cultivators in the Four Heavens Immortal World...”

Nine steps. This was already the limit of Ning Fan’s technique - Nine Steps, Sky Treader. After making the nine steps, his sword aura which had reached its peak began to decline swiftly. The heavy and strong immortal’s prestige nearly made Ning Fan suffocate, let alone complete the tenth step.

The Daoist child’s words were obviously a compliment to Ning Fan but when they echoed into Ning Fan’s ears, they became rather unpleasant.

Even if I make the tenth step in just an attempt, I could only be regarded as the top ten thousand experts among the Divine Transformation Realm cultivators of the Four Heavens? Are there really that many descendants of fiendgods and young talents in the Four Heavens Immortal World...

“It’s not enough to be within the top ten thousand! I might not know what the ranking my master got in the past, but I’m sure he isn’t just ranked within the top ten thousand!”

The blood-red aura force ferociously surged around him, slightly dispersing the immortal’s prestige carried by the purple mist. Determined, Ning Fan brought one of his feet forward, making the tenth step.

Chapter 267(2): The Ten Steps Bridge; Bei Li.

As the tenth step forcefully landed on the bridge, the immortal’s prestige shook. Ning Fan felt a hint of sweetness in his throat and almost coughed up a mouthful of blood.

But he deliberately chose not to cough nor swallow it down because if he does so, his strength would weaken and the tenth step would be his maximum limit.

“This man really made ten steps in just an attempt! Ten steps and an illusion. At this point, he will be facing the first illusion of his mortal life. The first illusion always shows a person’s first enemy. I wonder what the cultivation level of his first enemy would be...”

Ning Fan stopped at the tenth step. The purple mist gradually congealed into a black-robed cultivator emanating a Late Harmonious Spirit Realm aura in front of him. That person’s expression was indifferent. He looked young but his voice was old and hoarse.

He was the person who abducted Zhihe into the All Pleasure Sect with the intention of keeping her as his human cauldron. He was the outer sect elder of the Heaven Separation Sect - Wu Dongnan!

He was the first person whom Ning Fan killed with his own hands!

The Daoist child, Yi Qing’s countenance changed and involuntarily said, “His first enemy is actually a Late Harmonious Spirit Realm cultivator...”

The reason why he felt surprised was not because the Late Harmonious Spirit Realm was a powerful cultivation level but because a Late Harmonious Spirit Realm cultivator was indeed a little too strong to be one’s first enemy.

Even strong cultivators began their cultivation when they were just mortals. Therefore, the people whom the cultivators killed for the first time were normally mortal beings or merely Vein Opening Realm juniors...

Having a Harmonious Spirit Realm cultivator as his first enemy...

It is either he killed his first enemy after attaining the Harmonious Spirit Realm or he had directed the tip of his sword to that person when he had just begun the path of cultivation...

“It won’t be difficult for him to break this illusion. What I’m wondering is whether he can still make the eleventh step without stopping. If he can, he can be ranked within the top nine thousand among the Divine Transformation Realm cultivator of the Four Heavens...But I suppose he should not be able to do it. He could barely make the tenth step just now as it almost made him cough up blood...”

Ning Fan's gaze landed on Wu Dongnan while his eyes flashed with cold light.

That Wu Dongnan might just be an illusion, but he appeared to be exactly lifelike.

Besides, when he was facing Ning Fan, his expression was ferocious and his mouth was uttering harsh words.

“Ning Fan, how dare you kill me?! How dare you kill me?! If this matter is known by the master of my Heaven Separation Sect - Master Wuxie, you will surely die!”

As he spoke, his senses gradually became clear.

Only then did he realize that he seemed to have been dead for a very long time already. The current Ning Fan before his eyes was no longer the Fifth-Level Vein Opening Realm junior who killed him in the past!

The aura being emanated by Ning Fan was completely beyond his reach, just like an unattainable mountain. However, because Ning Fan was on the verge of breaking through to the Divine Transformation Realm, his aura was almost restrained within him, making Wu Dongnan be unable to notice how strong he currently was at first glance.

But as Ning Fan's eyes turned cold, his aura force was unleashed without reservation!

When the Late Divine Transformation Realm aura force landed on Wu Dongnan's illusory body which was formed by the purple mist, his heart was filled with terror.

“This...What's his cultivation level?! Gold Core Realm?! No. No one among the Gold Core Realm cultivators in the Yue Country would have such powerful aura force... Could it be the legendary Nascent Soul Realm? Yes. That must be it. He must be at the Nascent Soul Realm! But how is this possible?! How could he become a Nascent Soul Realm expert?! Impossible!”

To Wu Dongnan, the Nascent Soul Realm was just a myth.

However, just as he was suppressed by the blood-red aura force, he realized that that aura force alone was sufficient to cause his body of purple mist to crumble! His immortal veins disintegrated inch by inch! His Sea of Consciousness turned to dust, it was as if his Heart of Dao which he cultivated his entire life vanished under Ning Fan's aura force!

“This is the prestige of a Late Divine Transformation Realm being... Wu Dongnan, you plotted against Zhihe in the past. This feud, I will never forget even after cutting you down generations after generations... Die!”

In a flash, Wu Dongnan's body was destroyed, leaving only his head which eventually fell onto the bridge without the support from his body. His eyes were still staring at Ning Fan with disbelief.

This illusion might be unreal as its name suggested, but what happened in that illusion was real. So that was the technique of an Immortal Sovereign. The difference between reality or imagination rests on his single thought!

“Late Divine Transformation Realm. Late Divine Transformation Realm...” Wu Dongnan was stupefied. Divine Transformation Realm was just too much stronger than the Nascent Soul Realm. To him, it was a legend among legends.

Ning Fan placed the eleventh step on the bridge!

As his foot fell, Wu Dongnan's skull was squashed underfoot. Meanwhile, his dark hair grew longer and danced in the air even though there was no breeze. His white robe turned pure black and a demonic mark emerged on the left side of his face.

Without stopping, he lifted his leg forward as if it was as light as a feather and continued to make the twelfth step and the thirteenth step subsequently!

From the beginning of his cultivation until today, he had invented two techniques himself: the Nine Steps: Sky Treader and the Black Tempest Rupture Art.

The eleventh step was not his finishing point at all!

The Daoist child, Yi Qing's eyes were filled with amazement. If he was not wrong, the technique that Ning Fan displayed by turning himself into a black shadow was actually one of the Void Fragmentation Realm techniques - Sense Soul Incarnation Chant1!

Under the enhancement of his Soul Incarnation technique, Ning Fan trod forward until the nineteenth step with ease and eventually completed twenty steps.

“Making twenty steps in just a single breath. If this man completes his Divine Transformation, it won't be difficult for him to break into the top five thousand among the Divine Transformation Realm experts of the Four Heaves! Normally, the second illusion will be the person whom the cultivator wishes to kill but has yet to kill in his entire life... I wonder what's the cultivation level of his arch nemesis...”

Just as Yi Qing's voice fell, his eyes widened immediately at the following second.

In front of Ning Fan, the purple mist condensed into a ten thousand zhang* tall giant wearing black armor. His presence was radiating the frightening aura of a Void Fragmentation Realm expert who had already attained the 5th Heavenly Layer.

“Fifth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm. The possessor of the Nirvana Devil Veins! His arch enemy is actually such a powerful expert!”

Facing the giant with a height of ten thousand zhang*, Ning Fan appeared to be as insignificant as an ant.

Even so, the ant-like Ning Fan's eyes were fearless and menacing. He raised his head and glared at the giant.

“Han Nietian!”

“An ignorant ant! Who do you think you are to call out this emperor's full name?! Just wait a while longer. The period of a hundred years will be over very soon. Your master will die and there's no escape for you as well! Ancient Devil Dao, Turning Broken Bones into Soldiers!”

The black-armored giant literally bit off one of his finger where blood oozed out incessantly from his wound.

One of his fingers was equivalent to a small mountain in size. The bones of his finger transformed into a ray of black light, conjuring one hundred thousand devil soldiers. All of them looked vicious and hideous and each of them possessed strength at the Peak Gold Core Realm.

In the next second, the massive troop of soldiers began to merge together with one another. Ning Fan held his hand in the air, grasping the sunlight in the Sea of Clouds which transformed into a brilliant golden spear.

“Turning Broken Bones into Soldiers of the Ancient Devil Dao... 1000000 Gold Core Realm soldiers fused into 1000 Nascent Soul Realm experts and 1000 Nascent Soul Realm experts combined into 10 Divine Transformation Realm experts. If the ten Divine Transformation Realm experts fuse together, they could produce a Peak Divine Transformation Realm expert... However, before your soldiers finish fusing, this technique can be cancelled!”

With a slap of his palm, the golden spear pierced through the troop of soldiers like a ray of blinding light and exploded!

It was the Parting Sun Spear, A Mid Divine Transformation Realm demonic technique. It was Ning Fan’s first time congealing the body of the spear and using this technique.

Under the power of the spear, one hundred thousand Gold Core Realm bone soldiers were all rendered in a grievous state.

With a sweep of his sword sense, a cloud of black shadow approached them, wiping out every last one of them!

“Fake Moksha Emperor, get out of my sight!”

Ning Fan’s gaze seemed to be carrying the might of the Heavens. With just a look, the black-armored giant suddenly fell in pieces.

In these illusions, some of them were real while some of them weren't. If Wu Dongnan was much closer to reality, then the Moksha Emperor was naturally fake since he wasn't dead yet...

Yi Qing stared at him with his mouth agape. Commonly, if the Divine Transformation Realm cultivators met a Void Fragmentation Realm expert in their second illusions, they would definitely choose to wait for a day to pass. One day later, the illusion would dissipate and the purple mist would lessen. If they did not turn their heads back, they would then be able to continue walking forward.

There wasn't someone who would really use techniques to cut down an illusory being, let alone crush a Void Fragmentation Realm imaginary presence with just a gaze.

"Apparently, I've underestimated this man... He clearly has the capability of finishing the Ten Steps Bridge without a break. In the list of the Divine Transformation Realm experts of the Four Heavens, he is qualified to be ranked within the top one thousand..But that ranking should be his limit because his cultivation level is still at the bottom. If he advances into the Mid Divine Transformation Realm, he will surely be within the top five hundreds. If he breaks through to the Late Divine Transformation Realm, he will definitely be within the top one hundred. If he attains the Peak Divine Transformation Realm, he will certainly enter the top fifty... My judgement wasn't wrong after all. This man is really a genius!"

Twenty-first step, twenty-second step...Thirtieth step.

Ning Fan gradually discovered that as long as he persisted in moving forward without stopping, the illusions of the purple mist were the perfect nourishment for his state of mind.

