

Starlit Path 561

Chapter 561: I Haven't Cast a Poison Hex in Years

Tantai Xuan had sealed the Netherworld.

It was done quietly, and very few people across the Five Phoenix Continent even noticed. After all, he had only closed the paths that outsiders could use to enter; the natural pull of fallen souls and the reincarnation cycle remained undisturbed, so the operation of the Three Realms was unaffected.

Thus, no great commotion arose.

After sealing the Netherworld, Tantai Xuan began walking its vast lands. He intended to forge an Emperor Weapon of his own.

Emperor Weapons were, in fact, one of the most important means of elevating a Golden Immortal's combat power in the Emperor Realm.

When that golden spear had been hurled from the void rift, if he had possessed an Emperor Weapon to block even a fraction of its force, they would not have been so helpless.

Forging an Emperor Weapon, however, was no simple task.

It required not only extremely rare materials but also a tremendous expenditure of effort and spirit.

Tantai Xuan walked along the banks of the Yellow Springs. Flowers bloomed here and there, dotting the otherwise gloomy river with a strange, eerie beauty.

These were flowers that grew on the path to death, each one carrying an ominous meaning.

Yet Tantai Xuan seemed to have thought of something.

With a single step, he sank into the Yellow Springs.

Protected by vast karmic power and possessing a Golden Immortal body, Tantai Xuan had no fear of the corrosive power of the Yellow Springs.

He walked freely within its depths.

Soon, following the current toward the Sea of Bitterness, he gathered strands of fine white threads from the riverbed.

Each thread was the condensed remnant soul of a sinful being after being eroded by the Yellow Springs—a single soul filament from each.

Tantai Xuan continued on, traveling along the Yellow Springs toward the Sea of Bitterness, collecting a total of ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine such filaments.

These were the remnants left behind by countless sinners who had been gradually corroded and refined over the years.

Having gathered the filaments, Tantai Xuan emerged from the Sea of Bitterness and sat cross-legged on a small boat drifting across its surface.

At the bow of the boat, he began weaving the white filaments together, forming pieces of pale cloth.

Weaving these cloths consumed a great deal of his time and immense power.

Throughout the process, vast amounts of karma were infused into the fabric.

Finally, using the white filaments, Tantai Xuan wove them into a book.

The book radiated immense power, as though it held the authority to decide life and death.

With every page turned, torrents of karma surged forth, carrying a terrifying curse. Even a Golden Immortal would suffer greatly if they were careless.

Yet more than anything, this book represented authority.

With this book in hand, any evildoer in the world could be sentenced to death at the third watch and would not survive until the fifth.

BOOM!

The moment the book took shape,

Lu also sensed it. He had not expected Tantai Xuan to forge an Innate Spiritual Treasure in such a unique way.

With a casual wave of his hand, he summoned heavenly tribulation lightning, helping Tantai Xuan perfect the final flaws in the book during the crossing.

The tribulation did not last long.

But the process caused the entire Sea of Bitterness to boil and seethe.

Tantai Xuan stood on the boat, clutching the book.

The instant it was complete, he soared into the sky. His overwhelming aura seemed to illuminate the entire Netherworld.

Countless departed souls were drawn toward the book.

Moreover, the book could commune with the heavenly stars, drawing upon the power of the Heavenly Dao itself.

The city lords of the various cities of the dead all appeared, bowing in congratulations for Tantai Xuan's creation of an Emperor Weapon.

...

In the Ascended Realm,

After finishing their study of the stele, Micah and Lu Jiulian both sensed the Emperor Weapons forged by Tantai Xuan and Zhu Long.

They were surprised that the two had succeeded so quickly.

For a Golden Immortal, an Innate Spiritual Treasure had to be perfectly suited to them.

This realization brought a slight sense of urgency. After completing their study, they each began preparing to forge their own Emperor Weapons.

Of course, they did not rush to the Netherworld.

Although the lower volume of the Nine Revolutions Golden Immortal Scripture was located there, they were not in a hurry—after all, they had not yet finished cultivating the upper volume.

Once they had completed the sixth revolution of their Golden Immortal bodies, they would head to the Netherworld.

In truth, the Nine Revolutions Golden Immortal Scripture was not of paramount importance to them.

If a Golden Immortal cultivated naturally and received the blessings of destiny, the end result would be roughly the same as following a scripture.

The scripture's main purpose was to delineate levels of strength.

“It feels like the world is about to change.”

Lu Jiulian sat cross-legged on his green lotus, sensing something, and murmured softly.

But he also felt that, whatever was coming, it probably had little to do with him.

As a Golden Immortal who avoided entanglement in karma, even the Heavenly Dao could do nothing to him.

Yet after a long silence,

Lu Jiulian opened his eyes again.

“I hope so...” he whispered.

On the other side,

Micah also sensed the shifting of heaven and earth. A great calamity was approaching, but he did not care. His mindset was similar to Lu Jiulian's.

Besides, he had few ties to the Five Phoenix Continent.

He was largely indifferent. As long as he stayed out of it, he would be fine.

...

On the Western Continent,

The twelve tribes of the Witch Race gathered their armies and marched eastward. After crossing the vast sea, they set foot on Demon Race territory.

The war between the Witch Race and the Demon Race had been raging for a long time.

Ever since the initial spark ignited the conflict, at least four Witch Kings had been stationed outside the Demon Race's royal court year-round.

These were four Profound Immortal-level powerhouses, making the Demon Race feel as though they were sitting on pins and needles.

But over time, the Demon Race had grown stronger. Those special-blooded ten-headed demon beasts who had once entered the Sermon Platform had matured.

Under the turbulent destiny of the Demon Race, in just a few decades, many had completed their transformation and stepped into the Demon Saint realm.

There was the Ox Demon Saint, and among the descendants of the Demon Monkey King, a little golden-furred monkey had achieved enlightenment and become the Golden-Furred Demon Saint.

The Demon Race's combat power was surging. They were gradually gaining the strength to resist the Witch Race.

Yet this was only the beginning of the war between the two races.

At night,

Wu Qi stood atop a mountain peak, gazing in the direction of the Demon Race royal court.

Sensing something, he narrowed his eyes and turned toward the vast sea.

There, a bare-chested figure was slowly walking toward him—none other than Mo Tianyu.

In this great tribulation, Mo Tianyu had chosen the Witch Race.

His choice was based on nothing more than intuition.

“I am Mo Tianyu, from Heavenly Secrets Peak...”

Mo Tianyu introduced himself.

Witch King Wu Qi narrowed his eyes.

“I know you. That Hegemon fellow once mentioned there’s a human who specializes in casting poison hexes for heavenly secrets.”

Wu Qi grinned broadly.

At his words, Mo Tianyu’s mouth twitched.

“I haven’t cast a poison hex in many years.”

Mo Tianyu said seriously.

“Did the Hegemon send you? That guy still has some loyalty. Not bad, considering we fought for so many years.”

Wu Qi burst into laughter.

When it came to wisdom, Wu Qi knew full well that the Witch Race still lagged behind the human race.

If the humans were willing to help, conquering the Demon Race might become much easier.

“Of course, if the Hegemon sent you here to mediate, then you’d better leave right now.”

Wu Qi said.

“I’m not here to mediate. I’m here to take a side. The great heavenly tribulation has already begun. You can’t step back even if you want to.”

“This war must continue, and you must win. If you don’t win... the Witch Race will face a great disaster.”

Mo Tianyu’s words caused Wu Qi’s pupils to shrink slightly. A Profound Immortal-level aura erupted from him.

On the other side,

In the Demon Race royal court,

Lu Mudui arrived slowly, tapping his bamboo staff.

He entered the palace.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint personally came to greet him.

Seeing no sign of Mo Tianyu, Lu Mudui understood: Mo Tianyu had chosen the Witch Race.

He sighed softly. Now, Mo Tianyu stood on the opposite side.

Lu Mudui explained his purpose: he would help the Demon Race win this war.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint was overjoyed.

Lu Mudui represented the current master of the Heavenly Secrets Pavilion—and behind him stood the White Jade Capital.

With Lu Mudui's assistance, facing those barbaric witches would surely be an easy victory!

In terms of Profound Immortal powerhouses, the Demon Race was indeed slightly outnumbered.

But the Demon Race was not so easily bullied.

On the Five Phoenix Continent, the Demon Race was currently the undisputed largest faction.

While humans and witches might have more top-tier experts,

in terms of ordinary living beings, nothing could compare to the countless small demons scattered across the entire continent.

What the Demon Race lacked was only peak combat power.

Even within the Great Xuan Divine Dynasty, there were many traces of the Demon Race. Back during the world-ending catastrophe, humanity had been forcibly suppressed by the Demon Race.

As dawn's first light spread across the land,

the war between the Witch Race and the Demon Race flared up again.

On the battlefield, Mo Tianyu stood with the Witch Race while Lu Mudui stood with the Demon Race. The two looked at each other and gave a faint smile.

After that smile, they would become enemies.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The battle erupted. The Golden Crow Demon Saint led the Demon Saints in a fierce charge.

Wu Qi leaped into the fray, and the other Witch Kings also appeared.

The battle grew more and more intense.

Great witches and great demons clashed violently across the plains.

The earth was shattered, mountains were leveled, and countless demons and witches fell.

The vast sea surged, and the landscape changed beyond recognition.

Mo Tianyu and Lu Mudui watched the battle with grave expressions. They could feel that, with the fall of so many lives, the destiny of the Demon Race was undergoing massive changes.

Mo Tianyu pinched his fingers, holding his copper coins, his expression solemn.

“The Witch Race is untouched by destiny... Could it be that in the future, the Witch Race will become the protagonist of the world?”

BOOM!

The Witch Kings, including Wu Qi, returned.

The Golden Crow led the other Demon Saints back to the palace.

A battle between Profound Immortals was difficult to decide, and with the assistance of the Heavenly Origin Profound Immortal, the Demon Race showed no signs of defeat.

This outcome made Mo Tianyu and Lu Mudui believe the great tribulation could still be controlled.

But when a Demon King fell in battle, the conflict between the two sides instantly became irreconcilable.

In the Demon Race royal court,

the atmosphere was oppressively heavy.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint stared at the body of the Thunder Eagle Demon King being carried back. His body trembled faintly, and an aura of terrifying suppression spread outward.

The Thunder Eagle King was his father, the one who had once encouraged him.

And now he had fallen—killed by a great witch.

“Witches!”

The Golden Crow Demon Saint’s eyes turned blood-red in an instant.

Watching this scene, Lu Mudui sighed softly.

Now, the grudge between the Witch Race and the Demon Race had become completely irreconcilable. The Thunder Eagle King's death was very likely to become the true spark!

Rage surged in the Golden Crow Demon Saint's heart.

All he could think of was revenge.

Perhaps it was the hatred that ignited the solar divine fire within him. The Golden Crow Demon Saint shot out of the royal court.

Though hatred made him want to become a blazing sun in the sky,

he remained calm.

He transformed into a streak of light, spread his wings, and soared high into the heavens, concealing his aura as he flew toward the Western Continent.

He intended to strike deep into the Witch Race's rear and make them feel pain from this moment onward.

Lu Mudui pinched his fingers, sensing the increasingly violent destiny of the Demon Race. His expression changed slightly.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint's actions would make reconciliation impossible.

A powerhouse was about to fall!

Meanwhile, the Witch Race army erupted into celebration. They feasted on meat and drank heavily.

In this battle, they had slain a Demon King—a joyous victory.

Of course, it was also just an excuse to eat and drink.

Mo Tianyu, however, looked grave. He held his copper coins and pointed toward the west, asking the nearest Witch King, Zhu Yan,

“Is the Western Continent over there—the birthplace of your Witch Race?”

Zhu Yan was gulping down wine. Hearing this, his eyes lit up.

“Lord Mo wants to visit the Western Continent? The wine of my Fire God Tribe is the best in the West!”

Zhu Yan laughed heartily.

But Mo Tianyu shook his head.

“The Western Continent... the hexagram is extremely auspicious...”

“Witch King, you should hurry back and take a look.”

Zhu Yan took another big gulp. “Auspicious? Then that’s good, isn’t it?”

Yet he met Mo Tianyu’s strange expression.

Suddenly, something clicked in Zhu Yan’s mind. The wine jar slipped from his hand and shattered on the ground.

Didn’t you just say you hadn’t cast poison hexes in years?!

Witch King Zhu Yan’s face flushed red, but he had no time to speak.

BOOM!

He turned into a streak of flame and shot across the sky, disappearing in an instant.

At that very moment, on the Western Continent,

the night was vast and dark.

The Golden Crow spread its wings and descended upon the land.

In an instant, it let out a resounding cry. Solar divine fire erupted, transforming into a brilliant sun hanging in the sky.

As its wings swept wide, it was as though ten suns had appeared in the night sky.

Below, entire Witch Race tribes were engulfed in raging flames in a single moment.

A great witch from one tribe soared into the sky, roaring in fury.

But the Golden Crow Demon Saint coldly extinguished him.

The great witch was reduced to charred remains, falling to the earth.

Guided by Mo Tianyu's warning, Zhu Yan rushed back at full speed—just in time to witness the Golden Crow Demon Saint slaughtering the Fire God Tribe.

BOOM!

Divine fire erupted as Zhu Yan clashed with the Golden Crow Demon Saint.

This was a true life-or-death battle between two Profound Immortal-level powerhouses.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint pushed his bloodline to the extreme.

Solar divine fire burned like an ocean of flames, incinerating everything.

Many of his ten golden crow avatars were shattered by Witch King Zhu Yan.

But Zhu Yan was also gravely wounded.

Their battle raged from the Western Continent to the vast sea, causing seawater to boil and rise into thick fog.

When the other Witch Kings learned of the situation, they rushed to the scene.

After the Golden Crow Demon Saint left, the Demon Saints also realized the severity and joined the battlefield.

Yet neither Zhu Yan nor the Golden Crow Demon Saint showed any intention of stopping—in fact, the battle grew more ferocious.

Rumble!

The clouds churned, and thunder rolled across the sky.

Finally,

the Golden Crow Demon Saint unleashed a forbidden technique, forcibly seizing the Demon Race's destiny to empower himself. He launched a heaven-shaking strike—a spear forged of solar divine fire that pierced straight through Witch King Zhu Yan's brow.

In that instant, the world seemed to freeze.

Witch King Zhu Yan's eyes widened as he watched the dying Golden Crow Demon Saint flee.

His body fell, crashing into the vast sea and evaporating countless tons of water.

Witch King Zhu Yan became the first Witch King to fall in this war.

High in the night sky, a bright star streaked across the darkness.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint was cold and ruthless. Having killed a Witch King brought him no joy. Forcibly seizing the Demon Race's destiny had left him gravely injured. If he could not return to the Demon Race lands, he might very well fall here like Zhu Yan.

The fall of a Witch King sent shockwaves through the entire Witch Race.

Wu Qi sensed it and let out a blood-curdling roar. The twelve Witch Kings were bound together; the death of even one was a devastating blow.

Mo Tianyu stared at the fallen Witch King Zhu Yan, his heart heavy.

It had begun. The true great tribulation... had begun.

When Profound Immortals began to fall, the situation would spiral out of control.

...

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu leaned back in his Thousand-Blade Chair. The Spirit-Pressure Chessboard displayed the current state of the “Calamity of Witches and Demons.”

Too many lives had been lost in this battle—both demons and witches.

But the essence of the great heavenly tribulation Lu had set up was not to destroy everything—it was to make the Five Phoenix Continent stronger, to give birth to supreme powerhouses amid the chaos.

Those who fell were not failures; they simply hadn’t walked the path of strength to its end.

To Lu, every powerhouse was a source of vast spiritual energy.

He would never lift a stone only to drop it on his own foot. He would not let these people truly die.

Lu raised his hand. The heavenly stars above reflected down, and countless rays of divine light gathered in his palm, shifting and coalescing.

Soon, the power of the Heavenly Dao descended. In the purple bamboo grove, a stone stele took shape.

The souls of countless beings who had perished in the great tribulation drifted toward the stele.

“This stele shall be called the Conferred God Stele.”

Lu said softly.

As though with a single sentence, he had established a new rule of the Heavenly Dao.

Those who fell in the great tribulation would not truly die. When the tribulation ended, a divine court would be established, and they would have the chance to receive divine titles.

However, those who received a divine title would forever be bound by the Heavenly Dao, acting as its enforcers in place of Lu, and would lose the chance to become Ninth-Revolution Golden Immortals.

Moreover, Lu had already decided who would confer the titles.

Mo Tianyu and Lu Mudui were standing on opposite sides, weren't they?

Whichever one won would be the one to confer the divine titles and receive vast destiny as a reward.

Buzz...

As the Conferred God Stele was erected,

countless departed souls floated in from across the vast sea.

Ning Zhao, Ni Yu, and Yi Yue were all startled.

The stele glowed softly.

Soon, names began to appear engraved upon it.

Thunder Eagle King, Witch King Zhu Yan, and others.

Only those who had reached True Immortal level could leave their names on the Conferred God Stele.

Having finished this task,

Lu smiled faintly, took another sip of Heavenly Immortal Wine, and resumed placing pieces on the chessboard.

...

While the great tribulation spread rapidly across the Five Phoenix Continent,

in the Ninth Heaven,

before the Abyss of Nothingness,

a void rift tens of thousands of miles long slowly tore open.

An arm reached out from the depths of the rift.

In its hand was an array disc, its surface flickering with profound array runes.

“Since the Five Phoenix Continent has become a world of its own, it should bear the disasters it deserves.”

A faint voice echoed from within the rift.

The next moment, the array disc was hurled out, falling into the Abyss of Nothingness.

Chapter 562: The World Turns Against the Witches

A continuous descent, deeper and deeper.

Like a stone dropped into a bottomless well.

It fell endlessly.

Thump!

As if the stone finally struck the bottom, plunging into icy water and sending up a spray.

The array disc thrown from the void rift sank into the Abyss of Nothingness like a stone tossed into a deep well. After an unknown span of time, it finally reached the bottom.

The array disc began to bloom, like a flower bud unfurling in the endless darkness, radiating blinding brilliance.

BOOM!

A tearing sound exploded outward. Razor-sharp edges sliced through the Abyss of Nothingness.

The array runes swirled, and soon a deeper, darker passage was forced open.

The passage was profound and fathomless, leading to some distant, unknown place.

ROAR!

An earth-shaking roar echoed from the far end of that abyssal tunnel, rolling forth without end.

...

On the Five Phoenix Continent,

Thick clouds seemed to blanket the entire sky, pressing down with suffocating weight.

With the fall of one Witch King, the hatred between the Witch Race and the Demon Race became utterly irreconcilable—like fire meeting ice. Unless the fire was extinguished or the ice melted, the conflict would never end.

Lu Mudui stood in the temporary palace within the Demon Race royal court.

His hair fluttered in the wind as he gripped his bamboo staff, looking somewhat frail.

Beside him stood Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, Empress Ni Chunqiu, and other Heavenly Origin Profound Immortals.

At this moment, they all sensed something wrong—an immense tide seemed to be sweeping toward them.

“This great heavenly tribulation... it will engulf every living being, every cultivator.”

Lu Mudui exhaled slowly and spoke.

Then he turned and transformed into a streak of light, vanishing swiftly.

With Witch King Zhu Yan dead, the Demon Race royal court now faced the terrifying vengeance of the Witch Race. The old grudges had been completely engulfed by the flames of hatred.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

War drums thundered between the Western Continent and the Demon Race royal court.

The twelve tribes of the Witch Race gathered in full force, weapons in hand. The Witch Race possessed incredibly powerful physiques and qi-and-blood vitality—even a newborn child had strength comparable to a Nascent Soul cultivator.

They were truly a divinely blessed race.

While the Demon Race was no weakling, they still fell short of the Witch Race in terms of bloodline strength. However, the Demon Race vastly outnumbered them.

On the throne of the Demon Race royal court,

the Golden Crow Demon Saint stood, his aura weakened from forcibly seizing the Demon Race's destiny.

But Lu Mudui had already sought out master alchemists from the Great Xuan Divine Dynasty, and the pills they refined quickly restored much of his strength.

