

Necropolis 791

Chapter 791: Kun

Mystery shrouded the battle of Emperors Fall, just like the great war of immortals a hundred thousand years ago. Those who knew the truth wouldn't speak of it, and those who didn't purposefully avoided looking for an answer.

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Scorching and suffocating heat abounded on the other side of the tomb door. A vast ocean of flames greeted the eye, and the group found themselves surrounded by roiling heat waves and thick yang energy. This was the point of extreme yang in the yin tomb, the counterpart of extreme yin that they'd just left behind on the other side of the door.

At the point of extreme yin stood the dragonbolt pillar. The purest of yin had solidified into a tangible structure and chained the torch dragon to it, leaving no room for escape. Although the dragon could control yin and yang, it couldn't manipulate the pure yin shrouding the pillar.

No, wait, the pillar wasn't comprised of pure yin, but of extreme yin.

The relentlessly burning land under their feet was highly troublesome to Lu Yun and his companions. If the priest of flame hadn't gained control over the Fire Altar and thus possessed the ability to manipulate the fires in the tomb, Lu Yun, whose cultivation was the lowest among them, and the demon sovereign as well, would've been burnt to charcoal in an instant.

The flames here were no lesser than connate li fire.

"This is the developing core of a Sun Star," Ashu observed with shock after focusing his concentration and taking a close look around. "It's been nurtured for at least six hundred million years, and it rivals the great sun overlooking the world of immortals!"

Six hundred million years! Both Ashu's and Lu Yun's faces twitched. They lived in a time that was one that was exactly six hundred million years since the establishment of the immortal dao. A coincidence, or not?

"Star cores are the hottest in their infancy and carpeted with wild Sol Truefire, and Sol Truefire is a flame on par with connate li fire, so this star core is essentially a fully unleashed connate-grade spirit treasure.

"This part of the realm must be a world within a connate-grade peerless treasure," Ashu continued. "And the star core a spirit treasure born within the peerless treasure."

The demon sovereign turned to Lu Yun with bright eyes. "Do you think... we can find a way to collect this star core?"

"We can." Lu Yun nodded. "This star core is a treasure of pure yang born out of extreme yin, so taking it away won't affect anything. At most, the connate-grade peerless treasure outside will birth another spirit treasure of pure yang after another hundreds of millions of years."

Lu Yun opened his hand as he spoke, unfurling a sun-like golden flower on his palm—the Emperor Sunflower.

After Qing Yu refined the Central World, the Emperor Sunflower rooted within it naturally fell into her grasp. But instead of incorporating the tenth connate spirit root into herself, she planted it in the Central World, leaving it to slowly transform into the world's sun.

As soon as Lu Yun noticed the star core, he had Yuying notify Qing Yu to send the flower to hell, so that he was able to bring it here. He gingerly placed the flower on the star core beneath their feet and straightened up.

“Let's go.”

The others were caught off guard by his series of actions.

“Little Yu has refined the Emperor Sunflower,” Lu Yun smiled at the flower extending roots into the star core. “We can leave the rest of this in her capable hands.”

Although Qing Yu hadn't incorporated the flower into her body, she'd refined it completely with the power of the heavenly palace, making the flower essentially a replica of hers.

“Once it devours this growing star core, the flower will turn into a real sun and illuminate the heavenly palace and kingdom of hell!” Qing Yu's excited voice rang from the flower. Instead of taking the star core, she wanted to use it as fertilizer for the Emperor Sunflower, thereby evolving the flower into a real sun.

“I'll leave this to you then, and if it's possible...” Lu Yun's lips twisted into a smirk.

“If it's possible, I'll also collect the peerless treasure of pure yin and its counterpart on the other side of the tomb!” Qing Yu was so in tune with Lu Yun that she could anticipate his every thought.

“Birds of a feather flock together indeed,” grumbled the demon sovereign. “They're a perfect pair of robbers and thieves.”

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The star core hung high in the sky, its scorching heat and pure yang energy sealed tightly to itself. Beneath it was a vast ocean with a shoreline beyond any of their sights. Its black waters were the dreadful connate kui water, which contained boundless yin energy that contaminated the ocean.

The priest of flame shuddered at the sight and almost reflexively summoned the Fire Altar, but Ashu interrupted her.

“The Fire Altar is a treasure of pure yang and fire. Its appearance will result in backlash from the ocean, and then we'll have to face the frontal barrage of a connate-grade peerless treasure.”

Shudder crawling down her spine, she quickly put the altar away. Lu Yun summoned a great fortress ship to the ocean with a wave of his hand.

Bam!

A loud bang sounded from beneath the ship as something large seemed to slam into it. The ship that was five kilometers long shook violently and didn't settle down until Lu Yun hastily activated its formations.

A fish with a single horn on its head leapt out of the water, summoning a great wave with its motion before disappearing beneath the waves. Violent eddies and undulations broke through the peaceful surface of the ocean.

"It's a kun!" Ashu said in shock, having caught a glimpse of the creature. "There's a living kun here!"

Lu Yun paused. "A kunpeng?"

"No. A kun! A pureblood kun fish!" Ashu took a deep breath. "A long long time ago, someone attempted and succeeded in splitting the kunpeng bloodline in half. Thus, kun fish and peng rocs were born."

Lu Yun was struck speechless with the unexpected answer, and it was the demon sovereign who broke the silence with a dumbfounded question, "Do you mean the pengs we see today are divine beasts derived from half of a kunpeng?"

"That's right, and kuns and pengs met with very different fates after their forced separation. Upon their emergence, pengs were recorded into the great dao by heaven and earth as divine beasts, while kuns suffered from a great natural flaw that prevented them from surviving in the world. They fell into the underworld and ended up as decayed or zombified versions of themselves." Ashu stared at the retreating kuns and murmured, "And yet here it is, a living, breathing kun."

"Capture it!" he suddenly raised his voice. "There must be great secrets on the kun that enable it to survive here, ones involving creation itself! If we catch it, we may be able to peek into the mysteries of creation!"

Chapter 792: Primordial Water God

Everyone discovered in this moment that Ashu's eyes had turned a pure green. A beam of sheer, unadulterated greed shone out of his richly green pupils at the sight of what they'd encountered.

Lu Yun had never seen the holy lord like this before. It seemed that an obsession rooted in the deepest parts of his heart had been triggered, related to that of creation itself!

Without waiting for his companions to react, Ashu blurred into a streak of green light and chased after the kun fish that'd disappeared into the black sea.

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"No, stop him!" Lu Yun's expression shifted drastically and summoned a giant out of black seawater at almost the same time. Undulating ripples formed his head and his feet were planted on top of two dragons—the primordial water god Gonggong!

He'd first used Mastery of the Five Elements to summon connate water essence, then used that water essence to manipulate the connate kui water in the area, using that water of pure yin to manifest Gonggong's body.

The primordial water god manifested with the strength that he'd possessed at his peak in olden times. One had to say, in a place where the power of the five elements gathered like this, the world was Lu Yun's oyster. His nascent spirit was powerful enough to call upon connate elemental essence and he could do with it whatever he wanted to. The Gonggong that he manifested was pretty much the bonafide primordial water god!

"Stand guard over me!" Lu Yun roared and took a cross-legged position on the fortress ship, bending his mind to controlling his projection.

The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign transformed into his skeletal form without a word and set himself on fire with Hadal Bonefire. Not daring to deploy the Fire Altar, the priest of flames kept a weather eye on their surroundings. She'd been here once before, but hadn't been in possession of the true Fire Altar then, so she hadn't prompted the ocean's backlash. However, she was well aware of what terrors lurked in the deep.