After eliminating two illusions, his state of mind had already reached the early stage of the Divine Transformation Realm.

Chapter 267(3): The Ten Steps Bridge; Bei Li.

Fortieth step, Fiftieth step...Ninetieth step. Each of his previous enemies and his good friends emerged one after another. Moreover, his foster father who adopted him in Wu Country - Ning Daniu had also

appeared among the illusions. He stood behind Ning Fan and kept shouting for him at the top of his voice. However, although Ning Daniu had shouted so much that his voice had turned hoarse, Ning Fan did not turn his head back even once. Even though he owed much to Ning Daniu, he also had a score to settle with his adoptive father, thus making the debt of gratitude and revenge between the two difficult to calculate. Even so, Ning Daniu was not important enough to cause him to stop in place.

At the ninety-ninth step, Ning Fan came to a stop.

Relying on the power of his incarnation, he was able to complete the Ten Steps Bridge without much difficulties. But just before he intended to make the one hundredth step, he paused for a moment.

Before bringing the last step forward, he suddenly felt a strong feeling of warmth and affection.

What will be the illusion for the last step of the Ten Steps Bridge?

From making the first step up until now, Ning Fan had never stopped, not to mention turning his head back.

Clearing up his doubts, he made another step forward, completing the one hundredth step.

A few seconds later, he faintly felt the purple mist behind him congeal into a female shadow. She reached out her arms which were covered with light-yellow sleeves, hugging his neck from behind. With a feeble tone she called, "Son...My son...Remember...your surname is Yun. Don't hate your father. He just forgot about us... When he remembers you, he will come here and take you home as promised..."

At the moment when her voice resounded, he felt like there was a string that snapped within his heart.

"This voice sounds really familiar... It's... mother's..."

After making the one hundredth step, he could actually leave the Ten Steps Bridge and complete the First Step of Mortal Severance by just walking forward.

But Ning Fan did not leave. On the contrary, he gently turned around.

Outside the Ten Steps Bridge, Yi Qing's countenance changed greatly. Be it the mortal beings or experts who had attained the Void Fragmentation Realm, one must never look back on the Ten Steps Bridge.

Once they turn back, they would be affected by the purple mist and be enchanted by the illusions, causing them to completely sink into the illusions and eventually be consumed by the purple mist.

“Fellow Daoist Ning, you must not turn around! No!”

Yi Qing's voice echoed loudly throughout the space but still, it was too late.

However, after Ning Fan turned to his back, his eyes did not show even the slightest hint of confusion and his face did not seem to be in a trance-like state at all.

He had turned around but he was not influenced by the illusions!

How is this possible?!

“Since ancient times, no one could avoid being lost in the illusions after turning their heads to the Ten Steps Bridge... This man is the first one to do that! How did he do it?!”

...

On the Ten Steps Bridge, Ning Fan looked at the woman whose face looked pale and haggard and his heart became warm.

This yellow-robed girl who looked like she was in her late twenties gave Ning Fan a feeling that he had known her for a long time.

In the past, he once met a yellow-robed girl who shared a striking resemblance with her in Yun Ruowei's dream realm but the only difference was that the current lady had already become a mother of a child.

“Son. My son...” That lady stroked Ning Fan's head and her eyes flashed with relief.

As for Ning Fan, he gradually closed his eyes and gave her a faint smile.

“So this is my own mother...”

The absence of his own parents from birth had molded him into a strong man today. But there was still a trace of incompleteness deep inside his heart.

He might have been loved by his own brother, Ning Gu, his master, the Old Devil and his wife, Zhihe, but without experiencing the strictness from his own father and the benevolence of his own mother, the void within his heart would not be complete after all. If one lacks the most important element in his mortal life, how should one sever his mortal self?

“Mother, are you still alive... Good. Does that mean I am still able to meet you and father one day?”

Ning Fan lifted his hand and reached out to the lady without using any of his magic power. However, the yellow-robed lady vanished into purple mist, dispersing in all directions by itself.

This illusion was very much akin to the illusion of the Moksha Emperor which was fake. The reason is surely because my mother is still alive somewhere around the world...

“I once detested the path of cultivation. But if I don't cultivate the Dao, I would have never been able to ascend to the Sea of Clouds and walk in the Ten Steps Bridge and discover the fact that my mother is still alive...”

“Therefore, choosing the path of cultivation was right. That's why I should sever my mortal self... Mortal Severance... The meaning behind the two words is not about severing one's mortal coil but eliminating the fragile inner self of a mortal being... Cultivation... It is not about attaining huge magic power but cultivating a great heart.”

“On the Ten Steps Bridge, if one does not look back, there would then be lesser struggles. But if one looks back and fails to cut off their insignificant characters, they would then be trapped by the illusions and consumed by the mist... The reason why I can turn back without being influenced by the mist was because there was no confusions within my heart. At the moment I heard her voice, I’ve firmly resolved to turn back and take a good look at my mother’s face...”

“Mortal Severance...The meaning implied by the two words has been perceived wrongly by everyone!”

Ning Fan turned back and took a step forward, leaving the bridge.

In the Daoist child’s eyes, Ning Fan’s words and actions were like violent storms surging within his mind.

Incisive!

His theory about mortal severance literally surpasses all others of its kind in the beginning of time until now.

Everyone thinks that mortal severance is about severing one’s mortal coil. It’s difficult to realize that the “mortal” in those two words mean the weaker part of within them...

“Congratulations Brother Ning for passing the First Step of Mortal Severance smoothly! Now, I dare to say that if Brother Ning was born in the Four Heavens, I’m afraid among all the young talents in the Heavens, there are not more than 10 of them who have the capabilities to rival Brother Ning! Even if Brother Ning was born in the mortal world, with your unwavering Heart of Dao, ascending the Four Heavens is just something that will certainly happen sooner or later. I will wait for that day when you ascend to the Four Heavens Immortal Worlds. I believe it won’t take too long!”

“Thank you... Now, please take me to the Second Step of Mortal Severance!”

Before the two of them had made a move, a vague ray of purple sword light flew in their directions from a distance. It was swift and pure.

On top of the sword made of lapis lazuli stood a woman clad in a purple gown. Her gaze was fixed on Ning Fan while her eyes flashed with splendor.

“What a good theory about mortal severance... Bei Li has seen countless outstanding cultivators including the offsprings of the nobility. But it’s still my first time meeting a person like you who could turn back and face the Ten Steps Bridge...”

As the cloud of purple smoke got closer to them, the sword was kept, revealing a comely female cultivator.

Her delicate lips were slightly opened as she approached them with lotus steps, bringing with her a whiff of fragrance.

Her gaze was chilly. Just by the look of it, anyone would think that she was a being who remained aloof from the rest of the world.

Between her brows, there were two purple stars which were vaguely similar to Bei Xiaoman’s.

“I’m Bei Li from the Lost World Palace. Greetings to this Mister...”

The purple-robed female did not curtsy to him but cupped her fists towards him instead, displaying a valiant and heroic bearing.

Her Half-Step Void Refinement Realm cultivation level caused tiny strands of power of the Void Realm to coil up with every step she took.

This lady is not far from breaking through to the Void Refinement Realm...

Ning Fan returned her greeting by cupping his fists in return. Internally, he was stunned.

She mentioned that she is a member of the Lost World Palace... and her surname is Bei... Is it possible that she is Bei Xiaoman’s sister?

Bei Xiaoman is the Fourth Mistress of the Lost World Palace...Then, what mistress is this Bei Li?

Without being noticed, he privately kept the Yuan Yao Jade into his storage pouch.

If she is truly Bei Xiaoman's sister, I will probably get myself into trouble by letting her see the Yuan Yao Jade.

Moreover, if this refined and courteous lady was really Bei Xiaoman's sister, it would definitely be very surprising to Ning Fan. They were both sisters but why was one of them behaving so unruly while the other was highly cultured and steeped with propriety.

“The Second Step of Mortal Severance is known as ‘Strike the Bell to Question the Dao’. Sounding the Bell of Samsara would cleanse the worldly thoughts within your heart... Ordinary Divine Transformation Realm beings could at most strike the bell 3 times. In the past, when I was at your stage, I made it ring a total of eleven times... I wonder how many times can Mister strike it...”

Bei Li was beaming and in good spirits. She did not look down on Ning Fan at all due to his lowly identity as a cultivator from the mortal world.

From her perspective, the cultivator who came from an insignificant background was more fascinating and interesting...

Secretly, Ning Fan activated his Mind Reading Technique...

This lady truly is Bei Xiaoman's sister. She is the Third Mistress of the Lost World Palace. She is Bei Li, nicknamed “Purple Azure Sword”!

At least, she is ten times more gentle than Bei Xiaoman!

Chapter 268: The Bell of Samsara; A Startled Immortal Emperor

Yi Qing went back and resumed his duty of guarding the three Divine Tablets. The task of guiding Ning Fan to proceed to the Second Step of Mortal Severance was transferred to Bei Li.

While traversing above the clouds and passing by the mist, Bei Li would frequently question Ning Fan about the trivial matters in the mortal world, trying to obtain some details about his background.

As the Third Mistress of the Lost World Palace, of course she would want to rope such a talent in.

However, towards Bei Li's questions, Ning Fan reacted in an indifferent manner. He only replied with a few words, not willing to discuss any more about them. Moreover, when Bei Li asked him about the Lost World Palace in the Rain World, Ning Fan gave her a blank look, as if he did not recognize Bei Xiaoman at all.

His eyes were as calm as a mill pond all the time. They were as abstruse as a bottomless pond. Aside from that, his gaze did not linger too long on Bei Li's face despite her elegant visage and natural and unrestrained image which could make any man to stop and their tracks and look at her.

Bei Li's attractive eyes lit up, feeling surprised inside.

From the moment we met up until now, this mister wasn't affected by my beauty. It's enough to prove that his strength of mind is far more extraordinary when compared to common people.

I, a dignified Half-Step Void Refinement Realm, couldn't see through much of his background. It's enough to show his shrewdness and astuteness. He might not be concealing his cultivation level but what he is really hiding up his sleeve must be heaven-shocking techniques...

"It's truly beyond my anticipation to have such an outstanding being in the mortal world...Mister Ning was born in the Rain World. I believe he should not be buried in oblivion... Why didn't Sister Xiaoman recruit him?"

Bei Li was unable to comprehend it at all.

If Bei Xiaoman has recruited him on behalf of the Lost World Palace, he should have been given the “spot” and I would have been able to notice the clue.