Now, Lu Mudui had chosen to stand with the Demon Race. To survive this great tribulation, he had to carve out a single thread of survival through hardship.

He had fully tied his fate to the Demon Race.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint's aura soared into the sky, and the entire destiny of the Demon Race swirled like a vortex.

He was calling out.

As his call spread, demons scattered across the Five Phoenix Continent sensed it and began migrating back to the royal court.

A monstrous demon tide surged!

This phenomenon shocked the entire world.

Human cultivators were stunned.

The Demon Saints were exhilarated, and the lesser demons returned with wild excitement, ready to fight for their race.

Soon, the Demon Race royal court gathered demons from every corner of the continent. Almost all demons within the Great Xuan Divine Dynasty's borders had converged.

An overwhelming demon army formed.

The remaining eleven Witch Kings were cold and ruthless.

Leading the Witch Race army, they marched across the land, crushing everything in their path.

Even facing a tsunami-like demon army, the Witch Race showed no fear.

The auras of the eleven Witch Kings soared. Terrifying qi-and-blood power roared.

Each unleashed their innate divine abilities, overwhelmingly powerful.

In the Demon Race royal court, the Demon Saints refused to be outdone, releasing their own auras. Demon Saints were no weaker than Witch Kings.

The clash of momentum alone caused mountains and rivers to tremble.

The collision between the two races had long drawn the attention of human cultivators.

And on this day of decisive battle,

Lu Mudui disappeared. Tapping his bamboo staff lightly, he left the Demon Race royal court and traveled across famous mountains and great rivers.

He knew that, compared to the Witch Race, the Demon Race royal court had no guarantee of victory.

So he would raise their odds to absolute certainty.

Dressed in white robes, bamboo staff in hand, he crossed the Dragon Gate and arrived in the Northern Domain.

On the peak of a snow mountain, he found Kong Nanfei.

Currently, there were only a handful of human Profound Immortals. If Lu Mudui wanted reinforcements, he had to seek them out.

Lu Mudui sat with Kong Nanfei on the mountain peak. They talked for a long time.

But in the end, Kong Nanfei refused to help the Demon Race.

“The great heavenly tribulation is both disaster and opportunity. No one can remain uninvolved. If you want a share of the turbulent destiny, you must enter the tribulation and seek that single thread of survival within it.”

Lu Mudui said.

Kong Nanfei, dressed in his shabby scholar’s robes, waved his hand and smiled.

“We scholars debate with words, not fists.”

“Seek help elsewhere.”

Seeing Kong Nanfei’s firm refusal, Lu Mudui had no choice but to leave the Hao Ran Sect.

After Lu Mudui departed, the sloppy demeanor in Kong Nanfei's eyes vanished.

Meng Hao Ran soon appeared, seemingly puzzled by Kong Nanfei's decision.

Meng Hao Ran had also sensed the shifting destiny of heaven and earth. He believed Kong Nanfei must understand it even better.

"Clear the snow from your couch and wait for the fated one."

Kong Nanfei smiled and closed his eyes.

As if waiting for something.

Lu Mudui left the Hao Ran Sect and continued seeking allies. He visited many sects, and thanks to his status, human cultivators treated him with courtesy.

Indeed, he managed to rally quite a few human cultivators to aid the Demon Race.

Unfortunately, not a single Profound Immortal could be persuaded.

Each Profound Immortal's destiny flowed like a mighty river; they would not easily involve themselves in such a destiny-shaking war.

And so the war between the Witch Race and the Demon Race erupted.

Countless mountains were leveled, the vast sea was filled in, and the landscape itself was reshaped by the conflict.

Mo Tianyu sat in the Witch Race camp. With his divinations and calculations, the Witch Race gained a massive advantage at the start of the war, forcing the demon army to retreat again and again.

The Witch Race was simply too strong. Every member possessed terrifying qi-and-blood power.

A single witch was worth an army.

Even Mo Tianyu couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

The Witch Race excelled in the physical body. At the same level, even the Hegemon would struggle against a Witch King's brute force.

The Witch Race army advanced like a hot knife through butter.

But soon their momentum was broken.

The human reinforcements that Lu Mudui had rallied joined the fray.

With so many human True Immortals and Human Immortals entering the battle, the Witch Race suffered heavy losses!

The eleven Witch Kings were furious.

Mo Tianyu sighed. He had hoped to keep the human race out of this, but he had been naive.

This was the perfect moment for the Demon Race's destiny to surge. Human True Immortals seeking to break through to Profound Immortal would never miss such an opportunity.

What was called a calamity was also an immense chance.

The Witch Race, however, was completely passive in this tribulation—because they were untouched by destiny.

Helping the Witch Race offered almost no benefit.

The Witch Race's first offensive was repelled, and they were forced back to the Western Continent.

Mo Tianyu discussed with the Witch Kings and decided to personally leave the Western Continent to seek reinforcements from the human race.

If the Demon Race could call for help, so could the Witch Race.

Witch King Wu Qi naturally did not object.

Mo Tianyu departed gracefully.

Lu Mudui had seized the initiative by rallying allies first.

Mo Tianyu had lost the first move because he had been reluctant to involve the human race, but it did not trouble him too much.

He traveled to the Eastern Continent, walking through the lands of the Great Xuan Divine Dynasty.

He had considered visiting the Hao Ran Sect first, but he did not wish to drag them into this. In the end, he still harbored some bias.

He went to the Western Domain and found the Hegemon.

The Hegemon was silent for a long time, recalling the days of close-quarters combat with the Witch Kings.

In the end, he chose to fight—for the Witch Race.

Tang Yimo also chose to join the Witch Race. The addition of two Profound Immortals would undoubtedly make the Witch Race far stronger.

Profound Immortals could tip the balance of an entire battlefield.

Mo Tianyu sighed deeply. Perhaps this had all been predestined. The great tribulation had long since enveloped everyone.

If the Hegemon and Tang Yimo had not fought shoulder-to-shoulder with the Witch Kings in the past and forged a bond of friendship through battle, they would never have gotten involved.

After all, the Witch Race bore no destiny. Helping them offered no reward.

But aside from the Hegemon and Tang Yimo, every sect Mo Tianyu visited refused him.

Most had already been persuaded by Lu Mudui.

Mo Tianyu was not disappointed. He had expected this outcome. The Demon Race held the advantage of destiny, and with human cultivators aiding them, it was no surprise.

He looked up and pinched his fingers. He could sense that the human race's destiny was also beginning to surge.

Mo Tianyu did not seek out Kong Nanfei, but Kong Nanfei sent Meng Hao Ran to invite him.

In the end, Mo Tianyu climbed the snow-covered peak and sat on the cleared couch opposite Kong Nanfei.

They talked through the night. The snow on the mountaintop seemed to melt away.

The next day, Mo Tianyu left gracefully.

Behind him followed Meng Hao Ran.

Kong Nanfei had sent Meng Hao Ran—who had already reached half-step Profound Immortal—to assist Mo Tianyu.

Mo Tianyu also visited the Nine Phoenix Academy, but Bai Qingniao refused.

He went to North Luo City as well.

Nie Changqing and his son Nie Shuang both declined.

With no other choice, Mo Tianyu returned to the Western Continent.

With the Hegemon and Tang Yimo's help, it was already a significant boost.

On the way back, Tang Guo appeared carrying a bundle, looking around curiously. Tang Yimo's expression changed drastically.

With her special physique, Tang Guo had already reached half-step Profound Immortal.

Tang Yimo did not want her to risk her life, but he could not persuade her.

In the end, he could only sternly tell her to stay behind him and watch obediently.

Tang Guo nodded meekly.

Mo Tianyu returned to the Witch Race, bringing far fewer reinforcements than the vast number of human cultivators aiding the Demon Race. The Witch Race seemed almost deserted by comparison.

But the Witch Race did not care.

They planned another all-out assault.

On the eve of the attack,

the twelve tribes of the Witch Race gathered around the statue of the Heavenly Witch and began their sacrificial dance. Bonfires blazed into the sky. That night, it felt as though the entire Witch Race received the blessing of the Heavenly Witch.

The next day,

the Witch Race army marched forth in a grand tide, heading once more for the Demon Race royal court.

War erupted across the plains.

With the addition of the Hegemon and Tang Yimo, the Demon Race royal court immediately felt immense pressure.

But the human cultivators persuaded by Lu Mudui were simply too many. Their overwhelming numbers repeatedly thwarted the Witch Race.

The Hegemon and Tang Yimo were held back by the Heavenly Origin Profound Immortals.

The eleven Witch Kings were blocked by the Golden Crow Demon Saint and the other Demon Saints.

But without the Heavenly Origin Profound Immortals' aid,

the Demon Saints suffered heavy losses under the onslaught of the eleven Witch Kings.

With Meng Hao Ran's Song of Righteousness boosting their morale, the Witch Race army surged forward.

They nearly broke through the combined Demon Race and human forces.

The destinies of both the Demon Race and human race were in upheaval.

In the critical moment, Young Master Tianxu, blessed by the turbulent destiny, broke through to Profound Immortal and joined the Demon Race, slightly turning the tide.

This battle lasted far too long.

Years of war pushed the conflict between the Demon Race and Witch Race into a white-hot frenzy.

Meanwhile, the destinies of the human race and Demon Race underwent earth-shaking changes.

During these relentless years of fighting, great witches fell and Demon Kings perished.

But more often, new great witches and new Demon Kings were born.

Many human True Immortals died, yet many more Human Immortals seized the surging destiny and broke through to True Immortal.

This provided Lu with a considerable amount of spiritual energy.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu's chess match remained deadlocked.

Lu Mudui even opened the Heavenly Gate and entered the Ascended Realm, persuading the immortals there to descend and fight.

With the turbulent destiny at play, none of the immortals refused.

The arrival of Ascended Realm immortals dealt another heavy blow to the Witch Race.

Mo Tianyu was exhausted.

The Witch Race was at too great a disadvantage. Lu Mudui clung tightly to the card of "aiding the Demon Race brings destiny," recruiting far too many powerhouses.

Mo Tianyu had thought of asking the immortals in the Heavenly Gate for help, but...

With what could he persuade them?

No benefits, just goodwill?

Relying on poison hexes for protection might even get him beaten.

How could those immortals possibly care?

The only good news for Mo Tianyu was that Golden Immortal Lu Jiulian had not joined the fight. That, at least, was a relief.

If a Golden Immortal entered the fray, the Witch Race would be doomed.

The chaotic situation weighed heavily even on the Hegemon and Tang Yimo, who felt no hope in sight.

That was why neither had allowed the armies of Xiliang or Nanjun to join the war.

The crushing pressure made the Witch Kings roar furiously at the heavens again and again.

Yet at a certain moment, the tide began to turn.

Under extreme pressure, the eleven Witch Kings unleashed their divine abilities, transforming into eleven pillars of light that shot into the sky.

In the next instant, their divine abilities fused.

They became a colossal giant that stood between heaven and earth, wielding a massive axe.

An aura comparable to a Golden Immortal swept across the land like a raging tide.

This was... the True Form of the Heavenly Witch!

Mo Tianyu had never imagined the eleven Witch Kings possessed such a trump card.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint and the other Demon Saints were horrified.

A Heavenly Witch was a Golden Immortal-level powerhouse.

The appearance of the Heavenly Witch's True Form seemed intent on ending this war once and for all.

The giant axe radiated terrifying power. With a single swing, it felt as though the destiny of heaven and earth itself would be cleaved in two!

This Heavenly Witch could sever destiny!

All the Profound Immortals were shocked and felt immense pressure!

The Heavenly Witch's target was the Golden Crow who had killed Zhu Yan. The Golden Crow Demon Saint lured it away, leading it on a chase that scattered golden snow all the way to Mount Buzhou.

Unfortunately, the Heavenly Witch possessed Golden Immortal combat power. Even fleeing was extremely difficult for the Golden Crow.

In the end, he fell bleeding onto the Heavenly Dao Tree. The crimson blood caused the tree to radiate a strange dao charm, rapidly healing the Golden Crow's wounds.

The Golden Crow was overjoyed.

But the Heavenly Witch's True Form arrived. Raising its massive axe, it struck down toward the trunk of the Heavenly Dao Tree.

Pfft!

The axe struck true, and blood sprayed from the tree.

This sight stunned the world.

And this strike forced Li Sansui—the array master of the Dao Pavilion who had previously refused to enter the tribulation—to finally step in.

Li Sansui knew exactly why the Heavenly Dao Tree was bleeding.

Because Li Sansi was inside.

Li Sansui arrived riding a cloud dragon, gathered the Demon Saints, and set up the Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array.

The array activated and actually blocked the Heavenly Witch's True Form.

After all, the Heavenly Witch's True Form was missing Witch King Zhu Yan and was slightly weaker than a true Golden Immortal.

Thus, Li Sansui managed to hold it back.

If it had been full Golden Immortal power, even the Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array would have been unable to resist.

Blessed by the destiny of both the Demon Race and human race, Li Sansui broke through his bottleneck in this moment and stepped into the Profound Immortal realm.

The Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array grew even stronger.

Unfortunately, the Heavenly Witch's True Form remained unbroken.

The blood-soaked Golden Crow looked at the collapsing Demon Race royal court and let out a mournful cry.

He kowtowed repeatedly toward Mount Buzhou.

On Mount Buzhou, Zhu Long's eyelashes trembled lightly.

She sighed softly. Since she had already intervened when the Golden Crow sought the dao, she could no longer stand by now.

Thus, Zhu Long acted.

Gripping her Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc, she slowly swung it.

BOOM!

The Heavenly Witch's True Form swung its axe against the grinding disc. Terrifying energy erupted, shaking mountains and rivers, swaying the Heavenly Dao Tree.

In that instant, destiny itself surged violently.

The Heavenly Witch's True Form shattered. The eleven Witch Kings coughed up blood and were sent flying backward.

The Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc struck only once. After that single blow, it swiftly vanished, as if settling a karmic debt.

With the Heavenly Witch's True Form broken, it could not reform anytime soon.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint was overjoyed. Leading the Demon Saints, he charged toward the eleven Witch Kings, determined to settle the battle before they could reassemble the Heavenly Witch's True Form.

For a moment, the Witch Race seemed on the verge of utter collapse.

Mo Tianyu stood bare-chested, gulping down wine. When the Heavenly Witch's True Form was shattered, he sighed deeply.

The entire world had turned against the witches.

To aid them was to go against the heavens.

BOOM!

This was a battle of Profound Immortals.

It raged around Mount Buzhou and the Heavenly Dao Tree.

It felt as though the heavenly river itself might be shattered.

The Hegemon was suppressed by Li Sansui's Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array and could not break free. In the end, he sat cross-legged helplessly.

Even with the array, Li Sansui could not kill the Hegemon.

And the Hegemon could not break the array.

On the other side, Tang Yimo battled the Demon Monkey King. The ground collapsed, mountains were flattened, and great rivers were overturned.

The Demon Monkey King lay in a deep crater, battered and bruised, holding his staff.

Tang Yimo had opened six meridians—he was simply too strong.

After using the Eight Meridians Escapement, Tang Yimo fell into a weakened state, gasping for breath.

At that moment, more than a dozen Demon Kings charged out.

“No!”

The Demon Monkey King, lying at the bottom of the pit, changed expression and roared.

But it was too late.

Tang Yimo felt the cold breath of death envelop him.

In the final instant, however, Tang Guo appeared. Her God King Physique erupted, and she blocked the full-force attacks of the dozen Demon Kings in Tang Yimo's place.

In a flash, blood stained the wilderness—like a flower blooming in brilliant splendor, only to wither under the blazing sun.

On the banks of the Yellow Springs, a flower of rebirth quietly bloomed.

In the Ascended Realm,

within the blooming green lotus,

Lu Jiulian suddenly opened his eyes. In his gaze, life and death cycled endlessly.

Golden Immortals do not enter the tribulation?

Only because the time to enter has not yet come.

Chapter 563: Do You Have a Handy Innate Spiritual Treasure?

The tribulation was like a whirlpool, constantly pulling in surrounding powerhouses, growing larger and larger until it finally enveloped and dragged in the entire Five Phoenix Continent.

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu leaned back in his Thousand-Blade Chair, watching everything with calm composure.

He was like an outsider, quietly observing the myriad events unfolding across the Five Phoenix Continent.

The world was a chessboard, and Lu Ping'an was the one moving the pieces.

If the game was dull and ordinary, it would be boring. Only when the waves surged and climaxes piled upon one another did it become truly interesting.

Moreover, Lu's goal was to make the cultivators of the Five Phoenix Continent stronger—to push them to the threshold of the Immortal-Martial realm.

Therefore, there were many things he would not interfere with.

On the Conferred God Stele, one departed soul after another drifted over and merged into it, each leaving behind a name.

Lu's palm gently tapped the armrest, his gaze falling upon the stele.

A new name slowly emerged.

"Tang Guo."

Seeing this name, Lu let out a soft sigh.

This name was tied to Lu Jiulian.

Though Lu Jiulian had originally been created from Lu's clone fruit, he had long since ceased to be merely a clone.

Even Lu no longer regarded him as such.

Instead, he treated him as a living person—a genius cultivator with monstrous talent.

With Golden Immortals now entering the fray, this tribulation was approaching its end.

Lu withdrew his gaze.

With a thought, he looked toward the skies beyond the Five Phoenix Continent.

He could sense that, outside the Five Phoenix world, a terrifying aura was faintly rising and falling—as though some horrifying existence was crossing time and space to descend.

Lu raised an eyebrow slightly.

Was this the work of those ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts?

Lu narrowed his eyes.

But he wasn't too concerned. The Five Phoenix tribulation was nearing its conclusion.

If possible, the beings stirred up by those ancient Great Emperors would make excellent sparring partners for the living creatures of the Five Phoenix Continent.

...

BOOM!

The Heavenly Gate swung open.

Radiant light burst forth in all directions. High above the sky, a green lotus suddenly bloomed.

Nine petals unfurled, each one ringing with metallic clarity.

Terrifying Golden Immortal aura instantly flooded the world. In that moment, the entire battlefield fell into dead silence.

Lu Jiulian appeared in the Five Phoenix Continent as though teleporting through the Heavenly Gate.

His gaze fell upon Tang Guo, lying in Tang Yimo's arms. A flicker of emotion passed through his eyes, only to turn ice-cold and ruthless.

Far away, the Golden Crow Demon Saint—who was battling the eleven Witch Kings—suddenly felt an overwhelming pressure.

“Azure Lotus Golden Immortal!”

The Golden Crow Demon Saint drew a deep breath. The incomparable force felt as though it could crush him in an instant.

A Golden Immortal—a being on the level of a Demon Emperor!

How could they have provoked Lu Jiulian into entering the fray?

Weren't Golden Immortals supposed to avoid involvement in the conflict between witches and demons?

Lu Jiulian stepped down from the sky, one step at a time.

His expression was cold and merciless.

Tang Yimo's face had already gone numb. Tang Guo was his sister—his closest kin.

The little girl who used to wipe snot on him.

The little girl who would break a steamed bun in half, give him the bigger piece even though she herself was starving.

Tang Yimo felt as though his heart was splitting apart.

Tang Guo's body, having overexerted her God King Physique, was slowly dissolving into specks of dissipating energy.

Lu Jiulian descended from the sky and gently took Tang Guo from Tang Yimo's arms.

He sighed softly.

He had never wanted to get involved in this great tribulation, yet in the end, he was pulled in because of this girl.

After all, she was his only disciple.

His only remaining family.

He gently patted Tang Guo's head.

Gradually, her body turned into glowing embers, scattering into the heavens and earth like fireflies.

“It’s alright. Master will take you home.”

Lu Jiulian smiled.

Then he straightened up.

Around him, more than a dozen Demon Kings stiffened. They seemed to realize they had provoked an existence far too terrifying.

Azure Lotus Golden Immortal... this was a Golden Immortal powerhouse.

Lu Jiulian swept his gaze over them.

An eye for an eye, a grudge for a grudge.

By killing Tang Guo, they had entangled themselves in karma.