"So strong... his dao method is stronger than the art of incantations and far more perfected!" murmured the priest of flames when she looked at Gonggong off in the distance. "But there's still a flaw to this dao method—it's not complete yet!"

"What kind of flaw?" Lu Yun suddenly opened his eyes in question.

The young priest's face spasmed in fright at the response and she answered haltingly, "It's not real enough! What you're projecting is just an external copy and not the real thing. Or put another way, you've manifested just a replica of yourself."

Lu Yun blinked and frowned in consternation. "But I've never met the real water god. If I had and gained a deep enough understanding of him, I'd be able to project the real deal."

"No, you're wrong!" the high priest cut him off. "Even if you'd met the real water god, you'd still be projecting a replica and wouldn't be able to call upon his true strength."

"I can tell that your observation method borrows from the energy of heaven and earth to observe all things. All things, and not yourself, so you should forget your own existence and think of yourself as the real water god."

"The water god is a divine spirit of water, making water its true essence. The world is the heart of things, which makes that Gonggong just a replica of what you see with your heart." She gave voice to a strange syllable as she spoke, igniting the flames on the Fire Altar to form a man wreathed in fire.

Though the man was coalesced through the art of incantation as deployed by the priest, there was nothing indicating his origins whether by presence or aura. He seemed to have nothing to do with the priest of flames.

He should've been a fire god, but right now he was a puppet, a plaything without sentience of his own. His every move and gesture was controlled by the priest's art. But apart from that, he was much more real than Lu Yun's water god.

The art of incarnations had been established before Emperors Fall and undergone the tempering of countless aeons. Perfected as it were, it was natural that it would be superior to Lu Yun's nascent spirit

observation method that was less than a year old. However, the theory behind Lu Yun's method was far greater than the art of incantations.

"I see." He took in a deep breath, finally seizing upon the core principles of his method in this moment. What he should observe was heaven and earth, and all of life, not himself. Forgetting that it was him making the observations was key.

Off to the side, the demon sovereign shook his head. He didn't understand the meaning behind the priest's words and just practiced the nascent spirit observation method as Lu Yun had taught him. But given that his Hadal Bonefire nascent spirit was complete and his nascent spirit had also been transmuted to Hadal Bonefire, none of this really mattered to him anymore.

"It looks like my method has another step of improvement to make. Observing dead things and living things are actually one and the same. I must be resolute and have absolute faith in myself, but also let go of the self at the same time! I need to observe the world and all living beings, but not be lost in what I see..." Lu Yun fell into deep contemplation.

"For the good of all!" Ge Long applauded heartily in hell, and even Carmine Eternal—newly returned from the yang tomb—cracked a smile.

"Moat Snake..." Carmine Eternal looked merrily at the thirteen-year-old girl wearing long yellow robes and tousled her head lovingly.

"Call me Carmine Arbiter!" The girl swung her head with dissatisfaction. She'd reformed her soul with the aid of a Hell Flower and cast off her previous form as a vicious ghost. Returning to life from death, it was as if she'd been reborn, and being reborn in hell made her a denizen of hell.

However, the core essence of a moat snake was simply too strong; it was even greater than that of the torch dragons. Though she'd been reborn and was traveling the path of cultivation all over again, her starting point was exceedingly high and she was already very strong.

"What happened to you, why did someone refine you into the Xuan Yuan Tomb?" Carmine Eternal asked hastily.

"I don't know, I've forgotten!" She swung her head again, a lost look surfacing in her eyes. "But... it seems to have had something to do with God."

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Above the boundless sea, Lu Yun's projection underwent a significant change. The ripple of identity belonging to him vanished without a trace, and the final strand of estrangement between it and the world dispersed as well. Even more connate water essence and kui water energy gathered upon Gonggong.

"I see, I see at last!" Gonggong's eyes lit up. "The combat arts of the water god! As I'm the real water god now, I command the water god's talents!"

He'd once projected both Zhurong and Gonggong, but the combat arts they'd used had still been his or simple fire and water attacks. Now that he'd forgotten himself and fully thrown himself into Gonggong, he was the real water god despite never having met the entity or gaining an understanding of it!

The combat arts of a primordial water god were at his beck and call!

Boom!

Gonggong's body leapt forward as a tidal wave and swept across the black sea, catching up to Ashu and the kun fish in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 793: I'm Really So Very Cold

Ashu's entire body was green at this point and his emotions highly unstable. He was infinitely close to a cultivation deviation, and his eyes were locked on an "island" in front of them.

Covered in verdant growth, the island was also green and appeared quite out of place in the midst of a sinister, foreboding sea. But to Ashu's eyes, it was an enormous kun fish instead of an island.

The kun that'd attacked the fortress ship earlier had already fallen into his hands and was struggling mightily for life.

"This was the kunpeng great emperor back in the day," he murmured as he looked at the island. "I'd thought he'd perished after being separated in two. Who would've thought that his fish form would live on here?"

So the enormous island a thousand kilometers across was a large kun fish!

"In other words, that person succeeded. He really did discover the secrets of creation from the kunpeng." He took to the air as he spoke, making his way to the enormous fish.

"Don't go!" Lu Yun's projection finally caught up to the holy lord at this point. He grabbed Ashu while the Karmic Tree in hell shifted slightly, sending a cooling breeze into the holy lord's body.

Ashu trembled as the green drained out of his eyes.

"What's going on? What am I doing here?" He looked around blankly, utterly baffled and having completely forgotten what'd just happened. "Oh right, kun fish. Eh... I'm holding one of them..."

He goggled at the fish in his hand. Roughly five hundred meters long, it was swaying through the air by the tail. Close to death since it'd been out of the water for too long, its signs of life were fading away.

"There are no secrets of creation to be found here. The fish in your hand was born with defects and is at most only half alive. It's lived till now simply because of the yin energy in the waters." Lu Yun slapped the fish back into the water, whereupon it slowly recovered as it took in large mouthfuls of yin energy.

With an adroit flip of its tail, it then disappeared into the depths while Ashu looked on silently.

"There's another consciousness sleeping in your body!" Lu Yun frowned at the holy lord, who continued remaining silent and refused to respond.

Boom!

The water surface beneath their feet exploded as enormous kun fish leapt out of the sea, bearing down on the two upon enormous waves. A thick miasma of yin energy wreathed around them and they seemed both dead and alive.

“Let’s go!” Ashu sighed and took to the air, rising out of their attack range. He didn’t want to hurt them any further. Taking another look at the fish form of the kunpeng great emperor, he heaved another great sigh.

“Since the two of you have come, why leave in such a hurry?” The berserk fish abruptly calmed down as a light, ethereal female voice echoed over the sea. However, its sudden appearance only served to make it appear even more disturbing.

Lu Yun took a position next to Ashu and the two looked at the island—the voice seemed to be coming from there.

“The peng as yang and kun as yin... when the great emperor separated into two, the kun fish was a female...” murmured Ashu.

“Surely you jest, fellow daoist. This little girl is Xuanyuan Xiaoyue, not the fish form of some Great Emperor Kunpeng.” A girl sixteen years of age in a pure-white chiffon dress strolled gracefully out from the island formed by the kun fish. Her eyes and brows were so delicate they seemed painted on, and her willowy form exuded a unique presence at every second. In fact, she seemed to be a goddess who’d walked out of a painting.

“Xuanyuan Xiaoyue? The Xuan Yuan surname?” Ashu responded reflexively.

“Indeed, I am a descendant of the Xuanyuan clan. The Xuan Yuan buried in the Xuan Yuan Tomb is my ancestor.” An alluring smile drew itself over Xuanyuan Xiaoyue’s face. “There have been no visitors to the Embittered Sea over the past hundreds of millions of years...”