“Can it be that Mister Ning has already been roped in by the ‘Demoness’ from the heavens of the Eastern Ocean? Sister Xiaoman disliked cultivating. The Gui Vein she possessed made it difficult for her to sever the ‘scarlet dragon’. Since she’s facing the killing tribulation, so she replaced ‘Elder Sister Shi’ and ‘Elder Sister Qinghan’ to descend to the mortal world. With her Half-Step Divine Transformation cultivation level, she indeed isn’t a match to the Demoness who is at the Ninth Heavenly Layer of the Void Fragmentation Realm... However, Mister Ning’s body does not seem to have the spot given by the Godly Void Pavilion too...”

Bei Li was feeling even more perplexed.

A person who is able to turn back and face the Ten Steps Bridge wasn’t taken in by any forces? Why?

However, Bei Li was clueless that when the Demoness she mentioned met Ning Fan, he was just a Harmonious Spirit Realm cultivator while his Yin Yang Devil Vein did not display any astonishing potential. At that time, Ning Fan was barely able to surprise the little Demoness just by relying on his ability to measure and calculate the formation eyes for establishing a Mortal Void Realm grand formation. At that time, Ning Fan had just begun his journey in the path of cultivation. If he was given the ‘spot of ascension for the Nine Worlds’, it would really be absurd.

Besides, Bei Li was completely unaware that Bei Xiaoman would definitely not recruit Ning Fan on behalf of the Lost World Palace. In stark contrast, she was eager to tie him on a tree with ropes and beat him with a whip! She had a myriad of reasons not to rope Ning Fan in. But as a matter of fact, she had actually been roped in in return by him... After her Yuan Yao Jade was taken away, she was already half a step entering Ning Fan’s harem with her purity at stake...

Of course, Ning Fan would not be so foolish to tell her anything about it as he would only be inviting trouble to himself.

At the shore of the sea of clouds stood a golden bell. It was as massive as heaven and earth.

Although he was just looking at the bell from a distance, he could feel a tremendous immortal's prestige blowing against his face, preventing him from flying any further. After landing to the ground, he could only approach the giant bell on foot.

“Look, Mister. This golden bell is the Bell of Samsara... It was also constructed by the Immortal Sovereign. Rumor has it that before the ancient times, there will be an opportunity to listen to the preaching of Dao once in every 129600 years. The Immortals will then ring the Bell of Samsara and wake the Immortal Sovereign to ascend to the lotus platform. Everyone would wait for the Primordial Spirit of the Immortal Sovereign to arrive to preach the Dao for a billion worlds...”

“It's Immortal Sovereign again...”

When Ning Fan got closer to the golden bell, his eyes flashed with amazement again.

It was rare to find him visibly changing his countenance.

He discovered that this towering bell which controlled the cycle of reincarnation was too similar to the Eastern Ocean Bell...

Their appearances looked very much alike. However, there was still a slight difference between the two of them. If both of them were to be compared side by side, the Eastern Ocean Bell was comparatively tiny. Aside from that, it was just a Supreme Grade magical treasure and also an Offering Vessel of the Ancient Demons which stored the inheritance of the Heaven Sealing Technique.

As for the massive bell before his eyes, it gave anyone an intuitive feeling that its weight had already attained a level which would be frightful to everyone's ears. This enormous bell was even heavier than the Four Heavens Immortal Worlds. No one was able to carry it... Therefore, it was still able to remain here until today without being taken away by any expert.

After imprinting the Demon Codex, Ning Fan had already deciphered the Aura Force Cultivation technique of the Eastern Ocean Bell and engraved it deeply into his mind.

He realized that when he activated the technique, he faintly felt a new, intriguing connection with the giant bell. Moreover, he was able to absorb a trace of immortal's prestige and gradually increase his own aura force.

“This bell was built by the Immortal Sovereign... The Eastern Ocean Bell is the inheritance of the Demon Ancestor...The Immortal Sovereign cultivates the purple qi whereas the Demon Ancestor cultivates the golden light. I suppose the two of them weren't the same person. But judging by the similarity between the two bells, I'm afraid the relationship between the two of them was not shallow. In fact, there is some kind of friendship residing within the construction of the bells...”

The history regarding the ancient times was already untraceable. The most that Ning Fan could do was to identify the traces of information within the two golden bells.

The movements of his eyes were captured by Bei Li. Then, a wee smile emerged on her chilly face.

“Mister feels think this bell is very familiar, doesn't you? I bet you must have heard about the other golden bell which is share a close resemblance to it?”

“No, I didn't...”

Without a doubt, Ning Fan would never tell her about the Eastern Ocean Bell.

“Well, Mister, you don't have to deny. Isn't the Heaven Suppressing Treasure of the Eastern Ocean Heaven a golden bell too? I believe you must have heard about it in the mortal world... It is a relic of the Ancestral Emperor of the Eastern Heaven. However, ringing that bell does not produce the sound of samsara but the sound of killing. Everyone summarizes their opinions on the Heaven Suppressing Bell with only this phrase - When the bell rings, the world ends...”

“Heaven Suppressing Bell...” Ning Fan's expression remained calm while remembering every word that was uttered by Bei Li inwardly.

Just as they arrived three zhang away from the bell, Bei Li stopped and no longer went any further towards the Bell of Samsara.

Her hand pointed at the jade rack beside her where a golden mace as long as three zhang* was placed.

“The Bell of Samsara contains the prestige of the Immortal Sovereign. Other than True Immortals, anyone including Void Fragmentation Realm experts could not enter within a vicinity of three zhang* around the bell. It was why a golden mace was placed here. One has to hit the bell with the mace to produce the sound that could purify their worldly thoughts within their hearts and complete the Second Step of Mortal Severance. I’ve mentioned earlier that ordinary cultivators who came to attain the Divine Transformation Realm could at most strike this bell 3 times. As for me, I’ve strike it 11 times... If Mister could not ring the bell more than me, I’m going to laugh at you...”

Bei Li’s eyes glinted with humor. She was obviously just joking without harboring any evil intentions.

It was because she could tell that Ning Fan would not just hit the bell for 11 times or less.

At the same time, she did not hope that he would reserve his strength. She wanted to see how unfathomable this young man whose cultivation level was far lower than hers was.

“Mister, please ring the Bell of Samsara!”

Bei Li cupped her fists and gradually retreated, leaving Ning Fan to face the bell alone.

He did not immediately strike the bell. He just indifferently stared at the golden bell while his eyes began to look a little lost.

“The Bell of Samsara... This bell contains an incomprehensible force... The means of the Immortal Sovereign are really beyond my knowledge. So this is the power of the expert who stood above all True Immortals? My master wasn’t weak. The Ancient Chaos Immortal Emperor wasn’t weak. But when comparing the Immortal Sovereign with them, they just seemed trivial... How many times can I strike this bell?”

With a flick of his sleeve, the golden mace was in his hands!

The hazy look within his eyes dissipated and were now glistening with firmness.

The Immortal Sovereign was the mentor of the Ancient Chaos Emperor!

The Ancient Chaos Emperor was considered half a teacher to me!

“Today, the reason why I hit this bell isn’t for my mortal severance! Instead, I wish to cherish the martyrs of the ancient times! Someday in the future, I will also stand on the pinnacle of the immortals!”

Dong

As the golden mace fell, the giant bell trembled lightly, emitting a golden-purple sound wave.

The sound wave was like a ring of light. When the bell was rung, the light ring expanded, stretching into a thousand li* away.

When the light circle went past him, his eyes turned solemn. He found out that the golden-purple sound wave had raised the level of his state of mind by a fraction!

Ning Fan was unable to understand the profoundness of the bell, making him be more reverent towards the Immortal Sovereign’s means.

The deep admiration within his heart inspired the fighting spirit within him, urging him to firmly decide that he would definitely be like the Ancient Chaos Emperor and the Immortal Sovereign, following the path of becoming the ruler of heaven and earth!

“The second strike! The third strike! The fourth strike!” He muttered to himself silently while swinging the golden mace!

Dong ~ Dong ~ Dong

Three ringing of the bell sounded simultaneously, as if they were one, forming a purple-golden light circle which was much more dazzling than before, spreading into four thousand li* away!

The sound of the bell would travel further away for every strike he made subsequently. It might even be able to reach out so far that it could be heard by the late Immortal Sovereign!

However, a billion years had passed. The previous Immortal Sovereign had long perished. The Immortal Emperors who waited to listen to his preaching of the Dao had also reduced to ashes, leaving only their inheritance...

Nostalgic! Within Ning Fan's heart, a hint of nostalgic feeling was aroused. However, within that feeling, it contained the true meaning of samsara!

Dong

When he sounded the fifth time, the sound wave travelled to five thousand li* away!

He struck the bell five times in a single breath!

Bei Li was visibly moved. She had never heard anyone that could hit the Bell of Samsara five times in a row!

Her eyes stared at Ning Fan's back in disbelief!

Ning Fan's shadow changed, gradually becoming old. In fact, his qi changed every time he struck the bell, as if he was becoming one with the sound of the bell!

His body was clearly weak and thin but it made Bei Li feel that it was a mighty shadow that she could only admire.

In a way, she felt that the person standing in front of her eyes no longer Ning Fan but... the Immortal Sovereign himself!

Even though Ning Fan had landed five continuous strikes on the bell, he did not intend to stop!

The five successive strikes just now were his limit. But after taking a short pause, he estimated that hitting 11 times was not difficult, hitting 14 times would be strenuous while hitting 19 times would be his maximum limit...

On the other hand, the sound waves emitted by the five strikes had at least increased the cultivation level of his state of mind by five hundred years!

Striking the Bell of Samsara isn't just about mortal severance or cherishing the memory of the Ancient Chaos and the Immortal Sovereign but also a perfect method to increase the level of my state of mind!

“Shadow of Emperor, appear!”

A virtual shadow radiating golden light slowly emerged at Ning Fan's back. At the moment when the virtual shadow appeared, Ning Fan's aura surged and his eyes were even filled with a trace of the sovereign's prestige. Holding tightly to the golden mace, he landed the sixth strike on the bell!

Dong

The sound of the bell did not just stop there. Almost immediately, another five sounds were rung simultaneously!

Eleven times! Without stopping, Ning Fan had completed eleven strikes, causing the bell to ring eleven times!

After that, he did not instantly land the twelfth strike. At this time, his state of mind had broken through to the Mid Divine Transformation Realm!

At the same moment, he suddenly had a glimpse of an ancient scene from the Bell of Samsara...

That scene was a part of the cycle of reincarnation. However, it only appeared in a flash and vanished...

From the scene which he barely caught a glimpse of, he vaguely saw a lady whose face shared a close resemblance with Zhihe's.

Before the image of the lady disappeared, the purple star in Ning Fan's left eye blinked and the sharpness of his vision increased. The appearance of the lady became clear. The lady was not Zhihe but... Mu Weiliang!

She sat on a bluestone in the medicinal garden of the Celestial Emperor, doing her embroidery.