He raised his hand. In his palm, a lotus flower quietly bloomed. Then the petals scattered, carrying a clear stream that swept across the bodies of those Demon Kings.

They too dissolved into energy and vanished without pain.

BOOM!

High above, terrifying currents of destiny intertwined. Lu Jiulian looked up and seemed to see even his own Golden Immortal destiny being drawn into the vortex.

But he did not care.

Every powerhouse present feared him deeply.

A Golden Immortal—on the same level as the witch of Mount Buzhou. How could they not fear him?

Whichever side Lu Jiulian stood on would almost certainly win this tribulation.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu's expressions were complicated.

Things had escalated after all.

Even a Golden Immortal had been drawn in.

Mo Tianyu, however, breathed a sigh of relief. He understood that Lu Jiulian's appearance gave the Witch Race a chance to catch their breath.

The Demon Saints would not dare ignore the might of a Golden Immortal at this moment.

After dealing with the Demon Kings,

Lu Jiulian paid no further attention to the Demon Race—whether it was the royal court or the Witch Race, he had not chosen a side.

He had only entered this storm because of his disciple.

Now, he simply wanted to bring her back.

“Where do the dead go?”

“To the Netherworld, walking the Yellow Springs path...”

“That path is a little cold.”

Lu Jiulian murmured.

In the next instant, he stepped forward and vanished like a blur.

When he reappeared, he was already inside the Nine Hells Secret Realm.

This was the entrance to the Netherworld.

Tang Yimo had also abandoned the Witch Race and rushed after him. He too realized that if there was any chance to save Tang Guo, it would be in the Netherworld.

As Lu Jiulian and Tang Yimo departed,

everyone present breathed a sigh of relief.

The fighting resumed, but the eleven Witch Kings seized the moment to escape while wounded.

Though the Witch Race had suffered a crushing defeat, they still retained their core strength and swiftly retreated toward the Western Continent.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint and the other Demon Saints would not let the eleven Witch Kings escape so easily.

They unleashed their full speed and gave chase, determined to seize the chance to kill them.

If the Witch Kings were allowed to recover and reform the Heavenly Witch's True Form, the Demon Race would have no way to resist.

On the other side,

the Hegemon was still being suppressed by Li Sansui's Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array.

Li Sansui understood the Hegemon's unyielding dao intent, so he did not launch any offensive attacks—only a sealing formation to bind him.

As long as the Hegemon could not break free, the Witch Race would lose its most powerful ally.

However, although the Hegemon had never allowed the forces of Xijun to join this conflict,

Luo Mingsang and the Hegemon's subordinates—such as Xu Chu, Zhao Zixu, and others—had been closely watching the Calamity of Witches and Demons.

When they learned that the Hegemon was being suppressed in the Northern Domain,

Luo Mingsang's face turned deathly pale.

After much thought, she sent Zhao Zixu to the Eastern Sea ancient tomb to seek Luo Mingyue.

Luo Mingsang didn't care about the grand scheme of the tribulation. She only knew that the Hegemon was her husband, and she had to save him.

After receiving the message, Zhao Zixu personally rushed to the Eastern Sea and found the ancient tomb.

He met Luo Mingyue.

With a complicated expression, Luo Mingyue slung her pipa over her back and left the tomb.

Mo Liqi, Jiang Li, and Ximen Xianzhi watched her depart but did not stop her.

Luo Mingyue and Zhao Zixu hurried to Mount Buzhou.

Luo Mingyue sat cross-legged on the spot and began to play her pipa.

The melody was graceful, yet each note transformed into razor-sharp blades that clashed against Li Sansui's array.

The music and array runes collided, sending terrifying shockwaves in all directions.

But Li Sansui was, after all, at the Profound Immortal level.

Luo Mingyue had not yet reached Profound Immortal and could not shake the array in the slightest.

After three full days and nights of failed attempts,

her ten fingers were already stained with blood.

At that moment, three figures came walking across the vast sea.

Ximen Xianzhi unleashed a sword that split the heavens. Sword light shook the world, raising a thousand drifts of snow and chilling the Nine Netherworlds.

Having inherited the Sword King's legacy, Ximen Xianzhi now carried the demeanor of the Sword King himself.

Jiang Li led the Hegemon's Xiang Family Army, forming a military formation. A blood-colored War God strode forth, launching an assault on the array.

In this moment, the four inheritors of the King legacies erupted with astonishing coordination.

Li Sansui's Ten Thousand Immortals Grand Array actually showed signs of cracking.

...

Lu Jiulian and Tang Yimo arrived at the Nine Hells Secret Realm.

During this time, Tang Yimo's injuries had gradually recovered. His unique physique, tainted by demonic qi, allowed him to heal at an astonishing speed.

Lu Jiulian walked with his hands behind his back, green lotus phantoms blooming around him as he advanced step by step toward the Netherworld.

His aura alone was enough to force open the gates of the Netherworld prison.

However, to Lu Jiulian's surprise, he was unable to blast open the final gate.

"Why can't it open?"

Tang Yimo's eyes were filled with madness.

"The Nether Emperor has sealed the Netherworld. Outsiders cannot enter—only departed souls may be guided in."

Lu Jiulian said calmly.

"Sealed the Netherworld... why?"

Tang Yimo's eyes flashed with unwillingness. He still wanted to enter the Netherworld to find Tang Guo's soul, but now he didn't even have the right to step inside.

"No particular reason—just to avoid the tribulation... The Nether Emperor is also a Golden Immortal. How could he not sense the great tribulation?"

“If not for Tang Guo, I too would have stayed out of this tribulation.”

Lu Jiulian said.

“But since I’m already here... today, I will enter the Netherworld.”

“Every time someone dies, a rebirth flower blooms on the banks of the Yellow Springs. As long as I don’t allow Tang Guo’s rebirth flower to bloom, it will not bloom.”

Lu Jiulian’s voice was firm.

The next moment, his aura soared into the sky, as though it could change the colors of heaven and earth.

“Nether Emperor, open the gates of the Netherworld!”

BOOM!

The terrifying shockwave shook the entire Netherworld.

The Yellow Springs surged, the Sea of Bitterness rippled.

Countless departed souls let out terrified cries.

The nine city lords of the cities of the dead appeared, their expressions grave.

“It’s the Azure Lotus Golden Immortal...”

“He wants to force his way into the Netherworld?”

The city lords’ faces were solemn.

Tantai Xuan naturally sensed it as well. Holding his Life-and-Death Register, his gaze was heavy.

“The tribulation... has finally reached the Netherworld after all.”

Tantai Xuan sighed softly.

Receiving no response, Lu Jiulian said no more.

He flicked his finger.

A five-colored Wrath Lotus slowly drifted out.

It tore through space and fell into the Netherworld.

The Hell Hound guarding the gate sensed the five-colored Wrath Lotus and immediately fled in terror.

BOOM!

The Wrath Lotus erupted.

Brilliant light illuminated the pitch-black Netherworld as though it were daylight.

Tantai Xuan held his Life-and-Death Register and smiled.

He had hoped to avoid the tribulation by sealing the Netherworld, but it seemed impossible now.

Since he could not avoid it, he would face it head-on.

What had he not experienced?

“Jiulian, I’ve long wanted to exchange blows with you.”

As his words fell,

two streaks of light tore through space and vanished into the outer-sky battlefield, where they began to fight.

The clash between Lu Jiulian and Tantai Xuan—two Golden Immortals—naturally stirred the destiny of the Five Phoenix Continent.

But neither fought to the death.

At the Golden Immortal level, a friendly spar was enough. After all, both were supreme combat powers of the Five Phoenix.

On the other side, Tang Yimo charged into the Netherworld, searching for Tang Guo’s soul.

The nine city lords moved to stop him. Tang Yimo showed no fear and fought back.

He only wanted to bring back Tang Guo's soul.

"The Netherworld has its own rules. This is the land of the dead's rebirth. If every person dissatisfied with a loved one's death came to the Netherworld to retrieve them, the Six Paths of Reincarnation would fall into chaos."

The nine city lords spoke.

A great battle erupted.

But there were too many powerhouses in the Netherworld. In the end, Tang Yimo collapsed exhausted on the banks of the Yellow Springs, surrounded by a sea of rebirth flowers.

In the outer-sky battlefield,

the battle between Lu Jiulian and Tantai Xuan also came to an end.

Countless dead and silent continents shattered. Void itself crumbled inch by inch.

Tantai Xuan and Lu Jiulian hovered in space. Their auras surged, neither weaker than the other.

“Tang Guo is not dead. Her name did not appear in the Life-and-Death Register I forged.”

Tantai Xuan said.

These words stunned Lu Jiulian.

“In other words, Tang Guo did die—because a rebirth flower bloomed on the banks of the Yellow Springs—but her soul did not enter the Netherworld.”

Tantai Xuan continued.

“This is a heavenly secret and should not be revealed.”

“But... who told you to be so likable?”

Tantai Xuan smiled.

Hearing this, Lu Jiulian's stern face softened slightly.

He looked earnestly at Tantai Xuan.

Tantai Xuan tossed the Life-and-Death Register to him.

"Do you think I'd lie to you?"

Lu Jiulian caught it but did not flip through it. He merely glanced curiously at the register.

So this Life-and-Death Register was the Emperor Weapon—the Innate Spiritual Treasure—Tantai Xuan had forged?

"If Tang Guo's soul didn't enter the Netherworld, where did it go?"

Lu Jiulian asked.

"That, I don't know."

Tantai Xuan shook his head. After retrieving the register, he prepared to leave.

But just as he was about to depart, both of them—now calm—seemed to sense something at the same time. They exchanged a glance, grave expressions flashing in their eyes.

“Emperor Realm aura.”

It was faint and sometimes weakened, but it was unmistakably an Emperor Realm aura.

Whoosh!

The two shifted and appeared in the void starry sky beyond the Five Phoenix Continent.

Life stars floated in the void, each one dazzlingly beautiful.

Every star burst with vigorous life force, enveloped in destiny.

The saint ancestors seated on those life stars sensed the two Emperor Realm powerhouses and respectfully bowed.

Tantai Xuan held the Life-and-Death Register; Lu Jiulian sat cross-legged on his green lotus. Together they crossed the void.

Soon they reached the Abyss of Nothingness.

The abyss was like a deep chasm separating the void starry sky from the Ninth Heaven.

Lu Jiulian and Tantai Xuan's expressions grew solemn. They could sense an extremely terrifying aura surging within the abyss.

The two exchanged a glance.

Then, without hesitation, they transformed into streaks of light and plunged into the abyss.

They delved deeper and deeper.

Finally, terrifying, distorting tearing forces erupted.

Deep within the abyss, array runes floated, tearing open a twisted spatial passage.

At the entrance of the passage, a ferocious, enormous figure was squeezing half its body through.

It had four pairs of fleshy wings covered in scales—utterly terrifying. It seemed to embody the rules of the Great Dao, distorting and annihilating everything around it.

“Emperor Realm being!”

Tantai Xuan’s expression changed slightly.

Lu Jiulian also looked grave. Neither had expected that, in such a hidden corner deep within the Abyss of Nothingness, there would be a terrifying Emperor Realm being attempting to sneak through.

It was trying to cross into the void starry sky—into the Five Phoenix world!

“This aura... it feels somewhat similar to the being that fused with the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor after his coffin was opened!”

Tantai Xuan said.

They had witnessed that battle with their own eyes and recognized the similarity.

“What lies beyond that passage? Why is such a powerful existence crossing over?”

Tantai Xuan drew a deep breath, his eyes blazing.

“If it dares invade the Five Phoenix, kill it!”

“We’ve encountered it now. Naturally, we must destroy it!”

Tantai Xuan declared.

Taking advantage of the fact that the Emperor Realm being was trapped at the passage and could not move freely, Tantai Xuan and Lu Jiulian unleashed their most powerful Golden Immortal attacks without hesitation.

BOOM!

Brilliant light illuminated the pitch-black abyss.

The Emperor Realm being stuck in the passage was speechless. In the next moment, it was engulfed by the attacks, its upper body exploding.

Terrifying flesh and blood contained powerful rule auras.

Tantai Xuan struck again and again without pause.

Lu Jiulian flicked one Wrath Lotus after another.

The Emperor Realm being's flesh was blasted apart.

The falling chunks of flesh transformed into new beings, each still radiating immense power.

In the end, all the spawned creatures were ground to dust by Tantai Xuan and Lu Jiulian.

“Jiulian, I’ll stay here and suppress these mysterious, unknown Emperor Realm beings. You go back and help the Five Phoenix finish the tribulation. Also, find Young Master Lu and ask him about these Emperor Realm beings.”

“I have a bad feeling. This passage might be something those ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts created... What lies beyond it could be a world as terrifying as the Ninth Heaven.”

Tantai Xuan said to Lu Jiulian.

“I should stay here instead.”

Lu Jiulian replied.

But Tantai Xuan burst into laughter and waved the Life-and-Death Register like he was showing off a treasure.

“Do you have a handy Innate Spiritual Treasure?”

“You don’t. I do.”

Lu Jiulian: “...”

“Go on. While you’re at it, look for your precious disciple’s soul. Since it didn’t enter the Netherworld, it must be somewhere else.”

“Perhaps this tribulation is both disaster and opportunity. Otherwise, Young Master Lu wouldn’t just sit and watch.”

Tantai Xuan waved his hand.

Then he sat cross-legged deep in the abyss, his body erupting with terrifying light.

He blocked the passage filled with distorting power.

“Go back and tell those guys: the tribulation may be a tribulation, but no matter how much we fight internally, when a great enemy appears, everyone had better damn well pull themselves together and face outward!”

Tantai Xuan’s voice echoed behind him.

Lu Jiulian was silent for a long time. Finally, he nodded. The green lotus beneath his feet spun, and he transformed into a streak of light as he shot out of the abyss.

As he left the abyss,

he seemed to hear Tantai Xuan’s rough cursing from deep inside.

“No matter where the hell you bastards come from.”

“If one dares come, I’ll kill one!”

Chapter 564: When a Foreign Enemy Appears, the Five Phoenixes Must Stand United

While the battle raged in the Abyss of Nothingness, Lu naturally sensed it.

His brows lifted slightly. In his eyes reflected scene after scene: Tantai Xuan and Lu Jiulian clashing with the Emperor Realm being trapped at the passage entrance.

“This is... an Innate Divine Demon?”

Lu was momentarily stunned.

He had never expected an Innate Divine Demon to appear in the Abyss of Nothingness.

With a turn of thought, he quickly pieced together the sequence of events.

The corners of his mouth curved upward in a faint smile as he shook his head.

Was this a case of being too clever for one’s own good?

What did Lu lack at this moment?

Precisely what he needed most: Innate Divine Demons.

The system's task required him to slay ten of them. He had been racking his brain over how to accomplish it—never expecting someone to deliver them straight to his doorstep.

“The world... is still full of good people.”

Lu sighed with genuine feeling.

From his deduction, the appearance of the Innate Divine Demon was undoubtedly the work of those ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts.

“The Five Phoenix Continent has become independent of the Ninth Heaven. Therefore, the Ninth Heaven no longer wishes to shield the Five Phoenixes from the Innate Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky. They deliberately opened a passage connecting the two.”

“And noticing the great tribulation raging within the Five Phoenixes, they seized the moment—activating the passage while the Five Phoenixes were too divided to unite against an external threat, hoping to bring utter ruin upon them.”

“A clever scheme... but they underestimated the Five Phoenixes.”

“Internal strife is internal strife, but from its humble beginnings as a low-martial world to what it is today, the Five Phoenixes have always united against foreign enemies.”

Lu narrowed his eyes.

Still, the ancient Great Emperors' move had saved him a great deal of trouble.

He had originally planned to wait until the great tribulation concluded, until a new generation of Golden Immortals was born, and then lead them into the Primordial Starry Sky to hunt Innate Divine Demons.

Now...

It would be much easier.

“Those ancient Great Emperors can so easily control a passage to the Primordial Starry Sky—even summon Innate Divine Demons...”

“Could there be some collusion between them and the Divine Demons?”

“Hmm. Divine Demons vary in strength depending on the laws and rules they comprehend. The stronger ones rival Great Luo Immortals, while the weaker ones are comparable to Emperor Realm beings...”

“How can I turn these Divine Demons into an opportunity and benefit for the Five Phoenixes?”

Lu furrowed his brows.

Although the great heavenly tribulation was proceeding according to his plan, it had not unfolded as beautifully as he had hoped.

The birth of Golden Immortals was far more difficult than anticipated.

Thus, the tribulation's benefits to the Five Phoenixes remained limited. While many Human Immortals and True Immortals had been born, high-end combat power was still scarce.

"Perhaps I can use these Innate Divine Demons to bring this tribulation to its conclusion."

Lu's gaze flickered.

His fingers slowly tapped the armrest of the Thousand-Blade Chair.

Moreover, the calamity brought by these Divine Demons could provide an opportunity for the powerhouses on other life stars in the void starry sky to grow stronger.

With his mind made up, Lu sank into the Sermon Platform and began to deduce and arrange.

The moment an Innate Divine Demon stepped out of the passage, it would be tainted by the destiny of the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao.

It would become... a prize every cultivator would crave.

...

Lu Jiulian transformed into a streak of light and swiftly returned to the Five Phoenix Continent.

His expression was icy.

The unexpected battle with Tantai Xuan had revealed something truly alarming.

If this matter was not handled properly, it would be a grave crisis for the Five Phoenixes.

According to the Nether Emperor's deduction, what lay beyond that passage was likely a vast world. The number of Emperor Realm beings was unknown, but the threat they posed could not be underestimated.

BOOM!

The moment he returned, he sped toward the Eastern Sea.

He needed to find Young Master Lu.

The central island floated gently on the vast sea, carried by a giant whale. It moved slowly and unhurriedly.

In stark contrast to the frantic pace of the world around it.

The whale swam leisurely, as though savoring the quiet passage of time.

Lu Jiulian landed on the vast sea and looked up at the central island.

The mist parted.

Ning Zhao stepped out gracefully and gave him a slight bow.

“Young Master invites you in.”

Ning Zhao said.

Lu Jiulian nodded slightly.

He gazed at the central island. For some reason, it felt faintly familiar—yet no memory surfaced.

Once he stepped onto the island, Lu was already seated in his Thousand-Blade Chair within the peach blossom grove, warming wine.

Petals drifted in the air. The rich fragrance of wine filled the space.

Seeing Lu Jiulian, Lu gave a gentle smile and beckoned him over.

Lu Jiulian sat cross-legged, took the warmed Heavenly Immortal Wine from Lu, and savored its deep, mellow flavor.

After draining the cup, he finally spoke.

“In the Abyss of Nothingness, there is a scheme laid by the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven. It is very likely intended to destroy the Five Phoenixes.”

His voice was grave.

He described the Emperor Realm being he had encountered.

Lu listened with a slight nod, sipping his wine and smiling as he heard him out.

Ning Zhao quietly refilled the cups.

Though Lu Jiulian's words shocked her deeply, she remained composed, maintaining the calm dignity expected of Young Master's attendants.

"That was an Innate Divine Demon... from the Primordial Starry Sky."

Lu explained.

"There are countless Innate Divine Demons. They have existed in the Primordial Starry Sky for eons. Their very existence is sustained by destroying worlds and devouring Heavenly Daos."

"They are embodiments of laws and rules, and their strength is immense."

Lu Jiulian's pupils contracted.

Sustained by devouring Heavenly Daos?

Were these Innate Divine Demons truly so terrifying?

“The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor of the Ninth Heaven once stood guard in the Primordial Starry Sky precisely to hold back these Innate Divine Demons. Otherwise... the Ninth Heaven would have long been ravaged and reduced to ruins.”

Lu took another sip of wine.

Lu Jiulian felt the weight of the pressure.

“But the appearance of Divine Demons... is actually an opportunity for the Five Phoenixes.”

“An opportunity?”

“Divine Demons are born by devouring Heavenly Daos. Naturally, the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao will sense the threat. When crisis arises, destiny will surge—just like the Age of Ferocious Beasts that was once opened. This time... it could be called the ‘Age of Divine Demons.’”