“Because you ate them all,” Lu Yun suddenly cut in harshly.

Bewilderment blossomed over Xiaoyue’s face as she looked askance at Lu Yun.

“If my guess is right, you want to invite us to the island. But the moment we set foot on it, we’ll become your food.” A vortex of black connate yin water formed around Lu Yun’s projection of Gonggong.

“Wait!” Ashu flung out a hand. “Where did you say we were? The Embittered Sea?”

Eyes creased into two crescents, Xuanyuan Xiaoyue first looked blankly at Lu Yun, but then nodded.

“Embittered Sea? A connate treasure?” Lu Yun frowned.

“Embittered Sea... this is the Embittered Sea!” Ashu turned pale. “But how is this possible? How did the sea turn into a connate treasure?”

“Waughhhh—” Taking advantage of Ashu’s momentary lapse in attention, Xuanyuan Xiaoyue suddenly erupted into motion and her body turned pure silver. An exceedingly frosty aura emanated from her being. “I’m so cold, your blood seems very hot.”

She reached out with a slender arm and plunged it into Ashu’s chest, clawing his heart out.

“What is this?!” Completely baffled by what she came back with, she stared at the dark red heart in her hand. The blood inside was congealed—it was plainly a heart that’d been dead for a very long time!

"You're a living dead...?" Shock paralyzing her for only half a second, she raised her hand again at Gonggong off to the side.

Whoosh!

Gonggong's body collapsed into water droplets and then reformed again.

"Both of you aren't alive?" The silver haze around her departed to reveal a vastly changed Xuanyuan Xiaoyue. Frost crystals glittered all around her and her eyes and lips were purplish-white. She seemed to have been frozen for countless aeons. Likewise, there was no trace of the living on her either.

"I'm so cold, really so cold..." She looked piteously at Ashu and Lu Yun, but the heart in her hand made the fragile little girl seem like a macabre psychopath instead.

Ashu reached out and retrieved his non-beating heart, shoving it back into his chest. Lu Yun twisted a bit uncomfortably at the sight.

"I know!" Glee stole across Xiaoyue's face. "This is your replica. You've used a special method to collect connate yin water essence and formed this replica. Your primary body shouldn't be far away from here!"

Another blast of frost exploded from her and she vanished on the spot.

"Living person, living person... where's a living person? I'm really so very cold..." her ravings lingered in the air after her departure.

Chapter 794: Qing Yu Arrives

"You brought this trouble down on us, so you deal with it." Lu Yun shrugged with resignation and scattered his Gonggong manifestation.

Brows knitted in deep thought, Ashu cast his eyes at the great kun drifting aimlessly in the ocean and didn't immediately return to the fortress ship.

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"Living people! There are living people up there!" Xuanyuan Xiaoyue had shot to the aerospace of the fortress ship and celebrated her find when she saw Lu Yun, like a child finding candy within her reach.

"She's fast!" She'd teleported here as soon as Lu Yun scattered his projection from the nascent spirit observation method.

Before he could react, she snatched forward with her hand and a giant skeletal hand emerged in the air, grabbing at Lu Yun's fortress ship.

"The whole world within her reach and the universe in her sleeve!" screamed the demon sovereign. "How great is her cultivation?!"

At the wave of his hand, ghostly pale Hadal Bonefire burst forth and ignited a blazing trail snaking toward the giant hand.

"So cold..." Xuanyuan Xiaoyue cried out in shock. The giant hand of hers jerked away from the fortress ship like it'd been electrocuted.

Swoosh!

Hadal Bonefire blazed and enveloped the ship. Hovering in the air, Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's eyes reflected a sickly white and her body was encased in a thick layer of frost. A horrifying coldness radiated from her being, almost freezing the connate yin water beneath her feet.

A grimace stretched across her face, one that could be crying or smiling. She let out a continuous howl, seemingly summoning something.

In response, tall waves rose thousands of kilometers above the ocean and giant kun rushed out from underwater, slamming into Lu Yun's fortress ship with mad abandon.

"It's her! She killed all the previous priests of flame!" The high priest called out in shock when she got a good look at Xuanyuan Xiaoyue.

Among the five high priests of the five elemental altars, she was the only one who was yet to be corrupted, and therefore was able to enter the yin tomb. The previous priests of flame had died one after another from having their hearts dug out of their chests, their heart blood devoured.

The current priest of flame was still young. Although she'd once visited here, she'd never dared venture too deep, hence why she'd survived to this day. However, she knew of how her predecessors had died from their shared heritage, so couldn't help but scream when she saw their murderer.

The kun in the ocean hurtled about wildly and slammed into the fortress ship again and again. Fortunately, the formations on the ship were running at full strength, keeping the kun at bay for the moment.

Nevertheless, the demon sovereign's heart still pounded from fear. The ice goddess of a young woman in the air was too terrifying! He could tell that his Hadal Bonefire hadn't even left a scratch on her. She was staying away only because the cold fire annoyed her.

"Where is your Divine Glory?" the demon sovereign asked in a trembling voice. He'd once experienced the might of that ship for himself. It was a hundred times more powerful than the fortress ship they were riding at the moment and would make quick work out of their attackers.

"It's in Witherdew Major," Lu Yun said with a frown. "Dusk Province is too small and too impoverished, I have to take a major under my control."

The demon sovereign fell silent.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

The crystal cannons on the ship roared and fired white beams of light at the kun fish, ripping them to pieces.

"Let's go! Ashu has found the exit out of the Embittered Ocean!" Lu Yun stood at the bow of the lord-grade fortress ship as it charged forward at full throttle. The way out of the ocean was on the island transformed from the kun body of Great Emperor Kunpeng.

With the ship's power engaged to its limit and weapons of war roaring in a constant barrage, the kun fish couldn't stop it from advancing. Moreover, the demon sovereign had fully unleashed his Hadal Bonefire to cover the fortress ship in a protective layer of cold fire.

Thick frost crept over Xuanyuan Xiaoyue and she flew closely after the ship.

"Cold... So cold..." She kept shivering. Suddenly, her gaze zeroed in on the ship and the frost around her shattered. Seemingly having made up her mind, she reached out and struck the ship with her palm.

Boom!

The moving fortress ship exploded into pieces and the Hadal Bonefire protecting it scattered as sparks.

"Living people! Heat!" Overjoyed, Xuanyuan Xiaoyue rushed at Lu Yun. Before she could reach him, a wave of scorching heat descended from above and crashed into her.

With a final scream, she was vaporized without leaving a trace behind.

The ocean boiled over as tremendous yin and yang energy intertwined and clashed, offsetting each other. Sol Truefire and connate yin water rammed each other as well.

Gone was its peaceful facade and calm surface. A small bloom of fire suddenly emerged, swallowing the star core descending from above and taking root in the air, devouring the yin energy and yin water.

"I see now. For the Emperor Sunflower to fully mature, it needs not only pure yang energy, but also force of extreme yin... The mix of yin and yang, water and fire, was the 'emperor' dao within the flower." Qing Yu's voice came from within the flower. Then, she emerged from the pistil of the flower while wearing a crimson dress.

With a wave of her hand, the Emperor Sunflower turned into a hair pin and wove into her hair for safekeeping. She turned to Lu Yun with a brilliant smile, a smile that seemed to brighten the very world and inject everything here with vibrancy and vitality.

This was a replica that Qing Yu had created with the Emperor Sunflower.

The priest of flame stared dumbly at the sudden appearance, somehow feeling far inferior before her.