The pattern of the embroidery was a pair of butterflies flying wing to wing...

Meanwhile, there was a butterfly flying and dancing in a happy mood beside her.

When the image disappeared, Ning Fan's eyes turned serious.

"What was that?! I'm sure it's Zhihe but why did it turn out to be Weiliang in the end?"

Within the Sea of Clouds, there were the Three Steps of Mortal Severance and also the Divine Tablets of Heavenly Dao. The Sea of Clouds was actually a magic world created by the Tablets Master Immortal Emperor. It was also known as a chiliocosm.

This world was connected to the Void Realm. In the Black Tortoise Star somewhere in the Void Realm, a bald-headed, slightly chubby elderly man with white eyebrows were preaching the Dao for the cultivators residing in the stars with a serious expression.

His eyes were filled with a hint of discontentment because one of his favorite female disciples had gone to the Sea of Clouds boarding on a sword without informing him after receiving a message...

One has to know that today was the day he deliberately came out from his secluded meditation to pass the Dao for the Black Tortoise Star. His main intention was to tell that female disciple about how to break through the bottleneck of the Void Refinement Realm.

“Li Er, you are really angering this master to death... How could you let me down by skipping this session of Dao preaching which I intentionally conducted...”

Bei Li, the Third Mistress of the Lost World Palace was also the most important disciple for the Tablet Master Immortal Emperor, Meng Xuanzi.

Meng Xuanzi’s countenance was extremely sour. But after hearing the explanation from the guardian of the Divine Tablets, Yi Qing, saying that he requested Bei Li’s help in guiding a cultivator from the mortal world who was able to notice the colors of luck in the process of Divine Transformation, only then did he feel a little better.

Now, it’s considered excusable for her to travel to the Sea of Clouds because of that reason.

His expression slowly became calm and tranquil and continued to preach the Dao for the group of cultivators.

But all of a sudden, Meng Xuanzi’s eyes widened with a hint a surprise.

“The Second Step of Mortal Severance? Someone has seen the cycle of reincarnation before the Bell of Samsara?!”

“No, it can’t be. It must be an accident. What he saw should be just the broken scene of the samsara...”

“But this person’s qi is rather familiar. Have I met him before...”

Meng Xuanzi’s eyes were now filled with doubts and confusion.

He had yet to remember that there was once a Harmonious Spirit Realm cultivator from the mortal world who accidentally intruded the Void Realm by turning his spirit sense into lines and nearly died... It was Meng Xuanzi who lent him a hand and saved him.

However, no matter how hard he tried to think, he still could not remember... Well, it couldn't be helped. There were just too many things that an Immortal Emperor had to handle. Every time he went to pass the Dao, he had to face millions of unfamiliar faces. Remembering each and every one of them was rather difficult.

"I should have met this person before. Moreover, this person should have left quite an impression on me. Otherwise, I would not have recalled his qi... But where have I met him?" Meng Xuanzi hesitated.

Chapter 269(1): That Butterfly

Bei Li's hand gently rubbed her chest. Her chilly gaze flashed with surprise for the very first time.

11 strikes! 11 bell rings!

With just a single breath, he rang the bell... eleven times!

Bei Li had expected that Ning Fan would at most be able to sound the bell 19 times with all his strength based on the firmness of his Heart of Dao...

However, she did not anticipate that Ning Fan had comprehended one of the Void Fragmentation Realm divine abilities - the Emperor's Shadow and used the prestige of the emperor to withstand the immortal's prestige from the bell.

Without much preparation, her breathing was disrupted by the sound of the bell which rapidly came pounding on her one after one another. She quickly calmed herself down, regulating her breathing and magic power and only then did her breathing become normal again but her chest was still rising and falling in a noticeable manner.

"Even though he has yet to completely attain the Divine Transformation Realm, he has already congealed the Emperor's Shadow. Besides, when he was at the Ten Steps Bridge earlier, he had even

unleashed his incarnation technique... Among the three Void Fragmentation Realm techniques, he has already learnt two of them... He's really a monster..."

Ning Fan was unaware that his actions had made a favorable impression on Bei Xiaoman's third elder sister.

But even if he knew about it, he would not care about it at all because what truly mattered to him were just the giant bell in front of him and that incomplete scene that flashed past his eyes.

"What exactly was that image..."

"It's samsara!" Luo You's drowsy voice echoed from within the Yin Yang Locket.

"Samsara?" Ning Fan was stunned. The next moment, he inwardly teased, "Miss Luo You, you always wake up just right in time when I need you."

"Yea. I actually wanted to sleep for a little longer but the sound of the bell was rather annoying... It's a disturbance to my sweet dreams... Hmm... The Bell of Samsara. It really brings back old memories. This Elder Sister could not remember clearly how long it had been since I rang this bell to complete my Divine Transformation... Slumber... When one falls into slumber, they would then be forgotten and perish along with time..."

Luo You's voice was filled with a hint of nostalgia but immediately she was in high spirits again.

"Good Brother, are you going to attain the Divine Transformation Realm already? You're really excellent for being capable of sounding the bell 11 times with just a breath. In the past, this Elder Sister only managed to sound the bell 10 times..."

"10 times?" Ning Fan asked, feeling surprised inwardly.

So even if I have summoned the Emperor's Shadow, borrowing the prestige from the emperor, I'm just slightly stronger than her in the past.

“However, even if this Elder Sister was able to ring the bell 24 times in the end, I wasn’t able to catch a glimpse of samsara... The Bell of Samsara contains the power of Samsara of the Immortal Sovereign. But it’s just a myth because no one was able to use this bell. The fact that you are able to see samsara is considered pretty astounding, even if it’s just a fragment of the complete scene. Of course, there are others who are able to discover samsara and remained secretive about their discovery. As such, I am not sure how frequent it is for someone to see it... Erm... Do you want to have a clearer look of samsara?”

“Do you know any methods?” Ning Fan could not help laughing.

This Luo You is always helpful during critical moments like this.

“Yea. I know one. I just learnt it from hearsay. So I’m not really sure whether it is correct or wrong... After all, I couldn’t enter the vicinity of three zhang* around the bell...”

“Tell me the method. I want to see the lady...”

“Leave the golden mace, step closer to the giant bell and hit the bell with your fist for the total number of the Stars of Destiny - 108 times! Of course, it’s just a rumor. No one has ever tried it. But as for you, I think you should give it a try. This Elder Sister really has high expectations on you... *Yawn* I’m sleepy again...”

It was then that he heard the sound of drawing a curtain down and closing the window panes. Apparently, Luo You had gone back to her sweet dreams once more.

Ning Fan remained silent and stared at the bell. A moment later, he shut his eyes, recalling the lady he saw in that sudden scene just now.

It was clearly Zhihe at first but why did it become Mu Weiling in the end... What does that mean?

“Zhihe...”

The Aura Force Cultivation technique was activated. Ning Fan reopened his eyes and cast the golden mace aside!

After seeing his action, Bei Li was bewildered.

What happened to him? Why doesn't he continue to sound the bell after ringing it 11 times? Why is he tossing the golden mace away? Is he going to end the Second Step of Mortal Severance with only this result?

However, after ringing the bell 11 times, his state of mind has already broken through to the Mid Divine Transformation Realm. As such, it is more than enough for him to complete this stage.

Despite that, there was a hint of disappointment that could not be concealed in Bei Li's eyes... After all, she expected to see Ning Fan sound the bell 49 times and break the record set by the "number one Divine Transformation Realm expert of the Northern Heaven" who had managed to sound the bell for 48 times and become a legend of the Northern Heaven.

Just at the moment when the feeling of disappointment arose within her heart, it was replaced by disbelief.

Because Bei Li saw that Ning Fan had taken a step forward, entering the vicinity of three zhang* surrounding the bell!

"How did he do that?! Other than True Immortals, no one could possibly approach the Bell of Samsara?!"

When he was outside the vicinity of three zhang*, Ning Fan felt as if his shoulders were carrying a mountain due to the pressure of the immortal's prestige.

When he merely made a step into the vicinity, that feeling intensified, just like the weight of the mountain increased by a fold.

"Raise the prestige!"

Blood light gathered to his body and a vortex began to emerge around him. His eyes gleamed with ferocity. Using the secret art of prestige and aura derived from the Heaven Sealing Technique, he began to devour the traces of immortal's prestige.

He did not make the second step forward but his aura force was rising continuously.

From the Late Divine Transformation Realm, it gradually broke through the peak stage of the realm, reaching the Half-Step Void Refinement Realm.

However, no matter how much prestige he continued to take in, his aura force was temporarily unable to advance into the Void Refinement Realm, as if it was limited by his current cultivation level.

But as he consumed the immortal's prestige, his aura force was gradually imbued with a strand of ...True Immortal's qi!

The level of his aura force was no longer increasing but its quality was experiencing changes.

When the True Immortal's qi entered into Ning Fan's body, it left a trace of purple qi on his Nascent Soul.

At the same moment, he suddenly found out that the color of his luck was changing too!

The dark shade within his dark green luck was concentrating while the element of green was slowly filtering itself out, turning into the color of pure green.

After that, with a single thought, his luck which was previously dark with a faint green tinge had separated itself into two with one of them being fully dark while the other being completely green!

“Two traces of luck?!”

Ning Fan was flabbergasted. After absorbing the purple immortal's prestige, it not only increased the level of his luck but also divided his luck into two...

Perhaps, no one would believe such unbelievable matter but it truly happened!

It was like a pair of Yin Yang fish blending together with each other!

To Ning Fan, it was mind-blowing. He did not know whether such condition was because of the Yin Yang Locket or the benefit from absorbing the immortal's prestige.

All in all, the current condition he encountered regarding his luck was unprecedented.

Why was the Old Devil's luck also black? Is it possible that he was also being plotted against in the past which left him no choice but to tarnish his own luck?

However, as a consequence, his luck became extremely bad. There was not a Gold Core Realm Dao Fruit from the Gold Core Realm cultivators he killed. He could not even notice precious items like the Jade Royal Grass and the Coiling Evil Grass. Besides, when the Yin Yang Locket flew past his eyes, he did not recognize it and he failed tens of times in order to concoct a Four Revolution pill!

The black-colored luck might enable one to avoid someone else's plot but the consequences were not small.

As for Ning Fan's luck, from now onwards, it became unique.

Perhaps, even the Fate Wielding Immortal Emperor could never anticipate that a blackened luck still could be revived!

Luck would decide a cultivator's fortune.

At least, if one wishes to become a profound pill master, they must not have bad luck, or else they would be like the Old Devil, failing almost every single time in concocting pills...

“I was too obsessive!”

His eyes flashed with determination and made the second step!