“The Age of Divine Demons? You mean... slaying Divine Demons will grant immense destiny and allow breakthroughs?”

Lu Jiulian’s eyes lit up as realization dawned.

Lu nodded slightly.

That was exactly what he intended: to tie Innate Divine Demons to destiny. That way, the cultivators of the Five Phoenixes would be motivated to fight them.

And slaying Divine Demons would bring vast destiny—nothing but good for the Five Phoenixes.

Lu Jiulian’s heart trembled slightly at Lu’s words.

“Indeed, calamity and opportunity always coexist.”

He nodded.

“Now, the Nether Emperor is guarding the Abyss of Nothingness. Once I finish handling the tribulation here, I will go to his aid.”

Lu Jiulian said.

Lu nodded.

Then Lu Jiulian asked for details about the great heavenly tribulation.

He was certain Lu knew everything.

He also asked where Tang Guo's soul had gone—if not to the Netherworld, then where?

Lu simply smiled.

“This tribulation is actually an opportunity for the living. The dead are not truly gone. They will walk a new path of cultivation and grow even faster.”

Lu said.

“Go. When the tribulation ends, Tang Guo will return to life.”

Lu waved his hand.

Lu Julian paused, then asked no further questions.

Stepping onto his green lotus, he transformed into a streak of light and departed swiftly.

...

Lu Julian arrived at the Netherworld.

He had fought Tantai Xuan in the outer-sky battlefield and did not yet know Tang Yimo's condition.

On the banks of the Yellow Springs, amid a sea of rebirth flowers,

Tang Yimo lay face-up. All strength had drained from his body. He was covered in blood.

But he stared blankly at the sky of the Netherworld.

The city lords of the dead hovered above. The Hell Hound blazed with flames, its terrifying aura sweeping over Tang Yimo, watching him warily.

Tang Yimo was strong—but facing the entire Netherworld alone was beyond him.

Each city lord was protected by karma; their current combat power was close to quasi-Emperor level.

How could he suppress them all?

Exhausted, he lay there.

The Netherworld powerhouses did not kill him.

They were waiting for the Nether Emperor's return to pass judgment.

The Nether Emperor had not returned, but Lu Jiulian did.

After informing Tang Yimo of the situation in the Abyss of Nothingness, Lu Jiulian came before him.

“Young Master Lu said that within the tribulation, there remains a thread of survival. Those who die will return when the tribulation ends.”

Lu Jiulian's words caused a flicker in Tang Yimo's ashen eyes. Slowly, he sat up.

"Really?"

"Young Master Lu said it. If you don't believe him, go ask."

Lu Jiulian said calmly.

Tang Yimo scratched his head. Hope sparked in his eyes.

"Forget it. I wouldn't dare... Young Master Lu's temper—if he knew I doubted him, who knows what he'd do to me."

Tang Yimo waved his hand.

But since Lu had said it, there must be truth to it.

The grief in Tang Yimo's heart gradually eased. He saw hope once more.

"What we must do now is end the tribulation..."

Lu Jiulian said.

“Azure Lotus Golden Immortal, this man wreaked havoc in the Netherworld and disrupted the path of rebirth... If we simply let him leave, where is the dignity of the Netherworld?”

“You are on the same level as Lord Nether Emperor and can transcend the rules, but he cannot.”

“He committed an offense and must face punishment.”

The city lords spoke firmly.

Lu Jiulian frowned.

“If anyone could barge into the Netherworld and cause chaos, the Six Paths of Reincarnation would never know peace.”

“If Lord Nether Emperor were here, he too would impose tribulation punishment.”

The city lords' stance was unyielding.

Lu Jiulian glanced at Tang Yimo, who looked calm.

“If I’ve done wrong, I’ll accept the consequences.”

Tang Yimo said.

Lu Jiulian nodded and turned to the city lords.

“This is a time when we need every hand we can get. Let him stay by my side. When the tribulation ends and the disaster in the Abyss of Nothingness is resolved, I will personally bring him back to the Netherworld to face punishment.”

Tang Yimo bowed to the city lords.

“Once I confirm my sister’s life or death, I will return to the Netherworld of my own accord. Let the karmic flames burn me, let the Sea of Bitterness corrode me—for a hundred years—as atonement.”

The city lords exchanged glances and fell silent.

Karmic flames and the Sea of Bitterness were among the most severe punishments in the Netherworld.

If they pressed further, it would become awkward.

Lu Jiulian was, after all, a Golden Immortal on the same level as the Nether Emperor. Offending him came with a price.

Lu Jiulian left, taking Tang Yimo with him.

The disturbance in the Netherworld finally settled.

Back on the Five Phoenix Continent, Lu Jiulian went straight to Mount Buzhou and found the hidden Micah.

“In the Abyss of Nothingness, an Emperor Realm being has appeared. Young Master Lu says it is an Innate Divine Demon from the Primordial Starry Sky.”

Lu Jiulian said.

Micah’s expression changed drastically.

As the former head of the Heavenly Spirit Clan’s Sacred Hall, he knew of Innate Divine Demons.

Without delay, Micah transformed into a streak of light and shot out of the Five Phoenixes, heading for the Abyss of Nothingness.

If it truly was an Innate Divine Demon—and if more arrived—the Nether Emperor alone might not hold them back.

Zhu Long was momentarily stunned.

She had wanted to help, but Lu Jiulian stopped her.

“You and I have already been involved in this great tribulation. Let us end it together.”

Lu Jiulian said.

After a moment’s thought, Zhu Long nodded.

The war between the Witch Race and Demon Race had entered its most intense phase. Countless human cultivators joined in, turning the conflict into utter chaos.

It engulfed the entire cultivation world.

The eleven Witch Kings clashed fiercely with the Demon Saints above the vast sea.

Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, Ni Chunqiu, and even the newly ascended Profound Immortal Tianxu Young Master joined the battle.

The Heavenly Origin Profound Immortals were too deeply entangled with the Demon Race.

Many of them were master-disciple to Demon Saints, making it impossible to escape this karma.

The great battle erupted across the vast sea.

Waves surged, seawater evaporated into mist.

Profound Immortal-level combat could reshape the land. Had the Five Phoenix Continent not grown strong enough to withstand such attacks, it would have long been shattered.

The eleven Witch Kings once again formed the Heavenly Witch's True Form and unleashed their innate divine abilities.

Under extreme pressure, the Golden Crow Demon Saint burned his bloodline and stepped into quasi-Emperor realm.

He erupted with astonishing power.

The battle raged for half a month.

Giant waves formed of seawater nearly reached the heavens.

But with the intervention of Lu Jiulian and Zhu Long, the battle finally drew to a close.

The eleven Witch Kings were gravely wounded, but their bloodlines had awakened, and their momentum soared.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint had entered quasi-Emperor realm, and many Demon Saints had their bloodlines awakened in battle.

Thus, the outcome was a draw.

Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, and the others withdrew from the fight.

With the battle concluded, they breathed a collective sigh of relief. Had it continued, it might have spiraled out of control.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu stood above the vast sea and looked at each other.

They pinched their fingers.

They could see the tide of destiny had shifted.

Both revealed surprised expressions. It seemed the great tribulation had been altered by some event.

Buzz...

Both of them felt something. A voice seemed to echo in their ears—Lu's voice.

They froze.

In the next moment, countless silver lights burst forth.

Under the power of spatial mysteries, they vanished from the vast sea.

When they reappeared, they were on the central island, standing before Lu.

“Young Master Lu.”

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu were stunned and quickly bowed.

Lu smiled and poured them each a cup of Heavenly Immortal Wine.

After they drained their cups, he pointed toward the purple bamboo grove behind him.

“The great heavenly tribulation is nearing its end. You two shall bring it to a close.”

“Originally, the victor was to conclude it. Since there is no clear victor, you shall conclude it together... by conferring divinity.”

Lu said.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu’s expressions flickered.

They approached the purple bamboo grove and saw the Conferred God Stele formed by the power of the Heavenly Dao.

Names glowed upon the stele: Thunder Eagle King, Zhu Yan, Tang Guo, and others. Their brilliance shone brightly. Great witches, Demon Kings, human True Immortals—all were engraved upon it.

Powerful soul fluctuations surged. Vast destiny poured down from the heavens, enveloping the stele.

“The great tribulation is both calamity and opportunity.”

“The dead are not failures. They will walk another path and gain another chance.”

Lu sat in his Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering, speaking slowly.

“Those who perish may be chosen by the Heavenly Dao to govern the order and rules of heaven and earth—to establish a divine court and uphold the laws of the world. This path is called the Divine Path.”

Beside him stood Ning Zhao, Ni Yu carrying her black pot, and Yi Yue, who was like a shadow.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu sighed deeply. They reached out and gently touched the Conferred God Stele.

After nearly ten years, the war between witches and demons had finally ended.

The two looked at each other and burst into laughter.

Mo Tianyu and Lu Mudui shook their heads. After years of taking sides, they could finally relax.

“The Azure Lotus Golden Immortal said that a great enemy is invading from beyond the Five Phoenixes...”

“No matter how much we fight internally, when a foreign enemy appears, we must stand united. That is the Five Phoenixes.”

Mo Tianyu pinched his copper coins; Lu Mudui tapped his bamboo staff lightly.

The two stepped before the Conferred God Stele.

Their primordial spirits surged forth and merged into it.

A profound, ancient sound seemed to ring out, as though bells and jade chimes were being struck.

BOOM!

From the Ninth Heaven, pillars of destiny poured down.

Within the stele, departed souls manifested. Vast destiny converged into flesh. Heavenly Dao stars appeared, bestowing rules that became divine abilities mastered by each revived powerhouse.

With a thought, they could command the winds, clouds, thunder, and lightning.

They could govern the changing of seasons.

Lu Mudui and Mo Tianyu looked solemn.

“Today, we establish the Divine Court.”

“We confer divine titles and cultivate the Divine Path.”

As their words fell,

familiar figures revived one after another.

Zhu Yan, Thunder Eagle King, Tang Guo...

Not only were they revived, but their cultivation had advanced.

Zhu Yan's bloodline had fully awakened, reaching half-step Heavenly Witch—quasi-Emperor level.

Thunder Eagle King stepped into Profound Immortal realm. Tang Guo, blessed by destiny, also crossed into Profound Immortal.

Most importantly, they now represented the will of the Heavenly Dao and wielded its rules.

That was what set them apart.

All those who had died in the tribulation were revived, their cultivation elevated, forming a formidable new force.

Moreover, the Divine Path cultivation method appeared in their minds.

This path offered them another route to the absolute peak.

Lu smiled, quite satisfied.

“Though the Divine Path is bound by the Heavenly Dao... cultivators of the world do not always follow common sense. There will always be astonishing geniuses who can shatter those restrictions.”

Lu felt a quiet anticipation.

This tribulation had opened the Divine Path, giving the cultivators of the Five Phoenixes a new road to walk.

Of course, Lu himself had received an enormous increase in spiritual energy. The Five Phoenixes' accumulation had faintly reached the edge of Immortal-Martial ascension.

To ascend to Immortal-Martial... all that was missing... was the right契机.

As the conferral took place,

the vast destiny of heaven and earth surged downward.

Demon Saints, Demon Kings, and human immortals all received blessings of destiny.

Their cultivation advanced to varying degrees.

The chaotic and turbulent destiny gradually stabilized.

In the moment the departed were revived,

Lu Jiulian and Tang Yimo both sensed it. They looked toward the Eastern Sea, feeling Tang Guo's aura return. Their tense expressions softened.

Young Master Lu had not lied to them.

Since that was the case, next...

The Five Phoenixes would unite against the external threat.

They would slay the invading Divine Demons!

Just as the Nether Emperor had said.

Any foreign race that dared invade the Five Phoenixes would be killed!

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

within the void rift,

figures of ancient Great Emperors stood, tall and divine, shrouded in mystery.

After a long silence, a voice echoed.

“The Five Phoenixes are in chaos, locked in endless battle. This is our chance.”

“Seize this moment. Activate the Divine Demon passage and guide the Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky into the Five Phoenixes.”

“Wait a little longer. Let more Divine Demons gather in the Primordial Starry Sky before activating the passage... That way, the Five Phoenixes will surely fall. Activating it now is too early.”

“Lu Ping’an is cunning and treacherous. Is it possible that the current chaos in the Five Phoenixes is his deliberate arrangement—to bait us into acting prematurely?”

“It shouldn’t... be, right?”

The voices gradually fell silent.

After a long while, a faint, uncertain murmur drifted through.

“Besides... Lu Ping’an has no reason to lure us into acting early...”

Chapter 565: As Long as We Stand, the Five Phoenixes Stand

The Abyss of Nothingness.

This was the vast region Lu had cleaved open with his own power—a boundary separating the Ninth Heaven from the Five Phoenix Continent.

It belonged to both, and yet to neither.

That was precisely why the ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts could open a passage to the Primordial Starry Sky here without Lu ever noticing.

Of course, Lu had always vaguely sensed that some terrifying calamity loomed, but he had never seriously searched for it—never imagining that those ancient Great Emperors would choose such a method.

Exposing the Five Phoenixes to the Innate Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky was hardly beneficial for the Ninth Heaven.

If the Five Phoenixes fell, the Ninth Heaven would be next in line to face those ravenous, sated Divine Demons.

Thus, Lu found it incomprehensible.

The only explanation was that the ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts had some secret deal with the Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky—perhaps even an alliance.

“The Innate Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky are also living beings. Those capable of Emperor Realm combat must possess intelligence.”

“So it’s not impossible that they’ve negotiated cooperation with the ancient Great Emperors.”

Lu pondered, his fingers gently tapping the armrest of his Thousand-Blade Chair.

From the memories of the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, Lu knew that these Innate Divine Demons were far from foolish—they were cunning, intelligent, and treacherous.

“Judging by the level of Divine Demons the ancient Great Emperors could possibly cooperate with, they’re likely mostly at the Great Emperor level—comparable to Sixth-Revolution Golden Immortals...”

Lu mused.

For the current Golden Immortals of the Five Phoenixes, Great Emperor-level Innate Divine Demons would be difficult opponents.

Still, it was worth trying.

Above the Origin Lake,

Lu sat in his Thousand-Blade Chair, forming seals with his hands.

Soon, vast array runes surged into the sky.

...

Micah streaked through the void and soon arrived at the Abyss of Nothingness.

Having learned from Lu Jiulian that Tantai Xuan was guarding this place, he had rushed here to assist.

Deep within the rift,

Tantai Xuan sat calmly. Before him floated a white book radiating thick life-and-death aura—his Innate Spiritual Treasure, the Life-and-Death Register.

Like an immovable mountain, Tantai Xuan blocked any Emperor Realm being that dared try to pass through the channel.

BOOM!

From within the passage came terrifying waves of aura and the rolling roars of ferocious beasts.

Yet Tantai Xuan remained utterly fearless, unshaken.

Even the storm could not budge him.

Micah arrived swiftly. Seeing Tantai Xuan, he couldn't help but smile.

“The Nether Emperor truly possesses unmatched might.”

Micah held great respect for Tantai Xuan. He had heard many legends about this legendary human emperor of the Five Phoenixes.

From an immortal-affinity-less mortal when he was Human Emperor to the supreme Nether Emperor ruling the Netherworld today—

What a dramatic rise and fall. Even Micah found it miraculous.

Tantai Xuan gave Micah a slight nod.

“Young Master Lu said the passage beyond likely connects to the Primordial Starry Sky—a world beyond the Ninth Heaven, an extremely dangerous place where even ancient Great Emperors risk falling.”

“And now, the ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts no longer shield the Five Phoenixes from the calamity of these Innate Divine Demons. Instead, they've guided the entrance from the Primordial Starry Sky directly into our world.”

Micah said.

Tantai Xuan understood at once.

He let out a scornful laugh.

“A bunch of fools.”

“If these Innate Divine Demons are truly as terrifying as rumored, were I one of the Ninth Heaven’s emperors, I would never make such a stupid decision... Don’t they understand the principle that when the lips are gone, the teeth grow cold?”

Tantai Xuan shook his head, cursing the ancient Great Emperors thoroughly.

Micah sighed as well.

“The Heavenly Spirit Clan once stood on the front lines against the Innate Divine Demons.”

“The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor once led the Heavenly Spirit Clan army, sitting alone in the Primordial Starry Sky, fighting Divine Demons single-handedly.”

“The Ninth Heaven and those Divine Demons should be irreconcilable enemies... Yet this time, the ancient Great Emperors opened a passage from the Primordial Starry Sky to the Five Phoenixes, guiding those Divine Demons here. It’s truly baffling.”

Micah said.

“There’s nothing baffling about it. Something is wrong with the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven... Perhaps they’ve struck a deal with the Innate Divine Demons—maybe even formed an alliance...”

Tantai Xuan said.

“No matter the race, no matter the being—interest is the true driving force behind any situation.”

Tantai Xuan sat at the mouth of the passage and spoke calmly.

“But for me, any existence that dares invade the Five Phoenixes must pay the price.”

A terrifying killing intent emanated from him.

Micah hovered nearby, feeling the overwhelming resolve in Tantai Xuan.

It was an utterly unshakable determination.

Micah's expression grew complicated.

"Nether Emperor, have you never considered what happens if you cannot stop the incoming Innate Divine Demons?"

"Even the weakest Divine Demons are at least early Emperor Realm. If too many come and surround you, you could die."

"Die here in this cold, forgotten Abyss of Nothingness, with no one ever knowing."

Micah said.

Tantai Xuan, facing away from him, simply smiled.

"Even if I can't stop them, I must stand. When I was young, the Five Phoenixes was merely a small low-martial world. It endured countless hardships and grew into the supreme high-martial world it is today..."

"In my heart, it is the most beautiful home."

“Everything I have now was given to me by the Five Phoenixes.”

“The Five Phoenixes has faced so many trials, so many invasions—from the Heavenly Origin era to the Ninth Heaven. Hasn’t it overcome them all?”

“And now, facing the Primordial Starry Sky and the Innate Divine Demons—so what? I firmly believe the Five Phoenixes can withstand it and turn every calamity into nourishment.”

Tantai Xuan said.

Then his gaze shifted to the passage.

“I have only one thing to say.”

“As long as we stand, the Five Phoenixes stand.”

Micah exhaled slowly.

The Five Phoenixes truly was a special world.

Compared to the Ninth Heaven... everyone here was full of vitality, hope, and a sense of responsibility.

They worked together for the progress of their world.

Perhaps that was why Micah had dared to choose the Five Phoenixes all those years ago—to abandon everything and start anew.

Because he believed such a world could not be easily destroyed.

Micah hovered in place. Though he was not truly a native of the Five Phoenixes, he deeply wished to become part of it.

He did not want such a world to be so easily crushed by external forces.

He turned his gaze toward the Ninth Heaven, his expression grave.

What exactly were the ancient Great Emperors in the void rifts planning?

Had they truly allied with the Innate Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky?

Micah did not know, and he could not interfere.

BOOM!

Suddenly.

A terrifying tremor erupted.

Around the passage entrance, the array disc's runes surged with ever-deeper complexity.

As the runes flowed and swept outward, the collapsed passage grew larger and larger.

A chilling, ancient, and terrifying aura poured forth from the Primordial Starry Sky, pressing down on Tantai Xuan and flattening his robes against his body.

Yet Tantai Xuan was not pushed back.

Instead, he pressed forward step by step.

Until he stood directly at the mouth of the passage.

Micah narrowed his eyes.

Tantai Xuan looked into the passage.

Beyond it lay a vast starry sky—similar to the void starry sky of the Five Phoenixes, yet far more ancient and vast, heavy with the weight of eons.

Countless stars floated within, carrying the aura of decay left by time.

Vaguely, a terrifying crisis seemed to be drawing near.

...

On the Five Phoenix Continent,

the great tribulation had ended. Mo Tianyu and Lu Mudui had jointly established the Divine Court. Many powerhouses had revived, their strength elevated even further, their connection to the Heavenly Dao deeper, and they were favored by it.