"I know how we can collect the ocean and the volcano on the other side!" Qing Yu floated down to Lu Yun and wrapped her arm around his before he could say anything. "According to my calculations, the tomb realm is tethered to the world created by the moat snake and the door refined from the torch dragons. The volcano and the ocean are merely defenses for the door and won't affect the tomb realm's existence."

"Wonderful!" Lu Yun perked up. "Once the Emperor Flower refines the two peerless treasures, it'll reach full maturity, won't it?"

"Wait, Emperor Sunflower... Emperor!" Realization struck him. "The word 'emperor' has been a bad omen since Emperors Fall, the flower is the key to turning things around!"

Qing Yu nodded. "That hunch came to me as soon as I acquired the flower. To turn it into a sun that warms the many realms and worlds, though, it has to devour all of the other connate spirit roots as well!"

Lu Yun smirked. "Then we'll find them all and feed them to the flower!"

Within the kingdom of the netherworld, an approving smile tugged at Ge Long's lips.

"I'll collect the two peerless treasures while you go find the world's spleen!" Qing Yu's tone took a serious turn. "You must be careful, though. The other four high priests have sacrificed all living souls in the yang tomb and returned to the yin tomb through the might of some mysterious existence."

Chapter 795: Yin Yang Ghost Fostering Method

"What?! That can't be right!!" the priest of flame shrieked when she heard Qing Yu's words. "They can't possibly have done that, the Xuan Yuan Slaves are our kin!!"

She shook her head desperately, trembling violently as she stared fixedly at the images projected by Qing Yu.

An enormous altar hovered in the middle of the yang tomb realm. Bloody lights circled around it while howls and wails of anguish echoed throughout the realm. They didn't originate from the living, but instead were the cries of the sacrificial goods. They'd already died and their souls sucked into the altar, never to reincarnate or find release from their torment.

The priest of flame sank to the ground, clutching her head as her world shattered around her. Everything she'd ever known and cherished was brutally refuted by the merciless carnage in front of her eyes. Lu Yun remained silent, keeping her company.

"I finally understand what the torch dragon meant by corruption," he murmured after a long period of silence.

Previous priests of flame had all died within the yin tomb when Xuanyuan Xiaoyue ate them. Though the other four priests knew how inordinately dangerous the entrance to the yin tomb was, they still let generations of their colleagues go to their deaths.

The current priest of flame had only assumed her position for three years and was yet to come into her own, so she didn't yet know the meaning of her existence. But in this moment, she understood everything.

"I... from now on, I am no priest of flame. My name is You Si." A burning ball of hatred rose in her eyes.

The origins of the other four priests had long been lost to history, but You Si hailed from the fire tribe of the Xuan Yuan Slaves. The yang tomb was her home, and the slaves her family. She'd accepted Ashu's proposal and obtained the Fire Altar to become the dean of fire also because she wanted to find a way to help the Xuan Yuan Slaves leave the tomb.

The slaves were tomb keepers, but they could guard the tomb all the same even if they left this place and reclaimed their former glories in the current world of immortals. But her world had caved in on itself, and her only reason for living now was revenge. She wanted nothing more than vengeance from the four high priests!

Qing Yu walked over to the former priest of flame and patted her shoulder in comfort.

“Since the four high priests have made their way here, I’ll tell you the way of claiming the volcano.” You Si lifted her head to look at Qing Yu and continued in a small voice, “There are five restrictions related to the priests located outside the volcano, and the way to break them is...”

Qing Yu nodded and listened carefully. Her grasp of formula dao was greater than Lu Yun’s, so she only needed a bit of time to determine the proper way to break the restrictions, but she still listened attentively and paid close attention.

Right now, what You Si needed was to vent her hatred and feel that she was taking her revenge.

She spoke of everything related to the Xuan Yuan Slaves, yang tomb, secrets of the other four priests, and even secrets of the mother altar. Nothing was off limits and nothing was withheld.

“So if there really is a mother altar here, then what’s the altar in the mausoleum of the Exalted Divines?” Lu Yun frowned, but as Yueshen and Ruyi were guarding the World Gates and helping the nine celestial emperors, there was no one he could ask about this. At least, Zhaoqing didn’t know anything about a mother altar either.

“The key to collecting this Embittered Sea should lie with the fish form of Great Emperor Kunpeng. Once we travel through the sea, try to find a way to claim this connate treasure!” Lu Yun said to Qing Yu.

“Be careful, there are more terrors in the sea than that woman from earlier...” You Si quickly spoke up.

Qing Yu chuckled faintly. “Don’t worry, I’ll grab a few more helpers if it comes down to that. Alright, I’m going to go take a look at things in the yang tomb and try to collect the mother altar and volcano. Lu Yun, you must be careful!” Worry flashed through her eyes when she looked at her beloved.

“Don’t worry, I’ve got some more heavyweights living in hell. I’ll send them all out if things get too much for me to handle.” Lu Yun flashed a brilliant smile, but it didn’t alleviate the worry in Qing Yu’s eyes despite her nod.

If the great personages in hell could do as they would, why would they be hiding in the netherworld? Hell and the world of immortals were two completely different worlds in entirely different dimensions. For Ge Long, Carmine Eternal, and Carmine Arbiter, hell was more like a sanctuary where they could avoid being hunted down.

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After Qing Yu’s departure, the kun island continued drifting on the surface of the waters. Ashu stood upon its head, his eyes pure green once more as he looked gravely into the depths of the island.

“What’s wrong, why are you like this again?” Lu Yun frowned when he saw Ashu’s eyes of undiluted green.

“You noticed early on that Xuanyuan Xiaoyue wasn’t alive?” Disbelief rippled through the holy lord’s gaze when he looked at Lu Yun.

The young man nodded. “She’s a vicious ghost being kept here by someone, just like the moat snake outside.”

Inside hell, the young girl manifestation of the moat snake shook her head with dissatisfaction. “My name is Carmine Arbiter, don’t call me the moat snake anymore!”

A human face formed out of the six paths of Lu Yun’s nascent spirit and he smiled at the girl. “Alright, alright, I gotcha. You’re Carmine Arbiter.”

“Her body is here, sealed within ice located inside the kun!” Urgency tinged Ashu’s stare at Lu Yun. “Save her! She and I have a very strong kinship, perhaps she can help me escape the zombie tree’s pursuit!”

Though Xuanyuan Xiaoyue had been scattered by a single blow from Qing Yu, she was so strong that her soul had reformed. She flitted around the perimeter, staring slightly at the group of visitors.

“She won’t be cold anymore if her body is freed from the ice. She won’t kill anyone anymore... I think I should know who she is!” Agony twisted Ashu’s face as he struggled to restrain the restriction deep within his soul, one that hid even deeper memories. He couldn’t let them awaken, or he’d no longer be himself anymore.

“Alright!” Lu Yun promptly agreed and opened the Spectral Eye to scan the island.

Though the enormous fish was the body of a great emperor, it was a body without a soul or thoughts. Like a walking dead, it was a door to the Embittered Sea that drifted on these boundless waters. Deep within it was a vast world of snow and ice; Xuanyuan Xiaoyue’s corpse was sealed in that land.

The vicious ghost that was her cowered off to the side, sneaking fearful glances at Lu Yun’s group.

“But we have to be careful, there should be other things here guarding this island. Xuanyuan Xiaoyue...” Inspiration flashed through Lu Yun’s mind. A world of snow and ice to foster a vicious host... he found something unusual in Xingzi’s memories.