Dong Xu might have asked him to complete the Devil Transformation in order to avoid someone else's plot against him but perhaps he did not need to go to that extent of completely tarnishing his own luck...

Impure and pure, black luck and purple luck, good and bad, kind and evil, pretty and ugly, ice and fire... They might be contrasting elements that was against each other but it did not necessarily mean that they could not coexist at the same time!

Yin Yang Devil Vein. It was all about unification the coexistence of two!

Privately, the Aura Force Cultivation technique was rotated.

The color of his luck changed even more drastically.

Apparently, there was no longer a faint green tinge within the color of black which grew more and more concentrated to the point where it looked pure black.

But it would separate itself into them whenever Ning Fan wishes it, forming a portion of blackness while a portion of green which was gradually evolving into the color of blue.

When Ning Fan completely stood in front of the bell, he placed his hand on the surface of the bell and did the bravest thing in his entire life.

He directly absorbed the prestige of the Immortal Sovereign residing inside the Bell of Samsara with the Aura Force Cultivation technique!

For outsiders, they could only see that Ning Fan's luck was becoming darker, just like a droplet of pure black ink.

Only Ning Fan knew that when his black-colored luck was rising, the other half of the luck was also improving, gradually becoming the color of pure purple!

When the other half of his luck turned completely purple, the dark-colored luck totally covered it up, making it invisible to any other beings.

But Ning Fan knew that his luck had returned!

“Thanks a lot!”

Facing a non-living bell, he uttered some words which were baffling to any outsiders. The next moment, his fist glowed in jade green light and landed on the Bell of Samsara.

Dong

The twelfth ring of the bell echoed throughout the air!

“Mister Ning is able to walk to the bell and strike it with his physical body?! Is he a True Immortal?!”

The thirteenth ring, the fourteenth ring...the twentieth ring.

The twenty-first ring, the twenty-second ring...the forty-ninth ring.

When the bell rang for forty-nine times, it echoed across the vicinity of forty-nine thousand li*! As for Bei Li, it blasted loudly on her ears, reverberating incessantly within her heart.

The sound of the bell ringing made Bei Li firmly believe that if Ning Fan breaks through to the Late Divine Transformation Realm, he would definitely take over the title of the “number one Divine Transformation Realm expert of the Northern Heaven”!

Each time the bell rang, it cleansed one's state of mind. Aside from that, every time the bell rang, it was equivalent to one hundred years of cultivation for the state of mind.

In other words, if the bell rings for one hundred and eight times, it would improve one's state of mind by ten thousand and eight hundred years of cultivation!

His state of mind which was on the intermediate stage of the Divine Transformation Realm was slowly advancing under the sound of the bell, reaching the late stage, the peak stage and even the Half-Step Divine Transformation Realm.

The Bell of Samsara did not increase Ning Fan's cultivation level but it caused qualitative changes in many aspects such as his aura, luck and state of mind.

Dong

When the final blow landed on the bell, a massive repulsive force from the Immortal Sovereign's prestige was inflicted on him, causing him to puke blood.

His blood splashed all over the bell but his eyes were filled with satisfaction. It was because after the bell rang for the last time, he finally saw samsara!

But a few seconds later, his eyes widened!

The power of Samsara was far beyond his imagination. Besides, it was even more untouchable than the spirit sense technique - Myriad Miles Wander!

There was as if a force sucking his consciousness completely into the Bell of Samsara...

I'm afraid I'm really in grave danger this time...

He muttered to himself within his mind.

The last sound of the bell had travelled beyond the boundaries of the Sea of Clouds, reverberating within the Black Tortoise Star for a long while.

Within the Black Tortoise Star which was so large that it could hold more than 4700 cultivation countries, hundreds of millions of cultivators lifted their heads in unison at this moment, feeling incomprehensible. They could not understand where the sound of the bell came from. But after hearing the bell, all of them had a puzzled look on their faces, just like the time when Ning Fan saw the Bell of Samsara for the first time, bewildered.

The final ring of the bell caused hundreds of millions of cultivators to be absent-minded for a short moment concurrently.

When they regained their consciousness, no one was able to recall the strange incident that happened earlier, as if a part of their memories was literally erased!

Only Meng Xuanzi who was an Immortal Emperor was able to block the sound of the bell!

Originally, he was in confusion while contemplating about Ning Fan's identity. But when the sound of the bell echoed to the star, he suddenly rose up from his seat.

“He rang the bell one hundred and eight times! The power of Samsara! I finally remember him! He is the young man from the Rain World!”

He was the Harmonious Spirit Realm young man who accidentally displayed the True Immortal's divine ability -Myriad Miles Wander and intruded the Black Tortoise Star.

Today, in the Sea of Clouds, the same young man sounded the Bell of Samsara for 108 times while completing his Divine Transformation!

However, it's impossible for the sound of the bell to travel millions of li* away from the Sea of Clouds, spreading all over the Black Tortoise Star.

The reason why it could spread so far is because he has activated the power of Samsara within the golden bell!

“This kid indeed has monstrous potential!”

Chapter 269(2): That Butterfly

Meng Xuanzi's eyes sparkled. He made a step forward, shrinking the ground below his foot into an inch and in the next moment, he traversed hundreds of millions of li*, appearing above the Sea of Clouds!

The words he uttered earlier echoed through the space below the stage where he stood to preach the Dao.

No one remembered the bizarre bell ring.

Hundreds of millions of cultivators who were in the midst of listening to his preaching were greatly shocked. It was because the Tablet Master Immortal Emperor - Meng Xuanzi who was famously known for his unsociable and demanding traits had actually commended someone. Moreover, the comment he gave was a terrifying one.

A person with monstrous potential!

Meng Xuanzi had never given anyone such an appraisal before, including the Third Mistress of the Lost World Palace - Bei Li. Although Meng Xuanzi had high expectations on her, the comment he had for her was just “a being with satisfactory potential”.

Countless cultivators were curious about who Meng Xuanzi was commending. But in the end, no one would know.

At the Sea of Clouds, Meng Xuanzi descended to the ground in a step!

He stood below the Bell of Samsara, looking at the young man whose palm was placed on the bell without interrupting him.

As for Bei Li, she was taken aback by her master's appearance and hurriedly saluted to him.

“Master! I wonder if Master has any instructions for me by coming here personally...”

“Leave the Sea of Clouds now! Bring Yi Qing with you! I'll handle the rest from here!”

Without giving much explanation, Meng Xuanzi ordered in a serious tone.

The current situation could only be personally handled by him, the Tablet Master Immortal Emperor... If the power of Samsara within the bell goes out of control, perhaps the entire Void Realm would be affected, causing innumerable cultivators' memories to be completely erased!

Bei Li would not be able to withstand it, not to mention Yi Qing!

Thus, the two of them had to leave the Sea of Clouds! ASAP!

“But Master, this Mister has yet to complete the Third Step of Mortal Severance. Bei Li still has the responsibility to guide him...”

“Guide your a**! You little girl, don't tell me you've fallen for this man? Go now and don't worry! Your master, me, is here and I'll personally guide him for the Third Step of Mortal Severance!”

Bei Li was perplexed.

It's the first time she saw her master cursed.

A dignified Immortal Emperor actually also knows how to spit out harsh remarks...

Meng Xuanzi, who was one of the revered Immortal Emperors, was a person who was difficult to meet, even for countless star lords who asked to see him. For the deacons, the Mountain God and the unimportant immortals and gods, it would be nearly impossible to see his true face other than the time he came to preach the Dao.

A person who had such a high status like Meng Xuanzi was willing to guide a mortal cultivator to complete the Three Steps of Mortal Severance and carve his name on the Divine Tablet of Heavenly Dao in person. If this matter is spread, perhaps no one would believe it at all.

But this unbelievable matter truly happened before Bei Li's eyes. It was a fact.

Her face blushed, feeling slightly dissatisfied.

She just knew Ning Fan for a while. She just wanted to help him to complete his Mortal Severance out of kindness. But her master thought that she had fallen for him... If it was in the past, Bei Li would have replied to her master defiantly.

But now, she felt a shred of solemnity from her master's eyes and even... a hint of fear!

Master is feeling afraid? What is he afraid of?

Speaking of Mister Ning, he seems to have sounded the bell 107 times...

Bei Li only heard the bell ringing 107th times because when the bell rang for the 108th times, her memories at that point of time was deleted without her being aware of it!

That was samsara!

“Go now!” Meng Xuanzi shouted impatiently.

“Yes...”

Bei Li gave a deep look at Ning Fan, feeling a little unfortunate inwardly. Because of her master's orders, she had to give up the chance of recruiting Ning Fan after he completes the Three Step of Mortal Severance and attain the Divine Transformation Realm...

After conjuring a ray of purple sword light, she went on top of a sword and left. Along her path, she informed Yi Qing and brought him away with her.

Eventually, there were only Meng Xuanzi and Ning Fan left in the Sea of Clouds.

Meng Xuanzi smiled bitterly.

I'm afraid I have to help this junior from the Rain World for the second time today...

Samsara was a frightful thing. Even Meng Xuanzi was not qualified enough to spy upon the secrets of samsara with his current cultivation level.

This man is really daring. Even though he has yet to fully attain the Divine Transformation Realm, he tried to steal a glance into samsara. I suppose his state of mind should have been consumed by the bell now...

“This old man is going to do you another favor. I'll pull your consciousness out from the bell... Otherwise, the power of Samsara will lose control because of you. Having your consciousness being consumed by the power of Samsara is just a trivial matter but if the power of Samsara goes out of control, the cultivators of the entire Void Realm will lose their memories together with you... Immortal Technique, 'Heaven Peeking Dream'!”

Meng Xuanzi performed a hand seal, conjuring traces of purple lines which extracted Ning Fan's consciousness bit by bit from the bell and placed it back into his body.

After Ning Fan's consciousness successfully escaped from the bell, the power of Samsara within the bell which was unstable just now gradually returned to normal.

Within the Bell of Samsara, Ning Fan could feel that his consciousness was being saved by someone. Thus, he heaved a sigh of relief.

“Shameful. This time, I’ve gone overboard. If there wasn’t anyone to save me, I’m afraid I could only break free from this bell after fully understanding what samsara is... But I don’t know how many thousands of years it would take me to comprehend it...”

“If my senses aren’t wrong, the person who is saving me isn’t Bei Li. This person’s cultivation level is terrifyingly high... Although this qi is rather familiar. This person seems to be the senior who once saved me in the past when I intruded the Black Tortoise Star... If it really is him, I’ve owed him two favors now...”

Ning Fan smiled bitterly.

“Since there is someone saving me now, then I shall take advantage of this opportunity to have a good look on the incomplete scene of samsara.

The next moment, he found himself wearing a white robe, appearing in a palace. The medicinal qi of that place was extremely concentrated. It seemed to be a medicinal garden.