The original path of cultivation was to defy the heavens; the Divine Path was to follow it—naturally much easier.

Lu Julian gently rubbed Tang Guo's head, his eyes full of affection. For this disciple he had lost and regained, his heart was filled with complex emotions.

Tang Yimo looked at the unharmed Tang Guo and pursed his thin lips. The tension in his heart finally eased.

He didn't care that she had gained fortune through misfortune. All he cared about was that she was alive and well.

"The Divine Path..."

Lu Julian sensed the many members of the Divine Court, a strange light in his eyes.

"Following the heavens in cultivation—perhaps the Divine Path will produce powerhouses more easily than the Great Luo Immortal Scripture."

The Divine Court stood strong, renewed and vibrant.

After breaking through, the Thunder Eagle King seemed blessed by the Heavenly Dao. His demon bloodline erupted and evolved into the divine beast Thunder-Light Roc bloodline, granting him the world's utmost speed.

With the tribulation concluded, Lu Jiulian prepared to go aid Tantai Xuan.

According to Young Master Lu, the passage led to the Primordial Starry Sky—a scheme by the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven against the Five Phoenixes.

It posed an enormous threat.

But the Five Phoenixes could not retreat. If those Innate Divine Demons invaded, it would be an apocalyptic disaster.

Those Divine Demons lived by devouring Heavenly Daos. If the Five Phoenixes fell, it would be obliterated. All living beings within would be scattered and reduced to ashes.

The army was quickly assembled.

Though the tribulation had just ended, both the Witch Race and Demon Race sent forth their forces.

Internal strife was one thing—but when a foreign enemy appeared, they united against it.

After all, they were all beings of the Five Phoenixes.

Human, Demon, and Witch armies boarded special war vessels.

These ships had been specially modified to withstand the corrosive power of the Abyss of Nothingness.

Moreover, to counter the abyss's corrosion,

the human race's master artificer Ah Lu had crafted special armor capable of resisting the abyss's power, protecting Five Phoenix powerhouses from being eroded during battle.

Thanks to the difference in time flow, there was ample time for preparation.

Soon, one warship after another soared into the sky, each representing a different race.

Every vessel was guarded by Profound Immortal powerhouses.

The grand fleet surged out of the Five Phoenixes.

The moment they left, every powerhouse on the life stars in the void starry sky noticed.

And news of the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven guiding Innate Divine Demons from the Primordial Starry Sky to threaten the Five Phoenixes spread like wildfire.

It was as though a pot of boiling porridge had suddenly overflowed, splashing everywhere.

Most living beings in the surrounding starry sky were not originally from the Five Phoenixes.

But over time, under the Five Phoenixes' development, they had gradually integrated.

Even the saint clans once led by saint ancestors mobilized to support the Five Phoenix army.

After all, if the Five Phoenixes fell, their doom would not be far behind.

The Ninth Heaven would never accept them again—they were traitors.

For the Ninth Heaven's Heavenly Dao, recreating saint clans was no difficult task.

The entire void starry sky began to move.

Warships rumbled across the heavens, slowly heading toward the Abyss of Nothingness.

...

Deep in the vast sea,

in the Sea Clan palace,

Gu Mangran had unknowingly spent decades among the Sea Clan. He had created a cultivation method for them, adapted from the Great Luo Immortal Scripture.

He himself cultivated this method.

Perhaps by empowering an entirely new race, Gu Mangran had received immense destiny.

Unbeknownst to him, his cultivation had silently recovered to half-step Golden Immortal—quasi-Emperor level.

One could imagine how vast the destiny he had gained was.

Under his leadership, the Sea Clan had produced many powerhouses.

“The Primordial Starry Sky...”

“The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven are guiding enemies from the Primordial Starry Sky to attack the Five Phoenixes...”

“Such an act chills the heart.”

“Emperors... truly disappointing.”

Gu Mangran shook his head in the Sea Clan palace, his face full of disappointment.

He had received the message from the Heavenly Secrets Pavilion calling upon all forces to unite against the enemy.

Gu Mangran had kept the Sea Clan out of the great tribulation. The Sea Clan was still weak; getting involved would have made them cannon fodder.

But now the tribulation was over.

This time, Gu Mangran did not evade.

He summoned the Sea King.

The Profound Immortal-level Sea King looked at Gu Mangran respectfully.

Gu Mangran was the benefactor of the Sea Clan. Thanks to him, the Sea Clan had developed so rapidly in such a short time and produced many powerhouses.

“I kept the Sea Clan out of the great tribulation to avoid danger. But this time, the crisis threatening the Five Phoenixes cannot be ignored by the Sea Clan.”

“Because the Sea Clan is also part of the Five Phoenixes—one of its races.”

Gu Mangran said.

As his words fell, the Sea Clan beings erupted in roars.

Their cries spread across the vast sea in the form of sound waves, raising towering waves.

Gu Mangran smiled.

Then he personally set out.

He sought out the master artificer Ah Lu and borrowed several warships capable of withstanding the corrosion of the Abyss of Nothingness.

The Sea Clan powerhouses boarded the ships and, under Gu Mangran's lead, surged out of the vast sea.

The Sea Clan of the Five Phoenixes marched to war.

...

In the Yu King Mansion,

decades had passed.

The former Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, now reincarnated as a servant, had unknowingly become the true master of the Yu King Mansion.

He had quietly protected the mansion, ensuring it did not fall during the great tribulation.

However, the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor had always kept a low profile, fearing that any abnormality would be noticed by the ever-present Lu Ping'an.

That fellow never missed a chance to mess with his mind. The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor suspected Lu Ping'an already had some guesses.

Guesses that he was still alive. Otherwise, he wouldn't periodically sweep the Yu King Mansion with powerful primordial spirit scans.

Of course, another reason the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor never left the mansion was the little princess.

Under his secret guidance, the little princess had grown into an extremely powerful sword cultivator.

She was a renowned sword master throughout the Great Xuan Divine Dynasty. Unfortunately, as a mortal with limited talent, her cultivation progressed slowly. Even with the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor's help, she had only just stepped into the Nascent Soul realm.

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor never imagined that he—a supreme Great Emperor of the Ninth Heaven, the foremost of the Heavenly Spirit Clan—would be so captivated by a mortal in the Five Phoenix Continent.

He had always sought ways to cleanse and temper her meridians, to elevate her strength.

But it was not easy. He needed a divine herb capable of such a feat.

After investigation, he learned that the only one in the Five Phoenixes who possessed such divine herbs was the father of the legendary master of White Jade Capital—Lu Changkong.

Lu Changkong was a master of divine herbs. Gu Mangran had relied on Lu Changkong's herbs to repeatedly recover and oppose the Ninth Heaven.

But... the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor was helpless. Lu Changkong was Lu Ping'an's father.

He was already worried about being discovered by Lu Ping'an. Going to Lu Ping'an's father would be walking straight into a trap.

Just as he wrestled with whether to seek Lu Changkong,

he unexpectedly intercepted a message pigeon from the Heavenly Secrets Pavilion, learning of the call for all forces to unite against the enemy.

“Innate Divine Demons from the Primordial Starry Sky?!”

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor’s pupils contracted. The paper in his hand instantly turned to ash.

“Those ancient Great Emperors like Hao... they actually dared to guide Innate Divine Demons into the Five Phoenixes?”

“I once sat alone in the Primordial Starry Sky for hundreds of thousands of years, holding back the Innate Divine Demons...”

“And now you’ve opened a passage for them into the rear of the Ninth Heaven.”

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor drew a deep breath.

He did not wish for the Five Phoenixes to fall.

Because... in the Five Phoenixes, there were people and things he cared about.

In his previous life, he had lived for the Ninth Heaven.

In the end, he had been betrayed and killed by its ancient Great Emperors.

In this life, he wanted to be selfish. He would live only for those he cared about.

The Yu King Mansion and the little princess were what he cared about.

Therefore, the Five Phoenixes could not fall.

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor decided to join the war as a rogue cultivator.

To that end, he coaxed the little princess by saying he was going to sea to gather herbs—a familiar excuse he had used many times before.

The little princess did not suspect him and waited as always for his return.

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor covered himself in a black robe.

He joined the ranks of rogue immortals answering the call and boarded a warship.

He concealed his cultivation, keeping a very low profile.

...

The Nether Emperor sat calmly in the depths of the abyss.

Micah hovered beside him.

Beyond the abyss,

one warship after another floated in the void—warships of the Five Phoenixes, representing every major force.

They had once been enemies, but now... they shared a single goal: to face the Divine Demon threat from beyond the passage, a crisis that could destroy the Five Phoenixes.

Lu Jiulian sat cross-legged on his green lotus, eyes closed.

Behind him stood the immortals of the Ascended Realm.

Tang Guo floated quietly nearby, guarded by Tang Yimo, who looked gravely toward the abyss.

The Profound Immortals of the Five Phoenixes had all gathered.

Even those who had not appeared during the tribulation now showed themselves.

Nie Changqing, Sima Qingshan, Bai Qingniao, and others sat quietly on the warships.

They chatted leisurely, even brewing tea and discussing cultivation insights.

Yet the atmosphere between heaven and earth was incomparably solemn.

Suddenly,

Sima Qingshan, Bai Qingniao, and the others—who had been drinking tea and chatting—froze.

With grave expressions, they turned toward the depths of the Abyss of Nothingness.

“Innate Divine Demons... they’re coming.”

As the words fell,

every powerhouse on every warship felt their hearts tighten. Their gazes turned toward the abyss.

Of course, those with insufficient cultivation could not see clearly into the depths.

But the Profound Immortals' vision pierced through space.

They could see.

At the bottom of the Abyss of Nothingness, the passage entrance.

Array runes suddenly expanded, tearing open a massive spatial passage.

Then, an incomparably cold yet ancient and terrifying aura surged forth. Accompanied by ferocious roars, like evil beasts, something barbaric and pitch-black shot through the passage like black lightning.

Chapter 566: I, Lu Ping'an, Love Helping Others the Most

In the utterly silent void, a faint cracking sound echoed from the depths of the Abyss of Nothingness.

A furious gale erupted from the passage entrance, carrying an icy, murderous chill that surged forth from the ancient starry sky beyond.

On the warships, every powerhouse of the Five Phoenixes narrowed their eyes.

Even the Profound Immortals felt an overwhelming pressure descend like dark clouds.

It was Emperor Realm might!

“They’re here!”

The Hegemon, Sima Qingshan, Tang Yimo, and others spoke in unison.

The Innate Divine Demons that Young Master Lu had warned of—terrifying beings born to destroy worlds!

The weakest among them were already at Emperor Realm!

Deep within the Abyss of Nothingness,

Tantai Xuan, who had been sitting motionless like an immovable rock, finally stirred. His eyes flickered as the Life-and-Death Register before him continuously turned its pages.

He looked up.

Micah, standing behind him, also raised his head, following Tantai Xuan's gaze.

A terrifying figure shot forth from beyond the passage.

BOOM!

With a shattering sound,

a black shadow slammed into the passage entrance.

A claw emerged, riding the spatial fluctuations, and smashed down hard.

It was a claw formed entirely of white bone, covered in dense, eerie patterns that seemed to embody some profound meaning—the engraving of rules.

Gradually, as the figure fully emerged from the passage, its form became clear.

This was an Innate Divine Demon with a humanoid shape. Its aura was overwhelmingly powerful, its body clad in armor of white bone spikes, each engraved with ancient runes.

“Kekeke...”

“Humans!”

The Divine Demon’s eyes were pure black, like thick ink.

Yet within that blackness gleamed star-like lights. Its gaze shifted and locked onto Tantai Xuan, who stood blocking the passage. Every bone spike on its body bristled, transforming into razor-sharp protrusions.

“Truly a newborn world... and it has already given birth to a new Heavenly Dao. What a delicious scent... such rich ‘Dao Origin’!”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon opened its mouth, saliva dripping down.

“The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven did not deceive me!”

BOOM!

Terrifying power erupted as it fully burst out of the passage.

Unlike the first Divine Demon that had been stuck, this one's aura was far stronger. With the passage now torn wide open, it faced no obstruction.

Micah's pupils contracted sharply.

"So the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven really betrayed the Five Phoenixes! What did they promise you?"

Rage surged in Micah's heart.

He had only suspected before, but this Divine Demon's words confirmed everything.

The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven had colluded with these Primordial Starry Sky Divine Demons!

That meant everything the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor had done—sitting alone in the starry sky for hundreds of thousands of years—had been in vain.

Micah clenched his fists.

Though he had once resented the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, deep down he still admired him. After all, the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor had brought glory to the Heavenly Spirit Clan.

Yet that glorious figure had been betrayed and killed by those very ancient Great Emperors.

“They are wise. Faced with irresistible power, they chose to compromise. They are very smart.”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon’s saliva continued to drip uncontrollably.

BOOM!

Its body transformed into a streak of white light, shooting through the Abyss of Nothingness.

Tantai Xuan’s eyes snapped open.

His cold face was filled with murderous intent.

“No matter where the hell you crawled out from... as long as I, the Nether Emperor, stand here, you will not take a single step into the Five Phoenixes!”

The next moment, Tantai Xuan’s black robes whipped wildly as he charged straight at the Bone Spike Divine Demon.

The Life-and-Death Register flipped open, unleashing torrents of life-and-death qi that formed streaks of energy.

Tantai Xuan closed in, arms raised as though embracing a mountain, and shoved the Bone Spike Divine Demon backward.

He slammed it back into the passage.

But from the passage entrance, a second Divine Demon rushed forth.

BOOM!

The two Divine Demons collided, unleashing a terrifying energy storm.

“Emperor Realm... this world actually has Emperor Realm cultivators. What a nuisance!”

“The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven told us we could slip in unnoticed. What a load of crap.”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon cursed, its gaze turning even more sinister.

The other Divine Demon resembled a sharp steel blade—its arms and legs were razor-sharp edges.

Its overwhelming aura sent chills through the soul.

Tantai Xuan hovered in the Abyss of Nothingness, back turned to them. Above his head, the Life-and-Death Register rained down life-and-death qi, causing his aura to boil.

Faintly, he was approaching the peak of Third-Revolution Golden Immortal.

“Get lost.”

“Or die.”

Tantai Xuan said coldly.

He deeply felt the weight of the responsibility on his shoulders. The Divine Demons of the Primordial Starry Sky were indeed as terrifying as Young Master Lu had warned.

Two had appeared casually, and both were early Emperor Realm—on par with him.

Without the Life-and-Death Register as an Emperor Weapon, Tantai Xuan would already be in a bitter struggle.

“We Divine Demons were born from the source of chaos. Heavenly Daos are our food. Before food, why would we ever choose to flee?”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon sneered.

Then, terrifying energy surged from their bodies—strange waves rippling outward.

They attacked Tantai Xuan from bizarre, unpredictable angles.

“You cannot stop us! This world is doomed! Its Heavenly Dao will become our meal!”

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

outside the Abyss of Nothingness,

void rifts tore open, revealing long fissures.

Within those fissures, illusory figures hovered, casting their gazes through the thick fog.

They could clearly see the terrifying clashes within.

“The passage has opened. Two Innate Divine Demons have been discovered.”

“The Five Phoenixes already have Emperor Realm cultivators intercepting them... As expected, Lu Ping’an was prepared.”

“The moment the Primordial Starry Sky passage appeared, it brought enormous calamity. Back when the Ninth Heaven opened its own passage to the Primordial Starry Sky, it ushered in an endless dark age. Countless Emperor Realm powerhouses fell at the passage entrance.”

“Even several Peak Emperor powerhouses died before the passage was finally stabilized, granting the Ninth Heaven a chance to develop in peace.”

“At that time, the Ninth Heaven was at its absolute peak, with nine Peak Emperors, and yet it struggled so greatly. The Five Phoenixes is far weaker than the Ninth Heaven of that era.”

“Let alone Peak Emperors—even Great Emperors number only one: Lu Ping’an.”

“How can the Five Phoenixes possibly resist these ferocious Divine Demons?”

The ancient Great Emperors communicated with one another, their primordial spirit fluctuations laced with mockery and schadenfreude.

“But if the Five Phoenixes truly falls, it won’t be good news for the Ninth Heaven either...”

“Once the Five Phoenixes collapses, those Divine Demons will pour out from the Abyss of Nothingness, turning it into an unstable passage.”

“No matter. The passage has only just opened. At most, it can allow entry to low-tier and high-tier Divine Demons... Immortal-tier Divine Demons cannot pass through a newly opened passage.”

“As long as there are no Immortal-tier Divine Demons, they pose no threat to us.”

The ancient Great Emperors’ conversation gradually died down.

Their gazes remained fixed on the Abyss of Nothingness, as though waiting for the Five Phoenixes to be destroyed under the terrifying onslaught.

They seemed to be witnessing the same misfortune that had once befallen the Ninth Heaven.

...

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

“They’re here?”

Lu sat back in his Thousand-Blade Chair. Spring warmth and blooming flowers surrounded him. A gentle breeze blew, making everything feel serene.

Yet at this moment, Lu looked quite solemn.

Although he had learned much about Innate Divine Demons from the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor's memories, even the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor's knowledge was far from complete.

He only knew that Innate Divine Demons varied greatly in strength.

The strongest could surpass Peak Emperors and destroy entire worlds with ease.

Thus, Lu became serious.

The Spirit-Pressure Chessboard shimmered with light. It had long since reached the level of an Innate Spiritual Treasure. The chessboard grew alongside Lu—strengthening as his aura deepened.

That was the true power of the Spirit-Pressure Chessboard.

Lu rolled up his sleeves and picked up a chess piece.

His white robes fluttered in the wind.

Ning Zhao stood quietly beside him, pouring him a cup of Heavenly Immortal Wine.

The rich fragrance of the wine enveloped the entire island, mingling with the scent of peach and chrysanthemum blossoms, creating an idyllic paradise.

Lu slowly placed the chess piece on the board, setting up a formation—something he often did. Ning Zhao was not surprised.

She simply continued brewing wine and refilling his cup.

Everything on the island was peaceful.

Yet for some reason, Ning Zhao felt as though a massive storm was brewing.

Snap!

As Lu placed the piece, vast destiny seemed to be stirred.

...

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

the Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon charged out with eerie speed. Suddenly, thick destiny surged forth, forming a massive, ancient fortress that blocked their path.

The two Divine Demons narrowed their eyes but sensed no threat from it.

In the next moment, they shot left and right like ghosts, crashing into the destiny-formed fortress.

BOOM!

The fortress did not collapse.

But the two Divine Demons burst through it.

Tantai Xuan and Micah, already prepared for battle, were momentarily stunned.

Because as the Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon passed through the fortress, they became tainted with vast destiny.

Just like the ferocious beasts during the Age of Ferocious Beasts.

Tantai Xuan narrowed his eyes. Brilliant light surged within them.

The two Divine Demons now looked like delicacies coated in breadcrumbs and deep-fried.

The destiny clinging to them was deeply attractive to both Tantai Xuan and Micah.

Under normal circumstances, accumulating enough destiny to reach Third-Revolution Golden Immortal would take an extremely long time.

But if they could slay a Divine Demon, it would be much easier.

Tantai Xuan and Micah exchanged a glance.

Then both smiled.

Calamity... or fortune!

At this moment, they no longer felt fear—only anticipation and excitement.

If originally they fought the Divine Demons only to protect the Five Phoenixes, now, with their deaths tied to destiny, they had one more reason to kill them.

Tantai Xuan erupted with terrifying aura. The Life-and-Death Register flipped rapidly.

Micah unleashed his Extreme Realm Emperor Fist.

They clashed with the Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon.

The Bone Spike Divine Demon was held back by Tantai Xuan, while Micah battled the Blade Divine Demon.

As the fight continued, the two Divine Demons gradually sensed something wrong.

“Why are they getting stronger the longer we fight?!”

“Didn’t the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven say these Emperor Realm cultivators had just broken through and lacked combat experience?”

The two Divine Demons exchanged a glance. Immense pressure erupted.

BOOM!

The next moment, the Bone Spike Divine Demon let out a piercing howl.

Every bone spike on its body shot outward.