“This is the shamanic divine’s method of Yin Yang Ghost Fostering! Xuanyuan Xiaoyue is a yin ghost while Carmine Arbiter is a yang ghost. The combination of yin and yang reverses life and death—someone’s trying to revive Xuan Yuan!” Lu Yun cried out in shock. “No, no wait, not to revive Xuan Yuan, but his body! Someone’s trying to place a dead soul into a living body!”

Chapter 796: Ling Weiyang

A living dead, or tomb keeper, referred to when a living soul was imprisoned inside a corpse or zombie. What Yin Yang Ghost Fostering accomplished was to transplant a dead soul into a living body.

Carmine Arbiter’s yang soul and Xuanyuan Xiaoyue’s yin soul weren’t their final forms. The hand in the shadows ultimately wanted to combine the yin yang ghosts and create an even more terrifying vicious ghost.

At the same time, the union between yin and yang would reverse heaven and earth as well as life itself. The owner of the tomb would thus be revived by this inverted power, but the newly born vicious ghost would devour Xuan Yuan’s sleeping soul and take up residence in his body before he came back to himself. This terrifying existence would then be able to walk both the yin and yang realms, and there’d be nothing in either world capable of restraining it.

"This seemed to belong to the shamanic divines in Xingzi's memories, but this tomb existed far before the shamanic divines did!" Lu Yun was a bit lost at this discrepancy.

Shamanic divines stemmed from the era in which shamans ruled the immortal dao. Certain divines joined their tribe to learn the shamanic arts, which slowly gave rise to the tribe of shamanic divines. They were such a cruel, malevolent group that the arts they came up with were immediately listed as taboo arts during their time.

Even the divines themselves were highly contemptuous of the shamanic divines.

The immortal dao had already been established when the shamanic divines appeared on the scene, but arrangements here had appeared before the immortal dao and after Emperors Fall.

"The vicious ghost nurtured out of Yin Yang Ghost Fostering is meant to defy the hell of human dao!" Lu Yun sucked in a deep breath. "But the yang side of the method has been dismantled... probably by the fox that the torch dragon speaks of. I wonder who set all this up?"

For some reason, concern worried at Lu Yun's mind.

"Let's go take a look, we'll have to face whatever it is." Ashu spoke up when he saw Lu Yun's expression.

The young man nodded and the group ventured deeper into the island, following the path beneath their feet. Xuanyuan Xiaoyue drifted far behind them, aping their every move.

The island was quite peculiar in that no matter which direction one approached from or made landfall, they would end up at the head of the kun fish. There was only the one path for travel around the island, and the environment began to change the further they went in. What was a vibrant, lush world of greenery harbored a land of snow and ice at its heart.

"Is that an ice sculpture?" The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign stopped in his tracks to stare at a humanoid figure in front of him.

"It's a man, a man sealed in ice." Lu Yun sighed after sweeping the sculpture with a glance. "He's dead, and his surname is Xuanyuan." He fully opened the Spectral Eye to glean the person's information. "He was frozen to death in an instant."

Ashu sighed and murmured, "The legitimate line of succession to human dao before Emperors Fall, sovereigns of the multiverse. So this is where the Xuanyuan Clan met their end?"

"There are also legends of Xuan Yuan in my homeland," Lu Yun suddenly said. "It's said that Xuan Yuan was the holy emperor of humanity, the one who unified the land and led humans to conquer new territories..."

"Your homeland?" Ashu and the demon sovereign looked at Lu Yun with surprise, and even You Si tilted her head.

"The ancestor planet of the humans." Lu Yun nodded. Or so I'm told.

"Hush, we speak no further of this topic!" Ashu snapped to solemn attention when he heard the words "ancestor planet". He floundered around with an urgent need to change the topic. "Alright, let's keep going. We need to find Xiaoyue's body!"

Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's face reddened with life when she heard the word "Xiaoyue", and vitality gleamed anew in her stark-white eyes.

"Ling Weiyang... it's Uncle Ling Weiyang..." she mumbled in a voice only she could hear. Thick frost then once again consumed her after a convulsive shudder.

The little path opened up until it was a large road of foggy white. An enormous snowy mountain could be found at its end, and the group encountered tens of thousands of frozen Xuanyuan clansmen along the way.

None of them seemed to have registered the advent of death. They were all caught in whatever expression and gesture they'd borne in life, with no encroaching fear of death in any of their vibrant faces.

All of them had died in a single moment at the same time.

The further they walked, the colder Lu Yun felt—not a coldness of the body, but of prickling horror.

"Human king, human king, that's another human king..." He counted eighteen primeval human kings beside the road; none of them had been aware of their impending doom.

"I'm... I'm so c-cold—" You Si suddenly spoke up, frost crystals chiming in her hair and clothes. She wanted to release the Fire Altar, but discovered with dismay that the altar and fire essence energy upon her body had been sealed at some unknown point in time.

Lu Yun stumbled to a halt when he heard her voice, only discovering now that the Tome of Life and Death had materialized at some point to protect him.

Ashu was a living dead unafraid of the cold, and the demon sovereign was already using Hadal Bonefire to warm himself.

"Write your name on the pages of this book." Lu Yun handed over his precious treasure. Apart from the Ten Yama Kings, there were only a handful of other names on its pages. Ge Long, Canghai Chengfeng, Situ Zong, Xuanyu, Carmine Eternal, and Carmine Arbiter. You Si would be the seventh. Carmines Eternal and Arbiter had volunteered their names and received a faster recovery time in return.

You Si didn't reject the proposal as she'd almost lost her sense of self in this terrain of extreme cold. After writing her name down, a black light beamed out of the book and enveloped her.

Newly fortified against the elements, her eyes widened and she clapped both hands over her mouth, looking incredulously at Lu Yun.

"The exit of the Embittered Sea is ahead of us." Lu Yun paid her no heed and looked around. The island looked a thousand kilometers wide from the outside, but it was an entire world inside—likely the one manifested from Great Emperor Kunpeng.

A large snowy mountain towered in the middle of this world, and the path beneath their feet led to its interior, to a patch of unknown chaos.

"Over there, that's Xiaoyue's body!" Ashu pointed at the top of the mountain.

There laid a crystal coffin in which Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's body lay peacefully, like she'd fallen asleep.

Chapter 797: Ice Coffin

"That coffin of crystal..." You Si was taken aback by the crystalline coffin at the peak of the mountain.

"The cold air in this region comes from that coffin!"

As the beholder of the Fire Altar, she was the mistress of fire and thus uncommonly sensitive to any cold in their surroundings.

"That's not a crystal coffin." Ashu frowned at the coffin that Xuanyuan Xiaoyue lay fast asleep in. "That's a coffin of ice formed from connate kui water... just what is it that can freeze yin water like this?!"

Connate kui water was one of the strongest connate water essences around. It almost never appeared in gaseous form and wouldn't freeze over, almost always maintaining liquid form. But now, Ashu witnessed with his own eyes how it'd frozen into a chunk of ice so large that it could be carved into a coffin!

An ominous chilly air constantly emanated from the coffin, transforming what was supposed to be a vibrant world of life into one of ice and snow.

"Thank goodness the frosty air is just peacefully wafting in all four directions. If it exploded in a targeted blast, we would've been frozen into ice sculptures the second we set foot here," Ashu speculated fearfully as he looked at the coffin.

Whoosh!

"You guys stay here, I'll go take a look." Black hellfire ignited on Lu Yun, dispersing whatever chill it came in contact with. Hellfire was a level more sophisticated than connate kui water, which meant the air exuded by the frozen water essence had to immediately give way whenever it encountered hellfire, since it was at most on the same level as the liquid it originated from.