The cultivators who came and went were either maidservants or military personnel. Each of them were at least a Divine Transformation Realm expert.

There were many Void Refinement Realm experts there and Void Fragmentation Realm experts could be seen everywhere. Besides, immortals whose aura were much stronger than that of a Void Fragmentation Realm being also existed.

However, everyone brushed past Ning Fan without noticing his presence.

This place was just a part of samsara, a fragment of the past. Ning Fan did not belong to this era. Therefore, no one could see him and there was nothing he could change.

In the medicinal garden, a ray of golden light soared towards the sky. It was clearly a golden flame chariot.

Nine demon souls were pulling the chariot while a golden-armored demon general was standing at the front of the chariot.

“Lu Wu!”

Ning Fan uttered involuntarily. This person was exactly the person in Lu Daochen’s portrait.

The golden-armored demon general seemed to have heard someone calling his name. Feeling strange and puzzled, he looked around. After that, he shook his head and mocked himself.

“I seem to be overly nervous today. It just makes me feel like something big is going to happen to the Heavenly Court.”

Staring at Lu Wu who was patrolling the vast sky above the medicinal garden, Ning Fan’s brows were tightly knitted together.

Lu Wu was once the officer who takes charge of the Celestial Emperor’s medicinal garden. Since he is here, is it possible that this is the Heavenly Court of ancient times?

Step by step, he entered the garden. He remembered that the lady he saw earlier was within that area.

Each tuft of immortal medicines were at least more than one millions years old. Moreover, more than half of them were unrecognizable by Ning Fan. Despite that, he knew that he could probably break through the Void Fragmentation Realm immediately by just randomly consuming any one of them...

He reached out his hand, trying to pluck the immortal medicines. As soon as his hand touched them, it shattered into pieces like broken glasses. However, they would reform again at its original position.

This isn’t a place that truly exists. It’s just an incomplete fragment of samsara.

In the middle of the garden, there was a cyan-colored rock. The lady who should be sitting there while doing her embroidery did not appear.

So Ning Fan sat above it, patiently waiting for her appearance.

Zhihe and Mu Weiliang... What's the relation between the two of them?

After sitting there without knowing how much time had passed, light footsteps echoed from the path outside the garden. While walking, a crisp and clear female voice could be heard, complaining, “*Sigh* I failed to sneak out again from the Southern Heavenly Gate... It's really difficult to go and have a look in the mortal world...”

Ning Fan lifted his gaze. The person who was walking at his direction was a young lady dressed up in a maidservant attire.

She had a naive face and her eyes were as clear as crystals. Her hair was tied into a bun, just like that of any young girl.

“Zhihe!” Ning Fan rose up and called.

“Who are you?! How dare you enter my father's medicinal garden?!” The young girl angrily threw her delicate punches at Ning Fan.

This young girl who looked exactly like Zhihe was able to see Ning Fan?!

Ning Fan was inwardly surprised. But before he could open his mouth, a half white and half black butterfly penetrated through Ning Fan's body and flew towards the young girl while dancing happily in the leaves of the immortal medicinal herbs.

No, the young lady did not notice Ning Fan.

She was just reprimanding a butterfly...

“I see. She can’t see me after all...” Ning Fan bitterly smiled.

That’s right. How could she see him? This is the incomplete scene of samsara. What Ning Fan is seeing right now is just the past, the unchangeable history...

The expression of surprise on his face faded and his eyes were fixed on the young lady.

What he saw next was the butterfly perching on the young girl’s hand after she beckoned it. Staring at the butterfly, she suddenly cracked up.

“Silly butterfly. Look at you... Don’t be scared. I won’t tell my father that you are ‘stealing’ the medicines here...”

As the young girl made a step forward, a dazzling white light flashed past Ning Fan’s eyes. Basking in white light, the young girl’s appearance changed, looking just exactly like the female corpse.

She was cold-looking and her presence emanated nobility. However, there was still a tinge of innocence on her face which did not match her current identity.

Dressing up like a maidservant was just her camouflage to sneak out from the Southern Heavenly Gate.

Her true identity was actually Mu Weiliang, the daughter of the Celestial Emperor!

“Silly butterfly. Come here. Accompany me to get rid of my boredom. I’m really lonely in this Heavenly Court...”

Mu Weiling gently sat on the stone, not knowing that Ning Fan was just standing right beside her.

Holding the butterfly in her hands, she stared at it with rapt attention.

“Butterfly is a living creature from the mortal world. Interesting. Is it possible that this little butterfly flew up to the Heavenly Court from the mortal world? You really have terrifying willpower. There are so many Void Fragmentation Realm cultivators who failed in ascending here but you succeeded...You are indeed extraordinary.”

“..” The butterfly fluttered its wings which was half white and half black. Of course, it did not have the ability to speak.

“Mm-hmm. Since you are able to make your way up here, I will then grant you a name. Hmm... Let’s call you Little Fan...”

“..” The butterfly flapped its wings.

“Little Fan. I am not having a good mood today. Can you please talk to me...”

Mu Weiliang smoothed out her sideburns with her fingers while talking mindlessly to the butterfly in her hands.

But Ning Fan was internally flabbergasted.

Because he noticed that the butterfly in Mu Weiliang’s hands had turned towards him and its compound eyes flashed with praise and recollection... as if it could see through samsara and discovered him who was invisible to any other beings there.

Beyond all doubt, it truly saw Ning Fan!

With its weak and tiny body!

Chapter 270(1): Mortal Severance and Divine Transformation (Part 1)

Within the Celestial Emperor's medicinal garden in samsara, Ning Fan stood there for a long time.

Almost every day, Mu Weiliang would definitely come to the garden and would sit on the same bluestone, holding the butterfly in her hands.

She would unreservedly spill out all the loads weighing on her mind at the butterfly.

“Little Fan. Did you know that the Immortal Demon World had been split into the Land of the Awakened and the Land of Dreams by someone? Countless royal True Spirits had lost their royal bloodlines, causing them to also lose the power which they were proud of...”

“Little Fan. Did you know that the Devil Pool had been suppressed by someone? That person used nine ‘Emperor Mountains’ to block the nine entrances to the Devil Pool...”

“Little Fan. I heard that my fiancé who was chosen by my father will be returning to the Heavenly Court... He dislikes living creatures from the mortal world the most. You must never annoy him...”

“..Little Fan. Fortunately, he hasn't returned yet. I don't want to be married yet. I haven't had enough fun... Little Fan, look. My father has put the ‘Realm Gate Key’ under my custody. Hehe. You must never tell anybody, okay? The area around the Realm Gate is really dangerous. It was the Immortal Sovereign who personally sealed the place. It must never be simply opened ...”

Time passed like flowing water. Mu Weiliang leisurely sat at the medicinal garden day in and day out and there would always be a black-and-white butterfly which was given the name “Little Fan” perching on her shoulder.

The lifespan of a butterfly was very short. The shortest time it could survive was just half a month while the maximum span of its life was never more than 2 complete months.

Day after day, the life force of the butterfly deteriorated as it rested on Mu Weiliang's soft palms.

The more time she spent with the butterfly, the more painful her heart ached. Because the little butterfly which had only accompanied her for not more than 2 months was going to die soon.

This is a bold butterfly which dared to fly into the Heavenly Court with just its mortal body... It does not deserve death...

“If you are able to cultivate into a butterfly demon, I’m sure that you will be a good demon...”

She gently bit her lip and began to bustle about in the medicinal garden. She intended to search for the dew from the one-million-year-old spiritual herb for the butterfly to drink.

After the butterfly consumed it, its vital force gradually recovered and Mu Weiling’s face brightened up with a radiant smile.

Only then did she realized that she had actually fallen in love with this tiny butterfly.

What a silly girl she was to give her heart to a butterfly...

Since then, a girl like her who was known for being clumsy began to learn embroidery from the maiden immortals in the Heavenly Court. To them, it was truly an astonishing matter as they would stare at her with their mouths agape when they heard of her request.

The princess of the Heavenly Court who is famous for her indolent and carefree attitude wants to learn needlecraft?!

Naturally, no one dared to not teach her.

Therefore, from that day onwards, there was always a busy and beautiful lady appearing on the bluestone with an immortal needle and a white silk cloth in her hands, doing her embroidery.

What she embroidered on the cloth was not a pair of dragon and phoenix which was said to be able to bring prosperity or a pair of love ducks¹ swimming in the pond or a natural background of grass, mountains and rivers. On the contrary, it was a pair of butterflies flying and dancing happily in the air.

The half black and half white butterfly was of course Little Fan while she was the other one that looked plainly inconspicuous.

“Little Fan. I’ll preserve my virginity for you... You must cultivate well and be a butterfly immortal someday to take me away... I don’t like staying here.”

Mu Weiling seriously stared at the small butterfly.

Countless months had passed and Mu Weiliang was living happily and blissfully all the time. No one knew the reason of her happiness and no one was able to walk into her world.

The bliss and joy in her life lasted until that very day.

That day, she did not come to the medicinal garden.

On the second day after that, she did not appear.

On the third day, there was still no sign of her...

Ten days later, she finally came to the garden with a haggard face. The butterfly perched on her shoulder as usual but what was unusual about her arrival this time was that there was a golden-haired man following behind her.

His hair was long like a waterfall. The power of his cultivation level was unbelievably high. It was Ning Fan’s first time meeting such a powerful being.

His appearance was vague. But judging from his demeanor, he was a handsome young man.

Wearing a decrepit golden robe, he trailed after Mu Weiliang without uttering a single word.

He was actually giving her the time to think over something.

“You really are not lying to me? If I give you the Realm Gate Key, you will really tell my father to call off our marriage?” Mu Weiliang spoke while her eyes flashed with doubt.

“How would I be willing to lie to you? Hehe. It really shocked me that you’ve fallen in love with a mere butterfly. The way you do things is always exceeding all expectations. Well, I don’t think I’m going to do anything about it. As the ‘Love Wielding Immortal Emperor’, I never force someone’s feelings. Moreover, as long as you hand the key over to me, I will also connect the string of love between the both of you using my Immortal Emperor’s power. Even if you two go into samsara, you will still be reunited with each other in your future lives and stay together forever... How does that sound?!”

“But this key is very important. If you...” Mu Weiliang’s expression was visibly moved, even though the butterfly on her shoulder was violently fluttering its wings, trying to warn her.

“Don’t worry. Don’t tell me you don’t believe in my power? If the key is in my hands, no one will be able to steal it from me. In fact, it is quite dangerous for you to keep it...”

“Then...Then you must never go against your word...”

Mu Weiliang bit her lip in nervousness and passed a purple-golden key to the golden-haired man.