Each spike transformed into a bone demon in midair.

The bone demons screeched and surged like a flood, attempting to bypass Tantai Xuan and Micah and escape the abyss—rushing toward the Five Phoenixes.

“As long as one bone demon escapes, it can act like a parasite, devouring this world’s Heavenly Dao and absorbing Dao Origin to grow stronger!”

“Kekeke... as long as one bone demon enters, this world is doomed!”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon sneered.

Over the years, Innate Divine Demons had developed countless methods to destroy worlds. Every world had its resisters. Devouring a world’s Heavenly Dao was far too difficult without some tricks.

Survival of the fittest.

Without such methods, they would have starved long ago.

Thus, they had evolved the ability to create countless avatars.

Tantai Xuan transformed into the Nether Emperor, his face cold and merciless.

He glanced at the tide of white bone demons surging like a flood, trying to break through the Abyss of Nothingness' defenses.

He sneered coldly.

If this had been at the beginning, he would have been flustered, even distracted during battle.

But now, he could entrust his back to the people of the Five Phoenixes without worry.

He was not fighting alone.

Any foreign race that dared try to destroy the Five Phoenixes would be exterminated!

Tantai Xuan held the Life-and-Death Register and seemed to chant an ancient incantation.

“Where are the Netherworld Yin Soldiers?!”

Tantai Xuan roared.

In the next moment,

beyond the Abyss of Nothingness,

a Yellow Springs seemed to unfurl from the sky. Rebirth flowers bloomed in brilliant splendor.

Clanging sounds rang out as dense ranks of Yin Soldiers marched forth.

Hell Hounds roared, wrapped in infernal flames.

The nine city lords of the dead led the Yin Soldiers, forming a powerful defensive line outside the abyss.

As the bone demons surged out of the abyss,

they were intercepted by the Yin Soldiers, and battle erupted.

“They’re here!”

The Hegemon, Tang Yimo, and other powerhouses’ eyes lit up.

On the warships, the cultivators of the Five Phoenixes all shone with battle intent.

They could not interfere in Emperor Realm battles, but...

these small bone demons would not escape their defenses and infiltrate the Five Phoenixes!

The Hegemon transformed into a demonic figure, demonic qi surging.

Tang Yimo opened six meridians, shattering a bone demon with a single punch.

As they fought, they discovered they could draw faint strands of destiny from these bone demons.

This fueled their battle intent even further!

The Blade Divine Demon fighting Micah also released countless blade fragments—shards that detached from its body and transformed into blade demons.

But the outcome was the same as the bone demons—they were intercepted by Five Phoenix cultivators.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint swept past with spread wings. Solar divine fire blazed, incinerating numerous blade demons in an instant.

On the other side,

the newly reunited twelve Witch Kings refused to be outdone.

Leading the Witch Race, they grabbed blade demons and tore into them with savage ferocity.

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

the Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon, locked in battle with Tantai Xuan and Micah, suddenly changed expressions.

“Damn it!”

“The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven deceived us!”

“This is what they call unprepared?”

“What’s with those ferocious creatures outside? Is this a trap?!”

The Bone Spike Divine Demon roared.

But Tantai Xuan burst into laughter.

Sensing the Divine Demons’ fear, he felt immense satisfaction.

Micah, lacking an Emperor Weapon, was at a disadvantage against the Blade Divine Demon.

Yet during the battle, he gradually realized he didn’t need an Emperor Weapon at all.

His fists were his weapon.

The Extreme Realm Emperor Fist underwent sublimation once more, its power surging!

The two Divine Demons had barely emerged from the passage before they were already suppressed.

BOOM!

Soon, another roar erupted from the passage entrance.

Vaguely, it seemed another Innate Divine Demon was about to descend.

The Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon both revealed delighted expressions.

“Kekeke!”

“So what if you’re prepared?!”

“Unleash the dark age upon this world! Feel the terror brought by us Divine Demons!”

So what if they were blocked?

As long as this newly opened passage remained unstable, the scent of the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao would continuously attract more Divine Demons from the Primordial Starry Sky.

It was the scent of delicious food. Under its allure, even Divine Demons slumbering on distant Primordial Stars would awaken from their dreams—growing ever more frenzied.

In time, the Five Phoenixes would face more and more powerful Divine Demons.

As time passed, high-tier Divine Demons... even Immortal-tier Divine Demons...

Tantai Xuan and Micah's expressions changed slightly.

They looked toward the passage entrance.

The passage rippled. A powerful being was forcing its way through.

At this moment, the Bone Spike Divine Demon and Blade Divine Demon were no longer anxious.

As more Divine Demons gathered,

the Five Phoenixes' handful of Emperor Realm cultivators would be unable to withstand the onslaught. As those Emperor Realm cultivators fell, the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao would be like a peeled orange—ready to be devoured.

“Kekeke...”

A sharp laugh echoed from the passage entrance.

A female Divine Demon emerged, her disheveled hair writhing like venomous snakes.

After passing through the destiny fortress, she locked onto Tantai Xuan and Micah.

Meanwhile, Lu Jiulian, seated outside the Abyss of Nothingness, finally moved.

He flicked his finger. The Azure Lotus Sword whistled forth. Stepping onto the sword light, he charged into the abyss.

The female Divine Demon about to ambush Tantai Xuan suddenly turned her head.

A sword light slashed past her.

One of her venomous snake hairs was severed, spraying thick poison.

Lu Jiulian's sword qi surged. Around him, each petal of the azure lotus transformed into an incomparably sharp sword beam.

"Another Emperor Realm..."

The female Divine Demon narrowed her eyes.

The next moment, she let out a piercing shriek and clashed with Lu Jiulian.

Terrifying shockwaves erupted, widening the abyss even further.

Whenever the Divine Demons released their avatars to infiltrate the Five Phoenixes, they were intercepted and slain by the Five Phoenix cultivators stationed outside the abyss.

At the passage entrance,

it continued to writhe.

Powerful auras surged as one Divine Demon after another emerged.

Four... five... six...

The number of Divine Demons grew steadily.

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

beyond the void rift,

ancient Great Emperors' auras intertwined as they watched the terrifying carnage unfolding in the Abyss of Nothingness.

Buzz...

Array runes floated. From deep within the rift, a powerful presence seemed to radiate doubt.

“Why hasn’t Lu Ping’an made a move yet?”

“Is this kid deliberately messing with us? Like he did with the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor?”

“But this is already the ninth Innate Divine Demon...”

“Hmm? Could it be... Lu Ping’an deliberately allowed these Innate Divine Demons to enter?”

“We’ve been tricked.”

BOOM!

From deep within the void rift, a supreme aura erupted. Array runes surged.

...

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu leaned back in his Thousand-Blade Chair.

The corners of his mouth curved upward.

“The tenth... perfect. That makes ten.”

“Oh? They noticed...”

Lu raised an eyebrow. Lines danced in his eyes.

He saw the array runes above the passage in the Abyss of Nothingness surge, spatial fluctuations erupting as though trying to seal the passage.

The tenth Divine Demon was caught in the passage, unable to advance or retreat.

Lu smiled, playing with a chess piece in his hand.

“Too late.”

Looking at the early-tier Divine Demon struggling helplessly in the passage entrance, Lu casually tossed the chess piece.

After all, who said he, Lu Ping'an, loved helping others the most?

The chess piece landed on the board and rolled.

With a soft "snap," it settled into place.

At the passage entrance, the Eight Trigrams array runes suddenly erupted with profound mystery.

The passage that had been closing was forced open once more.

The struggling tenth Divine Demon burst forth in wild excitement.

Chapter 567: Whether One Becomes an Emperor or Not Isn't What Matters

In the Ninth Heaven,

beyond the void rift,

the atmosphere grew frigid. The illusory figures of numerous ancient Great Emperors hovered in silence, gazing toward the Five Phoenix Continent.

They were certain now: Lu Ping'an was playing some trick.

Why?

Because when Ancient Emperor Hao attempted to seal the passage connecting the Primordial Starry Sky to the Five Phoenixes, he had been blocked by Lu.

Lu had used array runes to tear the passage open once more, allowing the tenth Innate Divine Demon from the Primordial Starry Sky to enter the Five Phoenixes.

This...

It was practically an admission of guilt!

Even the slowest among the ancient Great Emperors present could now clearly sense that they had been played by Lu Ping'an.

"Lu Ping'an deliberately allowed ten Innate Divine Demons to enter... Does he have some purpose?"

“Could he be extracting benefits from them? Perhaps he’s after the treasures and resources they hoard from the Primordial Starry Sky? It’s very possible—after all, the Emperor Realm cultivators of the Five Phoenixes need materials to forge Emperor Weapons, and the best materials come from the remnants of Primordial Stars.”

No matter how the ancient Great Emperors argued,

one thing was clear: by guiding the Innate Divine Demons into the Five Phoenixes, they had unintentionally fulfilled Lu Ping’an’s plans.

This left them deeply dissatisfied.

BOOM!

From deep within the rift, that supremely powerful presence erupted with terrifying aura.

In the next moment, nine-character array runes surged violently.

...

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

terrifying pressure continued to spread, the silence carrying an eerie strangeness.

Ten Innate Divine Demons had emerged from the passage and now hovered within the abyss. Their overwhelming demonic auras filled every corner.

Tantai Xuan's expression grew grave.

Micah's pupils contracted slightly.

Ten Innate Divine Demons—though their individual strength was roughly on par with theirs, the sheer number created an oppressive sense of threat.

The tenth Divine Demon, meanwhile, was puzzled and wary.

Earlier, someone had tried to seal the passage, trapping it inside.

But then...

The passage had been forced open again, allowing it to enter the Five Phoenixes.

This sudden tightening and loosening felt deeply unsettling.

Divine Demons were not fools—they possessed intelligence.

This anomaly made them vaguely sense something amiss.

For a moment, the ten Divine Demons gathered together in the abyss.

On the other side,

the Golden Immortals of the Five Phoenixes also rose into the air, their auras surging powerfully.

Outside the abyss,

the battle continued. The small monsters spawned from the Divine Demons' avatars tried to break through the defensive line and infiltrate the Five Phoenixes, but the Five Phoenix cultivators held firm, allowing not a single one to advance.

Moreover, the destiny contained within these avatars allowed many Five Phoenix cultivators to break through.

For example, the Hegemon—who had been one step away from quasi-Emperor—finally stepped into that realm.

Sima Qingshan unfurled his ink-wash scroll. The scroll created a world of its own, swallowing the Divine Demon avatars and annihilating them instantly.

Thus, he too received a massive influx of destiny.

Combined with the immense destiny he had already accumulated through his contributions to the path of painting and cultivation, Sima Qingshan broke through to quasi-Emperor in this battle, his aura growing ever stronger.

The Demon Race and Witch Race, though they had fought bitterly before, now united against the existential threat to the Five Phoenixes.

They even turned the battle into a competition: whoever slew more Divine Demon avatars would win.

Thus, the abyss became a clear dividing line.

No Divine Demon avatar could cross it.

Within the abyss,

the ten Divine Demons gradually realized something was wrong.

“We’ve been tricked...”

“The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven deceived us. Just now... they tried to seal the passage!”

“This world’s inhabitants were fully prepared. Our avatars can’t break through their defenses—this is completely different from what those ancient Great Emperors told us. Damn it!”

“If we can return alive from this world, we must report this to the Immortal-tier!”

The Divine Demons’ exchanges revealed their growing panic.

This gave Tantai Xuan and the others a moment to catch their breath.

Tantai Xuan narrowed his eyes, the Life-and-Death Register hovering above his head.

Micah panted lightly, staring intently at the ten Divine Demons.

Lu Jiulian and Zhu Long also wore grave expressions.

...

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu smiled.

Ten Divine Demons—exactly what he needed to complete his special task.

Moreover, Lu had a feeling that once he finished this task, the Five Phoenixes might finally be ready to attempt ascension to Immortal-Martial.

If the Five Phoenixes succeeded in ascending to Immortal-Martial, every being within would experience a massive leap in strength.

Lu's eyes shone brightly.

“Divine Demons devour Heavenly Daos... within their bodies dwell the power of rules. Each Divine Demon represents a form of order and law.”

“I wonder if the Heavenly Dao can devour the power of Divine Demons to perfect its own rules?”

Lu stroked his chin, pondering.

But soon he set the thought aside. His gaze shifted toward the Abyss of Nothingness.

The passage had been resealed the moment he allowed the tenth Divine Demon through.

But this seal was temporary.

The Primordial Starry Sky contained immense power that constantly tore at the passage.

It was difficult to fully close; it could only be suppressed, delaying its reopening.

Still...

It was enough.

Ten Innate Divine Demons were sufficient for Lu to complete his task.

He was also very curious what rewards this task would bring.

Seated in his Thousand-Blade Chair,

Lu's eyes reflected the images of the ten Divine Demons.

For now, he did not rush to act personally.

These ten Divine Demons were perfect training partners.

Their strength had not yet reached Great Emperor level—ideal for Lu Jiulian, Tantai Xuan, and the others to hone themselves against.

Perhaps this time... they could break through to Great Emperor realm?

Raising his hand, he placed another piece on the chessboard, as though playing a grand game.

...

Buzz...

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

the Divine Demons suddenly felt immense pressure.

They looked up and saw a chessboard slowly unfurling at the top of the abyss.

Soon it covered the entire sky.

“What is that?”

“It looks like a human Emperor Realm domain...”

“Didn’t this world only have newly ascended Emperors? How can it so easily envelop us in a domain? Does this newborn Heavenly Dao world actually possess a human Great Emperor comparable to high-tier Divine Demons?”

The ten Divine Demons immediately sensed something ominous.

Tantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Micah, and Zhu Long also sensed something. They looked up at the chessboard domain.

The corners of their mouths curved upward.

“This is Young Master Lu’s chessboard domain...”

“Young Master Lu is assisting us.”

“With Young Master Lu’s support, everything becomes first-rate.”

Micah couldn’t help but laugh. The tension in his heart eased considerably.

BOOM!

In the next moment, the four of them erupted with overwhelming momentum.

Tantai Xuan gripped the Life-and-Death Register, life-and-death qi swirling around him as he transformed into a streak of light and charged once more toward the Bone Spike Divine Demon.

Micah clenched his fists. His Extreme Dao Emperor Fist reached its utmost peak.

Zhu Long and Lu Jiulian also attacked.

With Lu's chessboard domain spreading, they set aside their worries about the Five Phoenixes and fully immersed themselves in battle.

Perhaps Young Master Lu had arranged this so they could gain something from the fight.

After becoming Golden Immortals, they had few opportunities for real combat—or rather, few battles worthy of them.

Thus, this battle against ten Divine Demons of comparable strength was an incredibly rare opportunity.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Terrifying shockwaves rippled outward, causing the space to tremble like waves.

Facing the onslaught of Tantai Xuan and the others,

the ten Divine Demons cursed the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven in their hearts, yet their own madness was forced to the surface.

Power surged wildly from within them as they surrounded and attacked the four human Emperors.

Even if they were to die, they would make this world suffer.

They would make these four human Emperors fall here!

Lu Jiulian's sword light danced wildly as he clashed with the snake-haired female Divine Demon.

His expression was icy and solemn.

As he moved, vast destiny surged around him, his energy boiling.

In his hands, Wrath Lotuses bloomed one after another.

Each blooming Wrath Lotus contained terrifying explosive power.

Of course, these were only three-colored Wrath Lotuses—his most basic attack.

In his theory of Wrath Lotuses, they could be stacked up to seven colors, or even nine...

The more layers, the more terrifying the power.

This could perhaps be considered his divine ability.

The Azure Lotus domain expanded. Within it, lotus flowers bloomed everywhere.

Each lotus seemed to become an extension of Lu Jiulian—he could appear at any of them instantly.

This supreme domain sent chills through the snake-haired Divine Demon.

She roared furiously. The divine demonic power within her surged wildly. Her hair grew uncontrollably, transforming into countless venomous snakes that lunged toward every lotus flower.

If she could lock down Lu Jiulian's position, she would have a chance to kill him.

And indeed, Lu Jiulian's position seemed sealed.

He stood motionless.

Countless venomous snakes filled the space and domain, forming a flood ready to crash down.

Yet Lu Jiulian did not move. He raised his hands. Energy intertwined between them, vaguely forming a lotus flower.

Lu Jiulian closed his eyes.

He felt as though all the energy within him had been drained.

A rainbow bloomed between his palms.

Though his heart was cold, his hands could create rainbows.

The seven-colored Wrath Lotus slowly took shape,

slowly spinning in his palm.

Just as the endless snake hair was about to entangle him,

Lu Jiulian exhaled softly and flicked the seven-colored Wrath Lotus.

The leisurely floating Wrath Lotus moved with astonishing speed,

transforming into a streak of lightning that shot forth.

The Wrath Lotus danced like a serene rainbow lotus.

Yet within its calm beauty hid apocalyptic destructive power. The moment the snake hair neared, it was continuously annihilated and shattered.

The snake-haired Divine Demon felt a chill run through her entire body. She sensed the breath of death.

With a piercing shriek,

she unleashed her innate divine ability.

Divine power spread.

Around her appeared an ancient serpent.

The serpent was enormous—its dragon-like scales thick as city walls. It coiled protectively around her, hiding her within.

BOOM!

The seven-colored Wrath Lotus struck the snake-haired Divine Demon. Terrifying explosive and destructive power instantly engulfed her.

The shockwave from Lu Jiulian's battle drew the attention of the other Divine Demons.

Their expressions changed drastically as they moved to assist the snake-haired Divine Demon.

However,

a faint laughter echoed between heaven and earth.

The crisp sound of chess pieces landing rang out.

Snap! Snap! Snap!

Several chess pieces fell.

Beams of Spirit-Pressure light descended from the sky,

completely pinning the Divine Demons in place.

“This is the pressure of a high-tier Divine Demon! This world... truly has a high-tier Divine Demon! The ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven deceived us—they sent us to our deaths!”

The Divine Demons suppressed by the Spirit-Pressure beams revealed terror.

Moreover, they could sense from the Spirit-Pressure beams that this high-tier Divine Demon of the Five Phoenixes had combat power approaching Immortal-tier Divine Demons!

They had been thoroughly deceived!

BOOM!!!

The violently contracting explosion suddenly swept outward.

In the abyss, a seven-colored lotus continuously expanded—growing to ten thousand zhang—before contracting to its utmost limit...

Revealing the aftermath of the blast.

A massive serpent body hung limp. The snake-haired Divine Demon was covered in wounds, barely clinging to life.

On the verge of death.

Struck by Lu Jiulian's seven-colored Wrath Lotus, she had lost all combat power.

Or rather, her will had been shattered.

Lu Jiulian's face was pale. The seven-colored Wrath Lotus was a tremendous drain on him.

His destructive dao intent had been completely exhausted; two-thirds of his internal energy had been consumed by the Wrath Lotus.

Fortunately, the result was immense.

And fortunately, Young Master Lu's Spirit-Pressure beams had suppressed the other Divine Demons.

BOOM!

Destiny surged.

The destiny clinging to the snake-haired Divine Demon madly poured into Lu Jiulian's body.

Lu Jiulian's eyes lit up. He sat cross-legged.

Destiny like a vast sea appeared above his head and around him.

He seemed to sit at the center of the storm.

The sea of destiny flipped, forming giant waves like apocalyptic tsunamis.

The entire sea of destiny boiled, churning violently above Lu Jiulian's head.

In an instant, it completed three revolutions.

The sea of destiny surged three times—Third-Revolution Golden Immortal!

Meanwhile, the dying snake-haired Divine Demon felt the world spin. Spatial mysteries surged beside her as a spatial rift tore open.

An arm reached out from the rift, grabbed her by the hair, and dragged her inside.

When the snake-haired Divine Demon regained consciousness, she found herself on an island shrouded in immortal qi.

Not far away, a human loli was burning a black pot over a fire.

A fox-faced human woman silently sharpened her sword.

The snake-haired Divine Demon was filled with terror.

Rustle.

A breeze blew through the peach grove, sending petals dancing.