Of course, there was always an exception to things, and the one this time was the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign's Hadal Bonefire. Hadal Bonefire could reach the extremities of both hot and cold, making an intangible cold like this air the perfect nutrient for this fire.

The demon sovereign had unleashed his flames and was devouring the frigid mist with great enjoyment. He didn't dare approach the coffin though, the frozen water there could easily extinguish his fire.

Lu Yun sent out the Path of Ingress and took it to the coffin. He had to be careful as he could hear a ponderous breathing traveling from the depths of the enormous snowy mountain. The mountain seemed to be alive, but he didn't read any information from it.

"The breathing is coming from the coffin." He suddenly stopped and combusted a Karmic Fruit, infusing the Path of Ingress with its power. The treasure flared with brilliant white radiance and almost became one with the mountain ahead of them.

Thus revitalized, he continued forward to the sculpted block of ice.

Ashu had walked over to Xuanyuan Xiaoyue and released a curtain of emerald luminescence to envelope the girl within. Her ghastly pale face incrementally recovered to her previous form as she watched Lu Yun anxiously.

She knew that the coldness upon her came from whatever was inside the coffin, and that even her clansmen had been frozen in a split second by that thing. But as a vicious ghost from a partial soul fragment, she'd forgotten a lot of things a long time ago.

Still, she was very nervous. If her body in the coffin was destroyed, she would scatter upon the wind and truly disappear for good.

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Lu Yun reached the coffin and looked down at the girl inside. Shimmering and translucent, the Xuanyuan Xiaoyue inside seemed like a painting come to life. Cheeks rosy and chest rising and falling, she looked as if she'd fallen asleep. Her hands were crossed in front of her chest and an orb the color of frost placed in between them.

This orb was the source of all frigidity in this world; the connate kui water forming the coffin had also been solidified by it. There was no doubt that Xuanyuan Xiaoyue was dead, but her chest rose and fell like she was breathing. To Lu Yun, this was an absolutely horrific sight—a corpse that breathed?

“Yup, she's a corpse, not a zombie. Any further information about her would've been destroyed if she was a zombie. This body belongs to the daughter of Holy Emperor Xuan Yuan, the princess of humanity!” Lu Yun took in a deep breath and cocked his head to look at Xuanyuan Xiaoyue hiding behind Ashu.

Princess of the human race and daughter of the holy emperor, this identity was so awe-inspiring it invoked fear! Even Zhao Qing, daughter of the Exalted Divine emperor, was less than Xiaoyue.

Humans had been the sole sovereigns of the world before Emperors Fall, ruling over heaven and earth, setting the rules for reincarnation, and passing judgement over life itself. All other races—divines, demons, monster spirits, dragons, and others—had bowed down at their feet.

To be princess of the human race was to be a princess overlooking the entire world! The Xuanyuan surname was one that denoted the only imperial clan between heaven and earth.

Lu Yun's scalp tightened, then all his hairs stood on end. Inside the coffin, Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's eyes had snapped open and she was looking unblinkingly at him. Her eyes were a ghastly white, like they'd been carved out of ice.

A wondrously ethereal and enchanting voice drifted into his ears. “Young man, do you find this seat beautiful?”

Her voice was the same as Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's, but a few more traces of temptation and beguilement suffused it, nearly entrancing Lu Yun. To his great shock, the lid of the coffin then slowly slid open and the body within slowly rose to stand before Lu Yun. The pair of ice-like eyes were fixated on him.

“Young man, do you find this seat beautiful?”

Puff—

Lu Yun's body suddenly exploded and drifted apart as a cloud of inky hellfire.

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"What in the heavens, what's going on?!" Dismay gripped the group at the bottom of the snowy mountain. In their eyes, Lu Yun had exploded without a warning after he reached the ice coffin. They'd seen nothing from the coffin to prompt this development!

"Lu Yun!" Ashu poised to spring forward, but a hand pulled him back.

"Don't go, I'm fine." Lu Yun appeared behind Ashu, one hand on the holy lord's shoulder. "What an unsettling mirage, I almost fell for it and I didn't even realize!"

Face pale, his heart palpitated from what'd just happened. He really had died just now, and he didn't even know how it was he'd died. "Did any of you see Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's body walk out of the coffin?"

The priest of flames and demon sovereign shook their head at the same time while Ashu fell silent.

"You saw her?" The vicious ghost that was Xuanyuan Xiaoyue was enveloped by a layer of vibrant emerald light. She'd reverted back to her first appearance, when she'd been shrouded by a lively presence.

"Her? Um... you mean your body?" Lu Yun frowned.

Xiaoyue shook her head as the light around her suddenly faded away, replaced by a bone chilling cold.

"I'm so cold—"

Chapter 798: A Corpse That Breathes

Frost crept over Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's body without warning, and green light shone out of her eyes when she next looked at Lu Yun and the others. It was as if a starving wolf had seen a flock of baby lambs.

"No, she's getting out of control again!" Ashu's expression shifted as the shadow of a tree appeared behind him. An opaque emerald light blossomed from his body to flood into Xiaoyue's form, seeking to return her to normality.

In response, the cold air over Xuanyuan Xiaoyue thickened and furiously fought the emerald radiance. At the same time, the temperature in their surroundings descended a few more degrees. This time, the Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign's Hadal Bonefire started to flicker—their surroundings had exceeded the limits of his fire's tolerance.

"Lu Yun..." The demon sovereign groaned helplessly and looked piteously at the young man.

Lu Yun waved a hand and sent a blossom of hellfire to the guttering fire, melding the two together and propelling it on an evolutionary path to a different kind of existence.

Hellfire repelled the frigid air while Lu Yun turned around to look at where the ice coffin sat at the peak of the mountain. It was open and Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's corpse floated in midair, her ice-like eyes stared unblinkingly at Lu Yun's group.

“Do none of you see her?” Lu Yun’s eyes narrowed slightly. He hadn’t called upon the Spectral Eye yet, but her corpse was right there in front of him.

The demon sovereign and former priest of flame were in a bit of a daze. They peered closely again at the mountain top, but still saw nothing other than a coffin of ice.

Ashu didn’t have attention to spare for anything else; he was calling upon his full strength to vie with the frosty air exuding from Xuanyuan Xiaoyue. By now, the giant tree was almost a tangible, towering tree that really existed.

It completely resembled the zombie tree that Lu Yun had once seen!

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Somewhere deep in the depths of the underworld, an enormous, coal-black tree emitting gray fog suddenly trembled violently. Minor ripples percolated through the gray fog around it—which was actually countless yin spirits drawn to it from the various corners of the underworld.

It uprooted itself in the next second and formed two large feet out of its roots. Plodding forward with purpose, it headed for an unknown destination and vanished at some point along the way.

“Thank goodness it’s finally left!” The holy lord in charge of this part of the underworld heaved a long sigh of relief.

The zombie tree was too horrifying—more than a dozen tremendously strong holy lords had died in its hands after it took up residence here. Unsatiated after devouring them, the zombie tree attracted countless hordes of yin spirits to itself and consumed endless mausoleum keepers on a daily basis.

Thus, it was a great relief to all that it’d left. The five holy kings gathered on the premises and looked gravely in the direction to where the zombie had disappeared in.

“It’s gone to find Ashu,” Holy King Desolation said gravely. “Do not let it consume Ashu, or the world of immortals will meet its end.”

“Ashu is currently in the Xuan Yuan Tomb and using a special power to save Xuanyuan Xiaoyue...” Xing Chen said. “I will head to the tomb in a moment. I should be able to hold off the tree after I obtain the spleen.”

Now that he’d received the heritage of the holy kings, he would be at least on par with his three seniors after refining the spleen of the world into himself.