He then activated his immortal power to pull the love strings for Mu Weiliang and the butterfly together and tied a knot. After that, he vanished...

Seeing him disappear, Mu Weiliang heaved a sigh of relief and held the butterfly in her hands.

“Little Fan. You must quickly cultivate and transform into human form to bring me out of here... I really hate this place. Bring me to the world of mortals and grant me a peaceful life where I don’t need to have my hands be stained with blood... Okay?”

The butterfly flew from her hands for the first time and landed on her cheek, gently touching her with one of its wings.

That action caused Ning Fan to feel stunned.

Because he had done that similar action countless times to Zhihe...

“Zhihe! Is it possible that Zhihe is also the soul of the female corpse while the butterfly...is...me?!”

“So this is samsara?”

It was as if there was an invisible love string binding them together generations after generations...

All of a sudden, a thought surged within Ning Fan’s mind.

“In our previous lives, you were the daughter of the Celestial Emperor while I am just a simple butterfly...”

He remained silent.

He finally understood the unique feelings that he had towards Mu Weiliang in the Demon Sinister Forest and the reunion with Mu Xiaohuan in the Land of Slumber.

If he was not wrong, Zhihe was one of the three souls of Mu Weiliang. Besides, she was very likely to be the main soul!

At the same time, the image of a holy and pure woman wearing white robes appeared in his mind.

Her Dancing Sleeve Spell, the seven-colored light rays...

If Ning Fan thought correctly, that Si Wuxie was...

Her objective of coming to the Yue Country was actually...

“I get it now!”

At this moment, Ning Fan’s pupils expanded, heightening his attention. It was as if he was able to see through a person’s life including their previous ones with just a single look.

It was a seed. A seed that was planted by the power of Samsara. Due to the limitation of his cultivation level, he was not able to comprehend it. But one day in the future, this seed would germinate and grow its roots. When the time comes, it would be enough for Ning Fan to gain the power to change samsara!

He did not utter much but stood beside the bluestone, waiting to see what would unfold next.

In the past, he once pried into the remnant memories of the female corpse and found the scene where Mu Weiliang was betrayed by someone.

Now, he knew that her fate had become difficult to change the moment Mu Weiliang handed over the Realm Gate Key to the Love Wielding Immortal Emperor.

Well, that person obviously did not harbor any good intentions! Perhaps there was only the slow-witted girl, Mu Weiliang who failed to see through him.

Love Wielding?! Maybe he was the reason why Mu Weiliang would fall in love with a butterfly? He was probably the one scheming for such a relationship in the dark!

The demon race has been annihilated. The devil race has been suppressed. Could the divine race of the Heavenly Court be the next target?!

“Love Wielding Immortal Emperor...Who is this man?!”

Not knowing how long had passed, a strong wind blew through the Heavenly Court.

That wind which blew continuously made everyone ill at ease. Carrying a trace of indomitable aura, it swept across the entire Immortal World.

Above the sky, a purple-golden gate which was immeasurably massive emerged all of a sudden.

A purple-golden ray of light flashed past the gate from top to bottom. In the next moment, it opened!

Chapter 270(2): Mortal Severance and Divine Transformation (Part 1)

At this moment, countless terrified and angry screams could be heard from every corner of the Heavenly Court!

“The Realm Gate has opened! It’s bad! ‘It’ is coming back!”

“Who was it?! Who opened the Realm Gate?! His Majesty had placed the Realm Gate Key under the princess’ custody. Could it be her?!”

“Detestable! There’s no big deal if this Princess Weiliang doesn’t fail to see the larger issues. But how could she commit such a terrible mistake?! If we manage to survive this calamity, even if that lady is a princess, this old man will surely plead His Majesty to kill her regardless!”

Voices filled with hatred and resentment echoed through the air. Shadows of each of the True Immortals soared into the sky, dashing towards the massive gate and attempting to seal it once more.

But when nearly tens of thousands of True Immortals approached the giant gate trying to close it, a golden shadow entered the gate, revealing a man with golden hair.

One of his hands was holding a bloody eyeball the size of his fist.

When the True Immortals caught sight of it, their expressions were all filled with great terror.

“The eye of the Celestial Emperor! You’ve gouge out the eye of the Celestial Emperor! What have you done?! Zhang Qing! Is it you who did all this?!”

“Zhang Qing? My name isn’t Zhang Qing but ...”

The golden-haired man said something but Ning Fan was unable to hear his words clearly. It was as if when the words entered into his ears, they were immediately muffled out by an abnormal power.

At the end of the day, Ning Fan finally understood the reason why he could not see that man’s appearance... It was not because he was unable to see him but it was because the memories of him were erased immediately after seeing him!

It’s the power of Samsara!

“Die!”

Each and every one of the True Immortals were petrified by the golden-haired man's true name and shuddered in fear.

With a flick of his sleeve, a golden halo appeared and spread extensively. After that, the first batch of True Immortals who charged at him all exploded into mist of blood and perished...

Disdainfully, he tossed the eye of the Celestial Emperor which was dripping with blood down to the medicinal garden. There stood a girl who was weeping remorsefully while looking at her own father's eye.

The eye stared right back at Mu Weiliang, as if he was resentful of her action in opening the Realm Gate.

"No...It isn't me who open the gate. No..." Mu Weiliang wanted to explain but she clearly knew that her father could no longer hear her explanation.

After today, the Heavenly Court would probably be completely destroyed...

She lifted her head, glaring at the golden-haired man who was standing in midair, feeling upset.

"Why...Why did you lie to me...Why did you open the Realm Gate...Why did you betray the Heavenly Palace? My father and I trusted you so much... But you..."

“Hehe. Mu Weiliang, don’t you get it... I was born an outsider of this realm! You are the daughter of the Celestial Emperor...You are my... enemy! You’re a fool and you’ve made an utterly foolish decision. Therefore, you can die now...”

With a touch of his finger, the entire Heavenly Court collapsed.

He then pointed his finger directly at Mu Weiliang. If he unleashes the power, she would never survive. Her souls would split and scatter, causing her to be unable to enter the cycle of reincarnation.

That finger was able to cease the cycle of birth and death!

At this critical juncture, the black-and-white butterfly perching on her shuddering shoulders fluttered its wings!

Like a ray of grey light, it soared into the sky and its speed was beyond the golden-haired man’s imagination.

“A mortal butterfly. How could a mortal butterfly have such speed?! Ah!”

He let out a painful cry. It was because the butterfly collided into his left eye, smashing his eyeball to pieces!

The mighty golden-haired man who was able to wipe out innumerable True Immortals with ease actually had one of his eyes blinded by an insignificant butterfly which seemed to possess no magic power at all.

However, the repulsive force from the collision crushed the body of the butterfly to powder...

Even so, it still managed to protect Mu Weiliang after all.

She covered her mouth with her hand, feeling as if a knife was being twisted inside her heart.

She quickly put her palms together to hold the remaining ashes of the butterfly that fell from the sky. Being turned into ashes was the consequence of overexerting itself.

“How dare a mere mortal butterfly defy me... It’s just biting more than what it can chew!”

“Shut up! You aren’t even as good as a mortal butterfly! You aren’t and will never be!” Mu Weiliang’s eyes flashed with hatred.

With her attitude, she had never known what hatred was. But today, she finally understood how that felt like!

“From today onwards, I, the Love Wielding Immortal Emperor, will seize the heart of the divine race using my life!”

The golden-haired man's countenance remained indifferent and disdainful but deep inside, he was astonished, though he was not willing to admit that feeling.

Just a butterfly which flapped its wings at the right time was enough to cause a great change like a typhoon, altering the outcome of samsara.

At the moment it died, the path of the Heavenly Dao had deviated!

His state of mind was completely pulled out from the Bell of Samsara.

When he returned to his body, his eyes were bizarrely flashing in pure black and in absolute white from time to time.

After regaining the senses of his physical body, his vision slowly became clear. He placed his hands on the Bell of Samsara, muttering, "I was a butterfly in my previous life...Just an ordinary mortal butterfly. But in that butterfly form, I injured the Love Wielding Immortal Emperor and saved Weiliang's soul..."

"Love Wielding Immortal Emperor... Who exactly is he?!"

Ning Fan shut his eyes. When he reopened them, they had become normal again.

Samsara... It is not something that I can lay a finger on at my current level.

Zhang Qing...He is not a person that the current me can withstand.

Knowing more about this at my current strength isn't necessarily better. In order to have a clear view of the past, the only way is to obtain greater power.

At least... I have to become an Immortal Emperor!

"Zhihe...I've promised you that I won't let your hands be stained with even the slightest trace of blood in this life and I will fulfill my promise..."

Clearing off all the thoughts within his mind, he turned around and left the bell with a calm expression. He faced the bald elderly man who wore a sackcloth beside him and cupped his fists!

"I'm truly thankful to you for saving me twice! I owe you two favors now! If I, Ning Fan, ascend to the Immortal World one day, I will surely repay my debt of gratitude!"

"Come on. This old man doesn't want to have any connection with you... People who can see samsara are scary, too scary... But if you ascend to the Northern Ocean Heaven one day, perhaps... you can come to be my guest in the Black Tortoise Star. Other than the power of Samsara, this old man has a really good impression in you..."

“Since senior has invited me, this junior will definitely pay a visit to the Black Tortoise Star if there is a chance in the future... However, this junior still doesn’t know your name.”

Originally, Ning Fan wanted to question the elderly man who the Love Wielding Immortal Emperor was.

But after pondering for a while, he gave that notion up.

It’s still not the right time yet to divulge such secrets. Besides, perhaps this senior does not even know who Zhang Qing was.

“This old man is Meng Xuanzi. I am the Tablet Master Immortal Emperor of the Four Oceans Immortal World... Let’s go. We’ll be heading to the Dao Asking Cliff for the Third Step of Mortal Severance. Later, you just need to fall from the edge of the cliff so that your mortal self will be completely dead. Then, you will pass...”

“Dao Asking Cliff...”

Ning Fan jotted down the elderly man’s words in his memories while tailing after him to travel through the clouds.

Suddenly, a doubt rose within his heart. He cupped his fists once again and asked.

“I wonder where Mistress Bei Li and Fellow Daoist Yi Qing are. Their qi seemed to have disappeared from the Sea of Clouds...”

“They have left. I’ve gotten rid of them! It’s because of you! Little kid, this old man is going to give you a piece of advice. The power of Samsara is not something that people in your level can touch. The next time, you won’t be so lucky to have me saving you another time!”

Inwardly, Meng Xuanzi held back some criticisms against Ning Fan.

This little young man following me from behind might not have a high cultivation level, but everything he had done is certainly enough to shake the heavens.