A young man in white robes sat in a wheelchair before a chessboard, looking at her calmly.

“You... you are the high-tier Divine Demon of this world!”

The snake-haired Divine Demon trembled in fear.

“High-tier Divine Demon?”

Lu was momentarily stunned, then understood—this was how the Divine Demon race classified Golden Immortal strength.

Under Lu’s questioning, the snake-haired Divine Demon revealed everything.

“Early-tier, high-tier, Immortal... so that’s how Divine Demons are ranked?”

Lu pondered.

“And above Immortal?”

Lu’s gaze fell on the snake-haired Divine Demon.

Terror flooded her eyes.

“Cannot say... cannot say...”

Lu’s mouth twitched.

With a gentle wave of his sleeve,

the snake-haired Divine Demon was instantly petrified.

Then, lines danced in his eyes as his gaze returned to the Abyss of Nothingness.

Micah had always walked the path of the Extreme Realm. Seeing Lu Jiulian complete three revolutions of the sea of destiny, he felt a spark of unwillingness.

His fist might grew even more terrifying. Within his domain,

the Blade Divine Demon was beaten until every blade fragment shattered.

He seemed to undergo a breakthrough in will.

Every punch erupted with vast fist might, shattering the Blade Divine Demon's blades until it was on its last breath.

Then, with one final punch, Micah struck.

The Divine Demon's soul shattered.

Yet its incomparably tough body remained intact, merely lifeless, floating in the abyss.

Divine Demon bodies were far sturdier than their souls.

On the other side,

Tantai Xuan, wrapped in life-and-death qi, shattered every bone spike on the Bone Spike Divine Demon. Finally, he swept it away with life-and-death qi, killing it outright.

The light in its eyes faded. Its soul shattered and was absorbed by the Life-and-Death Register.

The register's power grew even stronger.

Both Tantai Xuan and Micah sensed something. They sat cross-legged in the void—one surrounded by surging karma, the other by a churning sea of destiny.

Both completed the Third-Revolution Golden Immortal stage, gaining combat power capable of contending slightly with Great Emperors.

Meanwhile, while Tantai Xuan and the others cultivated,

Lu sent Sima Qingshan, the Hegemon, Tang Yimo, and others into the abyss to battle the Divine Demons.

At this moment, the remaining Divine Demons clearly understood...

They had been used.

They had been turned into whetstones.

In their panic, their combat power weakened. They became perfect training targets for quasi-Emperor powerhouses like Sima Qingshan and Bai Qingniao.

Outside the abyss,

the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, cloaked in black robes, stood on a warship.

He watched the changes in the abyss in silence.

He had never expected such an outcome—the ten Divine Demons had become Lu Ping'an's tools.

They had been used as stepping stones to sharpen the strength of the Five Phoenixes' powerhouses.

Seeing the vast destiny, the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor felt his heart stir.

In that moment, he too chose to enter the abyss, hoping to claim a share.

If he could obtain destiny from these Divine Demons, he could save decades of cultivation!

Gu Mangran led the Sea Clan in battle against the Divine Demon avatars.

In this fight, the Sea Clan displayed astonishing combat power and coordination.

Especially after Gu Mangran communicated with Jiang Li, Ximen Xianzhi, Mo Liqi, and Luo Mingyue.

The four inheritors of the King legacies greatly respected Gu Mangran.

Thus, they joined the Sea Clan, greatly boosting its strength and allowing them to slay many Divine Demon avatars, receiving destiny in return.

Gu Mangran's gaze shifted toward the abyss.

With a light laugh, he stepped inside.

The twelve Witch Kings roared with battle intent. With enemies to fight, they charged into the abyss like madmen, surrounding a Divine Demon and unleashing a righteous group beating.

Having reached quasi-Emperor, the Golden Crow Demon Saint now sought further breakthrough.

He would not miss this battle.

A scorpion-like Divine Demon radiated deadly poison.

Yet watching the human cultivators of the Five Phoenixes charge at the Divine Demons with wild enthusiasm,

it felt that even its once-proud poison could no longer give it a sense of security.

Fortunately, due to the poison, no human cultivator had yet come to fight it.

“Hmm?”

Suddenly, a surprised voice rang out.

The chessboard trembled. A beam of Spirit-Pressure light descended, freezing the Scorpion Divine Demon in place.

It struggled to turn its head and saw a spatial rift tear open beside it.

A white-robed young man wearing spirit-energy woven gloves grabbed it and dragged it away.

After several spatial shifts,

the Scorpion Divine Demon's vision gradually cleared.

The air was thick with the fragrance of medicinal herbs.

In the distance,

the white-robed young man who had captured it sat in a wheelchair, conversing with an old farmer-like figure.

"Hey, why so polite? Your father just enjoys the soul-stirring feeling of researching divine herbs. I don't like fighting and killing."

Lu Changkong waved his hand.

“This Divine Demon’s poison should be helpful for your poison body, Father. That’s why I brought it. Becoming an Emperor or not isn’t important—what matters is that this kind of poison is hard to find.”

Lu said.

After a half-hearted refusal, Lu Changkong accepted.

The Scorpion Divine Demon awoke and frantically tried to escape.

The conversation between father and son was far too terrifying.

However, Lu gently beckoned.

The Spirit-Pressure beam smashed down, pinning the Scorpion Divine Demon in the ancient tomb, unable to move.

The old farmer-like Lu Changkong excitedly rolled up his sleeves and walked step by step toward the Scorpion Divine Demon.

He reached out and grasped its stinger.

The Scorpion Divine Demon trembled.

It had never felt so powerless—as though an incomparably thick and irresistible poison was pouring into its body, striking straight at its soul.

So... there existed such a bizarre and deadly poison in this world.

After a few breaths,

the Scorpion Divine Demon perished.

Above Lu Changkong's head, vast destiny surged as he began to break through.

Lu glanced at the system panel.

Divine Demons slain: (6/10).

Satisfied, he traversed space and returned to the central island.

He continued remotely controlling the Spirit-Pressure Chessboard, assisting the Five Phoenixes' cultivators in their battle against the Divine Demons.

But the moment he returned to the central island and took a sip of Heavenly Immortal Wine,

Lu froze.

He narrowed his eyes.

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

beside the Divine Demon currently battling the twelve Witch Kings,

a massive "Xing" (Travel) character array rune suddenly appeared.

Space shattered inch by inch.

A spatial rift tore open.

From within that rift,

an arm covered in ancient aura reached out.

It seized the Divine Demon fighting the twelve Witch Kings.

The twelve Witch Kings' eyes instantly turned red!

They could understand stealing food,

but stealing a Divine Demon?

Gu Mangran's body trembled violently. When he saw that arm, he sensed a familiar aura.

"Emperor Hao!"

The owner of the arm ignored Gu Mangran.

He still intended to take this tenth Divine Demon away.

BOOM!

Spatial mysteries surged once more in the abyss.

Space tore open.

“You think you can take back something that has fallen into my, Lu Ping’an’s, hands?”

A faint laugh echoed.

Lu’s palm also reached out from the spatial rift.

Chapter 568: A Small Explosion as Thanks

“Clang!”

When space tore open and a jade-like arm reached out from the rift to seize the tenth Divine Demon,

two terrifying waves of energy immediately erupted in the air above the creature.

The sound was like metal clashing against metal. The void shattered inch by inch, revealing dark voids.

A terrifying storm raged in that region. Every gust of wind contained immense colliding energy, carrying the dreadful power to rip everything apart.

The tenth Divine Demon trembled in fear. It was utterly confused.

It had been fighting those twelve foolish Witch Kings so happily.

How had it suddenly been dragged into this mess?

From the auras alone, this felt like a clash between two Peak Emperors.

It was just a mere early-tier Divine Demon—what right did it have to be fought over by two Peak Emperors comparable to Immortal-tier Divine Demons?

Couldn't they just split it in half?

But no one cared about the Divine Demon's shivering or the turmoil in its heart.

In the abyss,

the other Divine Demons felt chills run down their spines.

“It’s a Peak Emperor from the Ninth Heaven!”

“Damn it... it really was a trap. The Peak Emperors of the Ninth Heaven are using this newborn Heavenly Dao world to ambush and kill us!”

“There’s no way... Peak Emperors dare to scheme like this? Aren’t they afraid of provoking our Immortal-tier Divine Demons to take action?”

The remaining Divine Demons trembled. While rage burned in their hearts, doubt also filled them.

They watched as the Divine Demon was pulled back and forth by the two arms tearing through space. A mix of relief and sorrow washed over them.

When had they, Divine Demons who once dominated the Primordial Starry Sky, fallen so low?

Tantai Xuan opened his eyes. Around him, a vast sea of karma surged through three revolutions.

The principle of Third-Revolution Golden Immortal was not complicated. Though Tantai Xuan had not seen the upper volume of the stele, he could deduce it from Lu Jiulian's breakthrough.

Moreover, with the massive destiny gained from slaying Divine Demons,

he successfully completed three revolutions of the sea of destiny and became a Third-Revolution Golden Immortal.

Comparable to a Great Emperor!

On the other side, Lu Jiulian also completed his cultivation. When he opened his eyes, terrifying sword intent tore through thirty thousand miles of void.

They looked toward the epicenter of the terrifying clash.

"Ancient Emperor Hao..."

"Once the ruler of the Void Heaven."

Micah rose to his feet. A vast sea of destiny churned around him.

The arrival of these Divine Demons had brought them fortune. Slaying them had granted immense destiny.

Now, their cultivation had broken through.

But facing the arms tearing through the void, they still felt immense pressure.

Peak Emperor—Ninth-Revolution Golden Immortal level!

BOOM!

Both arms gripped the tenth Divine Demon. Invisible forces collided.

From beyond the rift, a terrifying existence seemed to watch everything indifferently.

The atmosphere reached an unparalleled tension.

At this moment, the Five Phoenixes' cultivators clearly understood: the appearance of these Divine Demons might have been part of Young Master Lu's scheme.

It seemed these Divine Demons could bring enormous destiny to the Five Phoenixes.

And indeed, that was the case.

Lu Jiulian, Tantai Xuan, Micah, Zhu Long, and the other Golden Immortals of the Five Phoenixes had all advanced to Third-Revolution Golden Immortal with the help of this destiny.

This passage to the Primordial Starry Sky had been opened by the ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven—which meant... those ancient Great Emperors had been played by Young Master Lu.

And Ancient Emperor Hao was unwilling to accept it.

Or rather, he did not want to watch the Five Phoenixes grow stronger through these Divine Demons—so he wanted to seize the tenth one.

To ruin the Five Phoenixes' opportunity!

Because Young Master Lu had deliberately allowed exactly ten Divine Demons to enter—there must be a reason.

Taking away the tenth Divine Demon would disrupt Young Master Lu's plan.

“Anything that falls into my, Lu Ping’an’s, hands isn’t so easy to take back.”

Lu’s faint laughter echoed.

In the next moment, terrifying power erupted from his arm.

It was like raising apocalyptic tides that constantly slammed into the void, causing it to rumble and tremble.

It seemed as though the void itself might crack apart.

“What exactly do you want with these ten Divine Demons?”

A calm voice came from beyond the rift, distant and ancient.

“Guess?”

Of course Lu would not tell him.

But the other side had also sensed something, hence the caution.

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu reached out. His hand tore through space.

A furious gale swept across the island. Terrifying pressure caused the vast sea to churn, raising massive waves.

Ning Zhao, Ni Yu, and Yi Yue stood quietly beside Lu, not daring to breathe.

Through the rift, they too sensed the aura of Ancient Emperor Hao from the Abyss of Nothingness.

The aura of a Peak Emperor.

Lu's expression grew solemn.

His body suddenly turned golden—the Indestructible Golden Body of Metal activated.

With the growth of the Five Phoenixes, Lu's strength had advanced tremendously. He had walked far along the path of the tenth layer of Qi Refining, and his accumulated power could not be underestimated.

In terms of overall combat strength, even without the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao's blessing, he already possessed power at the peak of Great Emperor.

Ancient Emperor Hao might be at Peak Emperor realm,

but he was reaching out from deep within the void rift. His power was weakened.

And by tearing through space to reach the Five Phoenixes, he was further suppressed by the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao.

His power was roughly equivalent to peak Great Emperor.

Thus, he and Lu were evenly matched.

Lu naturally would not let go. The system task required ten Divine Demons dead—missing even one would fail the task. Therefore, Lu would not allow Ancient Emperor Hao to ruin his plan.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

“Young Master Lu, let us assist you.”

From the abyss,

Tantai Xuan roared.

He clearly understood the importance of these Divine Demons.

It was precisely because he had slain one that he completed three revolutions of his sea of destiny. Even if this Divine Demon had no special traits, the sheer volume of destiny it contained made him unwilling to let go easily.

“I’m coming too.”

Lu Jiulian formed a sword finger and pointed.

Instantly, countless sword lotuses bloomed in the air, slashing toward Ancient Emperor Hao’s arm.

Micah clenched his fists, his gaze grave.

“Though I once resented the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor... you forced him to his death and destroyed the foundation of my Heavenly Spirit Clan. This grudge cannot be forgotten.”

Micah unleashed his Extreme Dao Emperor Fist, its might pressing down like a mountain.

Three newly ascended Great Emperor-level powerhouses attacked together. The terrifying power caused space to shatter like broken glass.

Beyond the rift,

Ancient Emperor Hao’s expression remained unchanged.

On his arm, array runes surged.

“Lin”, “Dou”, “Bing”, “Zhe”...

Each rune transformed into formations, embodying supreme rules that pressed downward.

Micah, Lu Jiulian, and Tantai Xuan—the three Great Emperors—found themselves unable to approach the area where Lu and Ancient Emperor Hao’s arms clashed.

Lu's gaze sharpened.

The Eight Trigrams array runes also emerged.

"Qian", "Kun", "Kan" ...

They pressed down fiercely.

The two arms once again erupted with apocalyptic energy storms.

"There's no need for you to interfere here. Help the others finish off the remaining Divine Demons first."

Lu's voice echoed.

Lu Jiulian, Micah, and Tantai Xuan retreated.

Their expressions grew solemn.

“Combat power approaching Peak Emperor... we still do not have the qualification to interfere.”

Tantai Xuan drew a deep breath.

On the other side, Zhu Long had also completed her breakthrough. Her aura grew increasingly powerful.

Hearing Lu’s words,

she did not hesitate for a moment.

She closed her eyes, her eyelashes trembling slightly. Her body shifted, charging straight toward the three remaining living Divine Demons.

Bai Qingniao had long since grown into a graceful beauty—no longer the simple country girl raising chickens in a farmhouse.

She was like a true phoenix—radiant and dazzling. Her eyes burned like fire. Nine phoenixes coiled around her, wreathed in true phoenix flames.

Though only at quasi-Emperor realm, she showed no sign of defeat under the Divine Demons’ assault.

When Zhu Long appeared to help her slay the Divine Demon, Bai Qingniao did not refuse.

At quasi-Emperor level, reversing fate to slay an Emperor-level Divine Demon was still difficult.

Thus, she accepted Zhu Long's help.

Zhu Long was straightforward.

She swung her Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc, wrapped in innate Yin-Yang qi.

Now at Third-Revolution Golden Immortal, Zhu Long had immense suppression over early-tier Divine Demons.

The Divine Demon fighting Bai Qingniao immediately panicked.

It raised its arms to block. Under the violent pounding, its arms were shattered to pieces. Zhu Long showed no mercy—Father had told her to kill these Divine Demons.

So she would kill with all her might!

Not a single one would escape!

The Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc was Zhu Long's Innate Spiritual Treasure—its power was terrifying.

The Divine Demon let out a miserable scream and unleashed its divine ability.

BOOM!

A massive eyeball appeared above its head.

The eye released terrifying bewitching aura.

“Divine ability?”

Zhu Long was momentarily stunned.

As if she had none herself.

Zhu Long pursed her lips lightly. Her eyelashes trembled. She opened her eyes.

Her left eye black, her right eye white—like day and night cycling. Innate Yin-Yang qi surged endlessly.

Da-da-da-da...

Terrifying pressure instantly crushed the Divine Demon's ability.

Its eyeballs exploded, blood gushing.

The Divine Demon felt the pressure of a superior Divine Demon. It collapsed in the void, trembling.

"This divine ability..."

"Immortal-tier? No... beyond Immortal-tier..."

It stared at Zhu Long in horror.

But the Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc crushed down. The Divine Demon's armor shattered, its flesh mangled, its soul nearly annihilated.

Just as it was about to be ground to death,

Zhu Long stopped.

She left the finishing blow to Bai Qingniao.

After all, the final strike determined the lion's share of the destiny.

Bai Qingniao did not hold back. Nine phoenixes coiled and rose, forming a terrifying shockwave that instantly annihilated the Divine Demon.

The flames dissipated.

The Divine Demon's body remained, but its soul had long been destroyed.

Every Divine Demon body was an extremely precious treasure.

Vast destiny descended. Bai Qingniao closed her eyes. The Nine Phoenix Transformation began circulating once more in her mind.

The nine little chicks seemed to undergo sublimation in this moment.

Their bloodline evolved.

Bai Qingniao's aura grew even more terrifying.

On the other side, seeing Zhu Long's actions, Tantai Xuan and Lu Jiulian were stunned.

So this was possible.

They followed Zhu Long's example—brutally beating the other two Divine Demons before tossing them to Nie Changqing and Sima Qingshan.

Soon, the two dying Divine Demons perished.

Nie Changqing and Sima Qingshan crossed their bottlenecks. Destiny like rivers poured into them, forming seas of destiny.

BOOM!

Thick tribulation clouds rolled in.

That was the Heavenly Dao tribulation for newly ascended Golden Immortals.

Bai Qingniao, Nie Changqing, and Sima Qingshan were undergoing their Golden Immortal tribulations. As new Golden Immortals, they naturally had to face the Heavenly Dao's cleansing to stabilize their power.

As for the tribulations, Lu paid them no further attention.

He and Ancient Emperor Hao were engaged in a hidden contest of strength—comparing who was stronger.

It was like a tug-of-war, but Lu was in no hurry.

As the other Divine Demons died, the system panel's task completion steadily approached perfection.

Divine Demons slain: (9/10).

When only one Divine Demon remained in the entire Abyss of Nothingness,

Lu's mouth curved upward in satisfaction.

Just one more Divine Demon and the special task would be complete.

He had never expected this task to be finished so easily.

Originally, he had thought he would need to enter the Ninth Heaven, pass through its upper realms, and step into the Primordial Starry Sky.

He had planned to hunt Divine Demons one by one in the starry sky.

He had even made a ten-year plan: one Divine Demon per year.

But in the end...

The enthusiastic ancient Great Emperors of the Ninth Heaven had directly opened a passage between the Primordial Starry Sky and the Five Phoenixes, allowing the Divine Demons to enter directly.

They had saved Lu the trouble of traveling to the Primordial Starry Sky.

Lu couldn't help but sigh: those who truly understand me are none other than the ancient Great Emperors.

Ancient Emperor Hao, clutching the tenth Divine Demon, seemed to sense something amiss in the Five Phoenixes.

As one Divine Demon after another fell,

Ancient Emperor Hao vaguely felt a vast power brewing within the Five Phoenixes—like boiling water.

It was an indistinct feeling he couldn't explain.

With each Divine Demon's death, this power in the Five Phoenixes grew by one part.

"This tenth Divine Demon cannot die."

Ancient Emperor Hao made his decision.

The Eight Trigrams array runes and Nine-Character array runes clashed.

This was a battle of array runes.

It was as though starry skies flickered in and out of existence, as though eons were collapsing.

The tenth Divine Demon, caught between these two forces, could neither advance nor retreat. It trembled helplessly.

It regretted everything.

Why had it stepped into this world?

There had been a chance to escape—why hadn't it fled?

Why had it fought so desperately to enter?

This world... was a trap, a pit, a graveyard for Divine Demons!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Heavenly thunder rolled as tribulation clouds gathered.

That was the tribulation for the Five Phoenixes' newly ascended Golden Immortals.

But Lu felt the Five Phoenixes accumulating power.

This power would bring enormous change to the Five Phoenixes.