“I’ll go with you,” Violetshade, the former corpse puppet contained in Violetgrave, offered. “I have a bit of karma to resolve in that tomb.”

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Ashu had turned a pure jade green by now and let loose with an aura as mighty as the heavens themselves. It bore down on the frigid air plaguing Xuanyuan Xiaoyue and slowly beat it into dispersal.

Just when victory was within grasp, Ashu’s expression changed drastically and he sprang up like he’d been scalded, instantly withdrawing the emerald power.

A second Xuanyuan Xiaoyue had appeared behind the first one, but the eyes of the new one was layers of thick frost, like she'd been carved from a block of ice.

"Is she who you mean by Xiaoyue's body? She really is a corpse, but she's still breathing!" Ashu retreated to Lu Yun's side with great dismay.

Lu Yun looked in Xiaoyue's direction, but shook his head. "I don't see anything..."

He called upon the Spectral Eye, but only saw the vicious ghost that the girl had turned into. In his eyes, her corpse was still floating over the peak of the mountain, above the opened ice coffin.

"Is this a mirage or is something else at play here?!" The surreal situation abruptly felt incredibly horrific. Whatever it was, a corpse that breathed bore no good intentions. His Spectral Eye couldn't see through to her core essence.

"Let's go, we're getting out of here!" He immediately made up his mind to leave; this level of existence wasn't something he could handle.

However, they turned around to discover that the path behind them had been replaced by a void of white nothingness. Corpse upon corpse walked out of the emptiness—all of them the Xuanyuan clan members the group had passed by on their way here.

The Xuanyuan had died a long time ago, and were well and truly dead as there wasn't the slightest hint of life force on them. They radiated such dreadful chill that they seemed to be one with the environment.

What was most shocking of all was that... they were breathing. More corpses that breathed! The cold that the corpses released was so powerful that it drifted through the air as a layer of haze.

"They're not zombies, just corpses! They're corpses without a soul, is something controlling them?" Ashu rapidly backed up, at a loss of what to do in a situation like this. In his eyes, the Xuanyuan Xiaoyue that'd suddenly appeared led her vicious ghost form back to the ice coffin.

But in the eyes of the others, the vicious ghost had left of her own accord.

"That's right, there must be something else here that we haven't seen, something controlling everything here. None of this makes sense." Lu Yun summoned his luopan with a flip of his wrist.

A sparkling golden radiance burst out of the compass, enveloping the group protectively. He silently called upon formula dao to theorize everything that was taking place on the island. The indicators of the compass pointed to the peak of the mountain, and a bloody character for "great danger" formed on top of the luopan.

"There's more malicious ghosts at work here alright!" Lu Yun muttered quietly. "There's another ghost present other than Xuanyuan Xiaoyue. It's controlled her and all the corpses here!"

Chapter 799: Realm Monsters

Hellfire was a natural counter to ghosts, but the ghosts here were too powerful for Lu Yun to deal with given his limited mastery over hellfire, unless he withdrew his will to unleash it completely.

Then, however, hellfire would rage out of control, turning all of the Xuan Yuan Tomb—nay, the entirety of Heaven Locus Land or even the world of immortals at large into an ocean of hellfire.

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Blazing flames swirled outside the barrier of the luopan's making. From within the compass, the former immortal emperor Meng Wang emerged, his expression tight when he noted the approaching corpses.

"These corpses must not be destroyed! The source of the chilling energy is within their bodies. Once destroyed, they'll release it all and the Embittered Ocean outside will freeze over." Meng Wang instantly seized on the right course of action. "These corpses may seem eerie and terrifying, but they do not seem to have any offensive power. What makes them a threat is the frigid energy within them."

Lu Yun cast thirty-six soybeans to summon warriors in golden armor. All of them were empyrean immortals, and their strength rivaled that of their master's.

"Blasted, it's cold!" shuddered one of the bean soldiers. All of them were summoned by Lu Yun's death art, the source of which was hellfire. While the soldiers could feel cold, they weren't afraid of the cold.

Moving around to stretch their burly statures, the thirty-six soldiers charged at the corpses of the Xuan Yuan Clan.

"They're realm monster spirits!" snapped a bean soldier that came to a sudden halt. "Stop! Don't touch the corpses! They've all been transformed into realm monsters!"

Lu Yun started when he heard the soldier shout. "Realm monsters?"

"Realm monsters?!" Ashu cried out, his expression grave and eyes shining with dread.

"What are they?" Lu Yun turned to ask him.

"Don't ask questions you shouldn't ask! It won't do you any good!" Involuntary shudders passed through Ashu's body as fearful dread clamped down on him and shook him in its grasp. Lu Yun rolled his eyes. Realm monsters had come knocking on their doorstep, when was a better time than now to learn about them?

"What are realm monsters, Ge Long?" A replica took shape from the six paths of his nascent spirit and landed before Ge Long, who sat alone beneath the Karmic Tree. Carmines Eternal and Arbiter had made their way to the City of the Dead at the center of the kingdom, befriendng the living souls and Infernum there.

Ge Long shot to his feet when he saw Lu Yun.

"Realm monsters? Those things went extinct before Emperors Fall... Have they emerged again?" Following Lu Yun's gaze, he cast his eyes outside hell.

"They really are realm monster spirits!" Ge Long's expression turned complicated.

"Well, what are they?" Lu Yun repeated.

"Realm monsters... are worlds that have died," Ge Long murmured. "These worlds nurtured life with all the resources at their disposal, but life showed them nothing in return... And so those dead worlds

transformed into realm monsters and return to the land of the living to take their revenge against all life they find.”

Lu Yun’s face twitched. Dead worlds turned into realm monsters? What the hell was that even supposed to be??

“Alright, I understand!” His nascent spirit replica scattered.

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“So these are what people call realm monsters!” His eyes fixed on the approaching corpses, Lu Yun unleashed the full power of his luopan. An enormous dragon shot out of the treasure, brandishing its teeth and claws. This was a dragon vein that Lu Yun had released at full strength with the Dragonshift Method.

In the eyes of a feng shui master, the world itself was an enormous and complicated feng shui layout. Dead worlds were no exception.

His earlier thinking had proven wrong. He’d thought all along that his enemies were ghosts, which was why Spectral Eye failed and hellfire didn’t work on them.

Lu Yun now looked at them as feng shui layouts rather than ghosts. He would deal with them as he would a foreboding layout instead! His eyes cleared, and his tangled thoughts found their proper paths to follow.

The power of the dragon vein imbued his luopan while a karmic fruit burned at the same time. Brilliant golden light sparkled over the compass to collect into the faint image of a world, within which a giant kun leisurely swam around.

“A kun?!” Lu Yun’s lips thinned. “So this is Great Emperor Kunpeng’s kun form...”

“How, how did she turn into a realm monster?!” Some color filtered back into Ashu’s pale face and he recognized the kun drifting within the projection of the world. It was both the kun form of the great emperor and a realm monster.

The venerated great emperor had turned into a realm monster!

“Great Emperor Kunpeng was a heavyweight from the time before Emperors Fall. She’d created a world within her, a feat which placed her at the top of the ranks of great emperors then. It’s the world within her that’s turned into a monster spirit. Were realm monsters a threat at that time already? No wonder that one wanted to split the great emperor in half.” Ashu muttered his observations as he scanned the realm monsters before them.

He possessed deep knowledge of many things, but numerous reservations kept him from telling Lu Yun.

Ge Long was in the kingdom of hell and bolstered by the power of Lu Yun’s nascent spirit and Tome of Life and Death, essentially making him an undisputed lord in the netherworld. This was why he dared tell Lu Yun about realm monsters.