At just the Harmonious Spirit Realm, he dared to stretch his spirit sense into threads... At Divine Transformation Realm, he dared to sound the bell of Samsara until he activated the power of Samsara... People say the younger generations are crazy and bold. But this young man isn’t just crazy and bold, he is overly mad...

Well this wasn’t strange actually... After all, in his previous life, Ning Fan was already daring enough to fly to the Heavenly Court with just the body of a mortal butterfly.

In his life, the two words “not daring” did not exist. He would be willing to try anything as long as there are chances of succeeding.

Rather than dwelling upon failures, why don’t one think about how to avoid failure?

Translated by Tommy, edited by Roel

Note:

1. Zhang(掌zhǎng) means [1] the palm of a hand or [2] control, or wield.

Qing (情 qíng) means love or emotion.

Zhang Qing (Chinese: 掌情 pinyin: zhǎng qíng) means a person of

controlling love or emotion.

In this novel Zhang Qing is another name of the Love Wielding Immortal

Emperor.

Chapter 270(3): Mortal Severance and Divine Transformation (Part 1)

The Dao Asking Cliff was an extensively enormous peak which was approximately seven million zhang* tall.

When Meng Xuanzi flicked his sleeve, heaven and earth trembled and the air around them rippled. In a flash, they had already traversed countless distance, appearing at the summit of the Dao Asking Cliff.

It really was Ning Fan's first time witnessing such incredible speed.

He's way too much faster than the Old Devil...

Ning Fan could imagine that the Old Devil who was behaving in an arrogant and domineering manner in the mortal world might not necessarily have a high post in the immortal world... At least, compared to an Immortal Emperor, he was pretty much insignificant.

At the peak of the seven million zhang* tall mountain, the strength of the wind alone was enough to blow any cultivators below the Divine Transformation Realm off from the mountain.

However, Ning Fan's steps were firm and steady despite the wind pounding harshly on him. Well, he did not attain the Second Level of the Jade Life Body Refining Realm for nothing. With the toughness of his physical body, how could it be possible for him to be unable to withstand the blowing wind?

The summit of the mountain was nearly ten thousand zhang* broad. Aside from that, the surrounding area was wreathed in clouds of purple mist.

Outside the vicinity of ten thousand zhang* which was shrouded with purple mist, Meng Xuanzi stopped at the edge of a cliff and impatiently said, "This is the Dao Asking Cliff. It was constructed by the Immortal Sovereign. This place is where you will go through the Third Step of Mortal Severance. Alright. Little brat, jump down from here and kill yourself. Then, you will complete your Divine Transformation!"

“Jump down...”

Ning Fan gently clenched his fists, walked closer to the edge and looked down from it.

From the height of seven million zhang*, nothing could be seen clearly below. However, he could vaguely see multitudes of corpses and skeletons lying all over the ground like a field of flax, except they were all in blood-red color. Apparently, they were the cultivators who made a leap from this cliff in the past and left their mortal selves below in order to complete the Divine Transformation.

Jump from the cliff and leave one’s mortal self. If it was in the past, Ning Fan might agree with this kind of practice. But after crossing the Ten Steps Bridge and sounding the Bell of Samsara, Ning Fan had a feeling that the third step would not be as simple as just jumping down from the cliff.

Since it’s called the Dao Asking Cliff, it shouldn’t be as easy as just making a jump from here. Otherwise, why isn’t it called “Mortal Severance Cliff” or just simply “Falling Bone Cliff”?

The reason why the Immortal Sovereign established the Three Steps of Mortal Severance might seem to allow the cultivators to sever their mortal coil. But from another perspective, he seemed to have left a strand of opportunity within the stages of mortal severance. In actuality, it seemed like only those who chose not to go through the mortal severance would be able to grasp that opportunity.

Ten steps and an illusion. Mister must never look back... But Ning Fan had actually done the opposite which in turn brought a huge improvement to his state of mind.

As soon as the Bell of Samsara rang, mister's Dao became empty... But Ning Fan's Dao did not disappear under the sound of the bell. In stark contrast, he saw samsara and got a better understanding of worldly affairs and existence, strengthening his Dao Heart. Moreover, his luck as well as his aura force improved too.

An opportunity lied within each of the steps of the Mortal Severance. Those opportunities seemed to be a kind of reward from the Immortal Sovereign to cultivators who dared to remain true to their worldly hearts.

The Immortal Sovereign should also be concerned with worldly affairs... It's because of those affairs that one would have struggles within their hearts. It's because of those things that he would become so powerful and strong.

At the end of the day, in the path of cultivation, what the cultivators were truly after was a strong heart. It was the insight that Ning Fan gained from the Ten Steps Bridge.

Jumping down from the cliff and commit suicide surely needed absolute courage. Anyone who was cowardly and timid would never be daring enough to make the leap from the cliff after seeing such a terrifying height.

But whatever the reason might be, committing suicide was equivalent to an act of avoidance. Cultivators who chose to kill themselves were actually trying to avoid from their feeble and inferior mortal selves...

Being weak was not shameful, being lowly was not a disgrace, being fragile was not an embarrassment... Those elements were the basic traits of a mortal! Those elements were what mortals were born with!

Even if one had become an immortal, the word “mortal” composed most of the word “immortal”!

In the past when Ning Fan was at the Sinister Sparrow Sect, the ugly man, Yun Lie had asked Ning Fan a question: What is an immortal?

At that time, Ning Fan answered him relying on the comprehension of the Dao from the Ancient Chaos’ memories.

He said, “An immortal is a person who stands on top of the mountain!”

As for now, Ning Fan was standing on a mountain, right on the summit of the Dao Asking Cliff. Within his heart, he suddenly had an unprecedented insight towards that particular sentence.

One who stands above the mountain is an immortal.

After descending from the mountain, he or she is just a mortal.

This is the cultivation path that was recognized by the Immortal Sovereign.

He heaved a deep breath but he did not show signs of leaping down from the cliff. The impatient look on Meng Xuanzi’s face had turned into a trace of praise.

Actually, his impatience was just a facade. He was just trying to test Ning Fan to see whether he was able to see through the true meaning behind the Dao Asking Cliff...

“Why haven’t you jumped yet?! Why don’t you go and kill your mortal self?!” Meng Xuanzi deliberately asked in a loud tone.

“Why should I jump?!” Ning Fan lifted his head and gazed into the sky with his sparkling eyes.

“Since I am standing on the mountaintop, I am an immortal! Since I am already an immortal, how does it make sense for me to kill my mortal self?! This mountain is just an analogy. As long as a mortal being places his heart on the mountain which is much higher than an immortal, he would then be considered an immortal!”

How did a butterfly fly to the Heavenly Court with its mortal body?

It was because this butterfly had not thought about the difference between an immortal and a mortal. In its eyes, it already considered itself higher than any immortals above the Heavens!

Perhaps it did not have any magic power but its state of mind was on a completely different level as compared to any True Immortals!

“I was that butterfly! And right here, right now, I will not jump off the cliff and kill myself... I will stay here and question the Dao!”

At the moment his voice echoed in the air, Meng Xuanzi burst into hearty laughter.

“You sure are a monstrous talent! In the past, this old man has hesitated for forty-nine days at this cliff before seeing through the true meaning behind it and eventually chose not to jump off the cliff. You, however, were able to see through it within just a few breaths... You are definitely qualified enough to ask the Dao here!”

Just as Meng Xuanzi finished speaking, the purple mist surrounding that area suddenly concentrated towards Ning Fan, producing multiples illusions.

At this moment, Meng Xuanzi’s eyes flashed with absolute seriousness.

“The illusion of Dao Asking. This is the Third Step of Mortal Severance. The only step where one would be able to increase their cultivation level! What cultivators are truly cultivating in the path of cultivation is their heart! If one has a strong and determined heart, their magic power will surge itself! Therefore, when cultivators have completed the seven cultivation realms and wish to become immortals in one go, they would rarely consume any pills or Dao Fruits if they intend to stand at the pinnacle. Those items are just external aid... In order to attain the culmination of cultivation, one must have the Dao Heart which is as strong and firm like this seven million zhang* tall mountain!”

“Although you are just attaining the Divine Transformation Realm for your demon power, your magic power is still your foundation because you are still a human after all. Within the illusory realm, each day that passes will be equivalent to ten units of magic power. Six hundred years... There will be a whole samsara in six hundred years and there will be a scene of samsara each day... Ordinary cultivators could only withstand six days within the illusory realm. It’s rare to find anyone who could stay within for more than seven days... In the past, this old man only managed to hold on for 97 days. How long can you stay within?!”

Within the purple mist, Ning Fan's eyes were vacant and lost. He appeared in an area surrounded by a bamboo fence.

He was holding a porcelain bowl in his hands which was filled with chicken feed. Looking at himself, he was just a child of seven or eight years old.

He stared blankly at the chicken feed, feeling that he had forgotten something important.

"I remember that I should be at the Dao Asking Cliff to ask the Dao...Huh? What is a Dao Asking Cliff? What is asking the Dao..."

Forgotten. He had forgotten everything. In this illusory realm, all his past seemed like a fantasy. Its realness and fakeness was indiscernible.

"Fan Er, hurry up and feed the chickens. Then bring this basket of eggs to the teacher of the school to take him as your teacher so that you can start learning calligraphy. It's for the best since you have nothing to do every single day..."

A woman wearing ragged clothes made of hemp carried a basket of eggs and passed it to Ning Fan's hands in a petulant manner. After that, she lovingly stroked Ning Fan's head.

"Silly boy, are you daydreaming again?"

This woman was the boy's mother. She was the only person who lived with the boy.

Her clothes might be old and torn, but her appearance was like a dusty gem. She was in fact the most famous beauty of the village.

Her name was Ning Qian...

Ning Qian was feeling angry and funny. Her kid loved to daydream. Every time he did that, he would still claim that he dreamt of becoming an immortal himself.

To Ning Qian, there wasn't any celestial beings in this world...

"Stop daydreaming, okay? Come on, little dear. Go and acknowledge the teacher as your master and obediently learn how to read and write from him..."

"But I really dreamt that I've become an immortal... I've also dreamt that Zhihe has become the daughter of the Celestial Emperor."

"Silly boy. Those are just dreams... Zhihe is the daughter of Carpenter Wang. How could she be the daughter of the Celestial Emperor... Let's go. Study hard and when you are capable enough in the future, I will help you to bring up a proposal of marriage between you and Zhihe to Carpenter Wang..."

“Alright, Mum...”

The little boy took over the basket of eggs with a slightly disappointed look.

He stared at the ethereal purple clouds floating above the sky, feeling unconvinced.

“Those slaughters were just dreams?”

“In here, I have mum and Zhihe. It should be a blissful life. But I still have a feeling that I’ve forgotten something very important...”

“What’s that?”