If he'd revealed the truth outside, he'd very likely immediately meet an untimely demise. Realm monsters had hovered threateningly in people's lives, like an unseen boogeyman, for the longest time before Emperors Fall.

"This should be the last of Xuan Yuan territory. Unfortunately, it was devoured by realm monsters and sealed into a lifeless, frozen world.

"Realm monsters?" Lu Yun muttered at the ice coffin. "If they are monsters born of dead worlds, then their existence must hinge on something. There must be a source from which they originate, such as the orb within the ice coffin."

With compass in hand, Lu Yun tread through air to make his way to the coffin on top of the mountain, deploying his three great tools—the Dragonshift Method, Dragonsearch Invocation, and Dragonspike Litany—at the same time.

The incoming corpses dissipated before the light of the luopan, and Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's body also faded out of existence in front of Lu Yun's and Ashu's eyes. The only thing left in front of them was the ice coffin atop the peak of the snowy mountain.

Ashu and the others followed Lu Yun closely. The further they advanced, the denser the frigid air. However, the overwhelming chill dissipated as soon as it touched the golden light of the luopan.

When Lu Yun stood in front of the ice coffin, everyone else with him had vanished. A white-haired woman dressed in white appeared out of nowhere, her eyes and lips the color of ice.

"Are you a realm monster?" Lu Yun asked calmly. "Or Great Emperor Kunpeng?"

Chapter 800: The Embittered Ocean Orb

"Or Great Emperor Kunpeng transformed into a realm monster spirit?" Lu Yun kept his eyes fixed on the lady in front of him and carefully phrased each question. He was deploying the three great secret arts of his sect—Dragonsearch Invocation, Dragonshift Method, and Dragonspike Litany—at the moment rather than the Spectral Eye.

If he could practice them to their greatest forms, he'd be able to combine them into the even more terrifying Dragonquake Scripture.

He wasn't there yet, but had reached a point of operating all of them at the same time. Combined with the luopan, he was able to see through the core essence of what was in front of him, despite being unable to restrain the realm monster before his eyes. The true form of the realm monster was vastly different from both the corpse and the Xuanyuan Xiaoyue it'd manifested earlier.

She looked calmly at him and didn't say a single word, but the frigid air within their surroundings became even more biting. The orb that'd lain between Xuanyuan Xiaoyue's hands earlier was hanging from the realm monster's body.

Suddenly, she undid it from around her neck and hefted it in her hands, pushing it in front of Lu Yun.

He looked slack jawed at the coldly glinting orb—he understood the realm monster's intentions. This was a gift for him!

But... the frosty air emanating from it was enough to freeze connate kui water into icy chunks. He didn't dare touch it, not with his current cultivation. At present, his hellfire could repel the cold air in their surroundings, but it couldn't do anything about the chill exuding from the orb.

Understanding seemed to flash through the realm monster's white eyes and she softly caressed the orb, dismissing the chilliness from its surface and returning it to a pitch-black, glistening sphere. Lu Yun's eyes fixated on it.

"The Embittered Ocean..." Lu Yun sucked in a breath and exhaled the name.

The realm monster nodded gently and reached forward again, presenting the orb to him.

"For me?" Eyes wide open, he recalled his initial disbelief when Ashu said that the Embittered Ocean had been refined into a connate treasure. Here the treasure was, right within arm's reach! Who would've thought that the Embittered Ocean was the culprit in freezing Xuanyuan Xiaoyue to death and annihilating the last hopes of the Xuanyuan Clan?

The realm monster nodded and released her grasp, sending the orb drifting slowly in front of Lu Yun. However, he still didn't reach out for it.

"Why are you giving this to me?" Lu Yun frowned.

The realm monster tilted her head in thought, taking a long moment before pointing at herself and then at Lu Yun.

"She's saying that you can resurrect her." Meng Wang rose from the luopan with formula dao actively circulating on him and postulated her meaning, which the realm monster immediately confirmed.

Formula dao was a marvelous creation that the former immortal emperor had immediately engrossed himself in upon learning it. His mastery of the supplemental path reached an unthinkable level within an incredibly short amount of time.

"I've heard of realm monsters, but this one seems different from the ones that plagued the Primeval Era and evoked terror at their name." As Meng Wang was now the treasure spirit of the luopan, him deploying formula dao meant that the compass was also operating it. "This realm monster was born here without any resentment or malice. She's never encountered the outside world, so she doesn't even have the most basic of language abilities."

Meng Wang connected his thoughts to the realm monster's and discovered that she was as blank as a sheet of paper. Other than some instinctive reactions, no other thoughts colored the page.

"The world formed by the kun body of the great emperor is dead, frozen instantly when the Embittered Ocean became a connate treasure. Thus marked the birth of the realm monster as well—it was a sheer accident." Meng Wang ran through his theories and frowned when he settled on the proper conclusion. "The Yin Yang Ghost Fostering Method you mentioned earlier... someone who we suspect to be the monster celestial master dismantled the yang ghost, and the realm monster destroyed the yin side of things. Whoever set this up likely never fathomed that a realm monster would be born here."

With this, the realm monster's earlier actions could be easily explained away. The orb within the ice coffin was her core essence. Anything that happened to it could easily threaten her.

Meanwhile, the vicious ghost that Xuanyuan Xiaoyue transformed into was the ghost nurtured by the Yin Yang Ghost Fostering Method. Whether logically or emotionally speaking, the realm monster didn't want Xiaoyue to obtain her freedom. Since the latter's existence was integrally linked to the Embittered Ocean, that also made her a threat to the realm monster.

Born of a dead world, the realm monster was a special feng shui layout and another dead entity in Lu Yun's eyes. She saw in him hope for coming back to life, so the obvious course of action was to hand over her core essence.

"Take it, this realm monster is different from the ones you've heard of before," Meng Wang said to Lu Yun.

"I've... never heard of realm monsters before." Lu Yun finally reached out and took the orb. Connate kui water covered the Embittered Ocean Orb's surface, but its heart was made of bitterly cold connate glacial essence.

"If I'm holding the Embittered Ocean in my hand now, then where are we?" Lu Yun looked closely at the ocean around them.

Countless kun swam through its waters like they were ordinary fish, and an island formed from the kun body of the great emperor drifted in the ocean's center. The island looked to be only a thousand kilometers across, but an entire world could be found within.

"This really is the Embittered Ocean in my hand, so seriously, where are we?" He was at a complete loss.

"The island formed by the kun is only the entrance to this world," clarified Meng Wang.

Lu Yun nodded and watched as the realm monster turned into a hazy current and flowed into the orb in his hands. The world immediately changed around him, depositing the vanished Ashu and others in front of him.

A joyous feeling circled around his heart—not from him, but from the orb in his hands.

"What happened just now?" The Venerated Sacrosanct Demon Sovereign looked at Lu Yun in stupefaction. It felt like only a moment had passed, but it also seemed like countless aeons had gone by. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, other than an exceedingly disagreeable feeling at the bottom of his heart, like someone had stolen his time for no rhyme or reason.

"The realm monster isolated us from this part of the world just now!" Ashu's face was pale and fear shone blatantly out of his eyes. This wasn't his first time coming across this particular combat art.

"Everything's fine now." Lu Yun carefully put away the Embittered Ocean Orb and sent it to a Hell Flower in the netherworld. Though the realm monster had gifted it to him, he didn't plan on actually accepting it. The karmic repercussions of such an act were too great, so it was safest in the realm monster's hands.

Besides, she was one of his after entering hell.