"I'm not competing with you anymore."

Lu's faint voice echoed through the spatial rift.

Ancient Emperor Hao was stunned.

In the next moment, he felt Lu release his grip on the Divine Demon. Terrifying power erupted.

The tenth Divine Demon was pulled rapidly toward the spatial rift.

No!

Something's wrong!

Lu Ping'an had competed with him for so long—why release it now?

Ancient Emperor Hao instinctively wanted to let go.

But he was unwilling. What if... Lu Ping'an was bluffing him?

BOOM!

The tenth Divine Demon was quickly dragged into the spatial rift and gradually vanished.

The spatial rift where Lu stood also began to heal.

The void fell silent.

Ten ferocious Innate Divine Demons from the Primordial Starry Sky—nine dead, one missing.

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

only the grand sound of Heavenly Dao tribulations remained.

Nie Changqing, Sima Qingshan, and Bai Qingniao were undergoing their Golden Immortal tribulations.

And after today, the Five Phoenixes would gain three more Golden Immortal powerhouses.

Zhu Long, Tantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, and Micah—all Third-Revolution Golden Immortals comparable to Great Emperors—watched as the spatial rift toward Ancient Emperor Hao gradually closed, and the tenth Divine Demon vanished.

Their brows furrowed.

“Young Master Lu... why did he let go?”

“That was a Divine Demon—full of vast destiny. It could have produced another Golden Immortal. Letting Ancient Emperor Hao take it... what a pity.”

“Young Master Lu had his reasons for letting go.”

Lu Jiulian and the others spoke slowly.

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, cloaked in black robes, stared at the closing spatial rift and drew a deep breath. Thoughts surged in his mind.

When he saw Ancient Emperor Hao's arm,

the sealed memories in his mind began to hammer against their prison.

"Ancient Emperor Hao... what exactly happened deep within that void rift? What did I see back then?"

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor clutched his head, not daring to think further. He feared his mind would explode if he did!

He looked at the floating Divine Demon corpses in the abyss. His mouth twitched.

Yet at the same time, envy stirred in his heart.

Though his memories of the void rift depths were sealed, his hundreds of thousands of years sitting alone in the Primordial Starry Sky remained.

Back then, he had sat alone in the starry sky, defending the Ninth Heaven from invading Divine Demons.

He had been isolated, without aid.

If only he had had so many allies back then.

Unfortunately, he had been utterly alone, sitting in the starry sky.

No one came to help him. No one cared.

He had faced countless Innate Divine Demons by himself.

Even when he gravely wounded early-tier Divine Demons, he dared not pursue.

Because if he left, the Ninth Heaven would be defenseless against invasion.

But the Five Phoenixes today was completely different.

So many fought side by side—even the weaker ones gathered outside the abyss to jointly resist the Divine Demon avatars.

Perhaps this was one of the differences between the Ninth Heaven and the Five Phoenixes.

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu withdrew his hand. The Indestructible Golden Body of Metal gradually faded.

He sat back in his Thousand-Blade Chair. The corners of his mouth curved upward. He held a bronze wine cup and took a sip of the freshly warmed Heavenly Immortal Wine prepared by Ning Zhao.

In the next moment, white lines appeared in his eyes.

On the Spirit-Pressure Chessboard, images reflected.

Did they really think his things were so easy to take?

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

deep within the void rift,

space tore open and slowly healed.

The tenth Divine Demon, utterly bewildered, was dragged inside.

Ancient Great Emperors emerged one after another. Their terrifying auras intertwined, making the early-tier Divine Demon feel as though it had entered a den of Great Emperors.

It trembled, not daring to move.

The arm dragged the Divine Demon deeper into the void rift.

Ancient Emperor Hao's powerful primordial spirit fluctuations surged.

The ancient Great Emperors watched curiously.

What was so special about this Divine Demon?

Why had Lu Ping'an used these Divine Demons to strengthen the Five Phoenixes?

BOOM!

Suddenly,

Ancient Emperor Hao froze.

The motion of dragging the Divine Demon stopped abruptly.

The ancient Great Emperors were puzzled.

The Divine Demon trembled in fear, not daring to move.

It was just an early-tier Divine Demon—even a high-tier one would not dare act rashly in this environment.

"No..."

“Why did Lu Ping’an stop competing?”

Powerful primordial spirit fluctuations rippled from deep within the rift.

Doubt intertwined.

“Judging by the fate of the other Divine Demons, Lu Ping’an only needs them dead. That means during our struggle, he could have easily killed this Divine Demon.”

“But why didn’t he? Why let me take it back...”

BOOM!

The will deep within the rift surged.

In the next moment, the atmosphere grew incredibly oppressive—like a volcano on the verge of eruption.

BOOM!

Then,

from deep within the rift, a rule power strong enough to annihilate everything surged forth.

It slammed toward the Divine Demon, intent on crushing it.

The ancient Great Emperors in the rift were puzzled.

They did not understand why Ancient Emperor Hao had gone to such lengths to seize this Divine Demon from the Five Phoenixes—only to kill it immediately.

Suddenly,

like a thunderclap from clear skies,

Buzz...

Above the Divine Demon's head, the phantom of a chessboard suddenly unfurled. A faint laugh exploded like thunder.

Someone rolled up their sleeves and placed a chess piece.

“What a pity... I’ve been discovered.”

“I was hoping to glimpse the secrets deep within the rift.”

The pupils of the ancient Great Emperors contracted sharply.

They looked at the Divine Demon, murderous intent surging in their eyes.

“Lu Ping’an?!”

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The auras of the ancient Great Emperors soared, like apocalyptic waves intent on annihilating the tenth Divine Demon.

The Divine Demon collapsed to the ground in terror, waving its hands frantically.

“No... I’m not...”

I’m just me—a little Divine Demon from the Primordial Starry Sky!

It really wasn’t Lu Ping’an!

BOOM!

Before Ancient Emperor Hao’s attack could reach,

the Divine Demon cracked open.

Its body began splitting from the inside. Eight Trigrams array runes intertwined and leaped out.

And those Eight Trigrams array runes transformed into an eight-colored lotus flower.

The lotus bloomed with eight petals, each a different color, embodying one of the Eight Trigrams array runes. The lotus heart was black and white—Yin and Yang—like Zhu Long’s Yin-Yang Grinding Disc.

Lu Jiulian’s Wrath Lotus and Zhu Long’s divine ability.

In this moment, they had been perfectly fused.

Lu Jiulian was originally Lu's clone, and Zhu Long was Lu's cherished little cotton-padded jacket.

Lu had combined their attacks and planted them inside the Divine Demon's body during the struggle with Ancient Emperor Hao.

For Lu, his goal was simply to ensure this Divine Demon died.

But since Ancient Emperor Hao had insisted on seizing it,

whether it died here or there made no difference.

So Lu had gone along with it—planting a little trick inside the Divine Demon, hoping to probe the secrets deep within the rift through it.

Unfortunately...

Ancient Emperor Hao had discovered it.

“A small token of my appreciation, nothing grand. Courtesy demands reciprocity.”

“You sent me Divine Demons, Young Master. Since I have nothing else to repay you with, allow me to gift you a splendid lotus flower. A small explosion, as thanks.”

Lu’s faint voice echoed.

The moment his words fell silent,

Ancient Emperor Hao’s attack arrived like a storm.

It slammed into the eight-colored Wrath Lotus.

Chapter 569: Today, We Charge Toward Immortal-Martial!

BOOM!

The unstoppable assault slammed into the eight-colored Wrath Lotus.

The lotus contracted violently, like a beating heart—squeezing and releasing. Terrifying energy waves erupted from within it.

Ancient Emperor Hao's attack struck at the same moment. The collision of two forces was like an avalanche roaring down a vast mountain peak—earth-shaking, apocalyptic!

Every ancient Great Emperor unleashed their immense power, forming protective shields around their bodies.

As Ancient Emperor Hao's strike and Lu's eight-colored Wrath Lotus exploded against each other,

the entire rift was swallowed by blinding light.

It was as though everything had fallen into utter silence.

When an explosion reaches its peak, sound vanishes.

Even time seems to slow.

Space shattered. The massive eight-colored lotus spun, tearing the rift apart. Black voids appeared everywhere, making the space look like shattered glass.

The raging storm swept outward, causing upheavals across the entire Ninth Heaven.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

In the Ninth Heaven,

rifts cracked open.

Like mouths torn wide by giant hands, countless streams of energy poured out. The rifts stretched longer and longer, spanning billions of miles.

The cataclysmic explosion surged like a tsunami—unstoppable.

Countless rules of heaven and earth began to stir.

Even the Heavenly Dao of the Ninth Heaven rushed to the scene, casting down a powerful barrier to seal and protect the area around the rift.

The explosion lasted an unknown amount of time.

All living beings in the Ninth Heaven trembled, as though the end of the world had arrived.

A massive chasm stretched across the heavens—like an abyss of the dead.

Finally, as the energy slowly receded and the rifts began to heal,

the interior of the rift lay in ruins. Shattered space caused chaotic currents to surge.

As the energy gradually dissipated, the ancient Great Emperors—shrouded in haze—exhaled in relief.

The eight-colored Wrath Lotus had been so terrifying that they hadn't dared breathe.

Silence reigned among the ancient Great Emperors.

Yet the air inside the rift carried the sharp scent of gunpowder—and the burning rage in their hearts.

“Lu Ping’an... that bastard is truly detestable...”

“He actually hid an attack inside an early-tier Divine Demon’s body—caught us completely off guard.”

“This was revenge. We opened the Primordial Starry Sky passage, exposing the Five Phoenixes to the calamity of Divine Demons. So Lu Ping’an retaliated against us.”

“That bastard is messing with our minds again!”

The ancient Great Emperors spoke, their voices thick with fury.

The rift was in chaos. Their appearances were somewhat disheveled.

From deep within the rift, powerful primordial spirit fluctuations spread.

“This Divine Demon is dead.”

“Lu Ping’an did this on purpose. Why exactly ten? What is the mystery behind it?”

The powerful fluctuations carried confusion.

No matter how much he thought, he couldn’t understand.

The explosion of the eight-colored Wrath Lotus had indeed been terrifyingly destructive.

But this was the void rift—the home turf of the ancient Great Emperors.

Lu's actions had only caused them slight trouble.

No ancient Great Emperor had been killed.

They were not so fragile as to be easily obliterated.

Most importantly, Lu's eight-colored Wrath Lotus had been aimed at Ancient Emperor Hao. The majority of the explosion's power had been borne by him.

Of course, while the explosion hadn't caused major damage,

the psychological impact it left was profound.

Lu Ping'an... really knew how to get under people's skin.

“This Divine Demon still died in the end. What changes will this bring to the Five Phoenixes?”

A calm voice drifted from deep within the rift.

“Lu Ping’an... what exactly are you trying to do?”

Soon, the voice fell silent.

The Divine Demon he had brought back had already been annihilated—its body reduced to nothing.

Lu’s eight-colored Wrath Lotus had approached Peak Emperor power.

Even the incredibly tough body of an early-tier Divine Demon could not withstand a Peak Emperor-level attack without being destroyed.

A high-tier Divine Demon might have left some remains.

Suddenly,

an ancient Great Emperor spoke from within the rift.

“Should we continue opening the passage connecting the Primordial Starry Sky and the Five Phoenixes?”

His words caused the atmosphere in the rift to turn eerie.

Because this was a difficult decision.

Open it or not?

If they opened the passage, the Divine Demons that entered would become nourishment for the Five Phoenixes.

If they didn't open it, the Five Phoenixes would face no threat and could develop peacefully.

Neither outcome was what the ancient Great Emperors wanted.

Lu Ping'an's mind games had left them in a dilemma.

After a long silence,

powerful primordial spirit fluctuations slowly spread from deep within the rift.

“Open it.”

“Lu Ping’an only needs ten Divine Demons. Once the passage entrance tears wide enough, the Five Phoenixes will face high-tier Divine Demons—even Immortal-tier Divine Demons.”

“Right now, Lu Ping’an still lacks the strength to resist an Immortal-tier invasion.”

The calm voice echoed.

...

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

everything returned to silence.

The impact of the Golden Immortal tribulations was far less than that caused by the Divine Demons.

After the thunder receded, the abyss returned to pitch-black darkness.

The Five Phoenixes had gained three more Golden Immortal powerhouses—a great blessing for the entire world.

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, cloaked in black robes, prepared to leave.

He did not want to draw attention. He had acted in this battle, though no one had questioned him. Now that the fighting was over, someone might ask about his identity.

But just as the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor was about to depart,

the sealed passage to the Primordial Starry Sky reopened.

The Nine-Character array runes forced it wide.

Beyond the passage, the ancient and distant Primordial Starry Sky appeared before everyone.

“We will stand guard here.”

“If any Divine Demons enter, we can delay them for a time.”

Tantai Xuan sat before the passage, clutching the Life-and-Death Register.

Lu Jiulian and Micah also rose into the air. Three Third-Revolution Golden Immortals at Great Emperor level guarding the passage—it was foolproof.

Moreover, having just broken through, they were eager for powerful Divine Demons to arrive.

That way, they could fight to their heart's content and consolidate their cultivation.

The cultivators who had relaxed moments ago now felt pressure once more. The reopening of the Primordial Starry Sky passage was not good news for the Five Phoenixes.

“This passage will continue to widen over time. Eventually... high-tier Divine Demons, even Immortal-tier Divine Demons, will descend...”

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor couldn't help but speak up with a warning.

Tantai Xuan, Lu Jiulian, Micah, and the others turned to look.

Who was this person?

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, wrapped in his black robe, regretted speaking the moment the words left his mouth.

Why couldn't he keep quiet?

He and the Five Phoenixes were enemies. Why should he care about their survival?

His relationship with Lu Ping'an was terrible.

He wished Lu Ping'an would be torn apart by Divine Demons!

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor snorted coldly. He told himself his warning was only for the sake of the mortal little princess.

"Just a casual remark. Believe it or not."

With that, he transformed into a streak of light and vanished.

Micah narrowed his eyes. His Great Emperor aura surged as he considered stopping the black-robed figure—he vaguely felt a sense of familiarity from him.

But in the end, he gave up.

The black-robed man's warning had clearly been given in good faith.

If he acted now, it would be unreasonable.

“For the time being, this passage shouldn't open too widely. But to be safe—even early-tier Divine Demons entering would be a crisis for the Five Phoenixes... We should stand guard here.”

Tantai Xuan said.

“Besides, we've now reached Third-Revolution Golden Immortal and hold suppression over early-tier Divine Demons. If more early-tier ones arrive... we'll suppress them. Let the quasi-Emperors of the Five Phoenixes use them as training targets and help birth new Golden Immortals.”

The moment this idea arose, everyone's fighting spirit soared.

Zhu Long did not stay.

Together with the other newly ascended Golden Immortals, she returned to the Five Phoenixes with the Divine Demon corpses.

These corpses were supreme refining materials—capable of forging treasures.

Outside the abyss,

all Divine Demon avatars had been slaughtered.

Not a single one had infiltrated the Five Phoenixes.

In this battle, the entire Five Phoenixes had mobilized.

Demons, witches, humans, the Sea Clan, the living beings on life stars beyond the continent, and even the former saint clans—all had come to aid the Five Phoenixes.

This battle had united the will of the Five Phoenixes.

...

At the Origin Lake, on the central island,

Lu leaned back in his Thousand-Blade Chair.

The corners of his mouth curved upward.

He had no idea if the “gift” he left for Ancient Emperor Hao would bring joy.

Regardless, Lu felt quite pleased.

After all, the other side had gone to great lengths to send him ten Divine Demons. If Lu showed no appreciation, it would be impolite.

His fingers lightly tapped the armrest.

The central island returned to tranquility.

Ning Zhao poured wine for Lu. The liquid entered his mouth, releasing rich fragrance.

On the island, the petrified body of the snake-haired Divine Demon stood frozen in terror. Ni Yu was inspecting it up and down.

“Throw this snake-haired Divine Demon statue into the vast sea.”

“Though it’s only a Divine Demon corpse, the profound meaning it contains can grant cultivators great insight.”

“At least it’s not entirely useless.”

Lu said.

Yi Yue appeared from the shadows, responded, and carried the statue away across the sea.

As for where she would throw it, Lu paid no further attention.

“Young Master, I will enter seclusion for a while.”

“Guard me.”

Lu said.

Ning Zhao's gaze sharpened. She drew her Innate Spiritual Treasure—the golden longsword. Her aura soared.

Having stayed by Lu's side, Ning Zhao's cultivation had grown silently.

She now possessed Profound Immortal strength.

Ni Yu, meanwhile, was deeply hidden—possessing quasi-Emperor cultivation. But her combat power was slightly weaker.

After all, she was only an alchemist.

Lu returned to the pavilion.

Finally, on the system panel,

Divine Demons slain reached (10/10). The task was perfectly completed.

Clearly, the Divine Demon taken by Ancient Emperor Hao had successfully detonated.

What kind of “surprise” the eight-colored Wrath Lotus had brought to the ancient Great Emperors, Lu did not know.

Of course, Lu also felt some regret. He had hoped to use this opportunity to glimpse the secrets deep within the rift.

Whatever could make the Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor despair to the point of self-destruction—it made Lu’s curiosity itch.

BOOM!

Suddenly, Lu raised his hand.

Ten Innate Divine Demon Seeds floated up, radiating faint light.

Each seed represented a rule and order. Vaguely, distorted Divine Demon faces seemed to writhe within.

“Begin refining the Divine Demon Seeds...”

The system prompt appeared before Lu’s eyes.

Refinement in progress...

“Congratulations, Host, for completing the special task: Refine Innate Divine Demon Seeds (10/10).”

The system prompt flashed.

Lu narrowed his eyes slightly.

“Innate Divine Demons born at the dawn of chaos are favored by rules. Each possesses immense power.”

“Congratulations, Host, for obtaining the rewards: Title [Divine Demon Hunter], North Fishing Rod, Dao Origin ×2.”

The system prompts continued to flash before Lu.

Lu, who had been looking forward to the task rewards, froze slightly.

“A title? There’s even a title?”

Lu was speechless.

[Divine Demon Hunter]... it sounded a bit embarrassing.

“Title [Divine Demon Hunter]: Special reward. Grants suppression against Innate Divine Demons. The stronger the Divine Demon, the weaker the suppression.”

The system’s explanation made Lu narrow his eyes.

Suppression against Innate Divine Demons?

Though the title sounded shameful, its effect was excellent.

Divine Demons were ranked—high-tier, Immortal-tier, and above Immortal-tier were those comparable to Great Luo Immortals.

With Lu’s current strength, if a Great Luo Immortal-level Divine Demon appeared,

even with the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao’s blessing, he might not be able to win.

At that point, the Five Phoenixes would face the crisis of destruction.

That was something Lu refused to allow.

Now, with this title... perhaps if a Great Luo Immortal-level Divine Demon truly appeared, he could resist it.

Lu turned his attention to the second reward.

Buzz...

Light flashed. Soon, Lu found himself holding... a purple fishing rod.

Yes—a fishing rod like those used by fishermen.

“This rod would be great for smacking people...”

Lu swung it. Each swing shattered the void with explosive force.

“North 冥 Fishing Rod: Innate Spiritual Treasure. Can be used to fish for unique Indestructible Divine Demons in the starry sky.”

The system’s introduction left Lu slightly stunned.

So this rod really was for fishing.

And it was for fishing in the starry sky...

“Fish for unique Indestructible Divine Demons?”

Lu narrowed his eyes. The words “Indestructible” caught his special attention.

After all, he himself possessed the Indestructible Demon Body, which greatly enhanced his strength.

Were Indestructible Divine Demons related to his Indestructible Demon Body?

Lu sat in his Thousand-Blade Chair, slowly stroking the fishing rod.

This time’s rewards seemed to reveal quite a few clues.

Faintly, Lu sensed that the system had some mysterious connection to the Primordial Starry Sky.

“Dao Origin is the system’s term. The Divine Demons that invaded the Five Phoenixes also spoke of devouring Heavenly Dao Dao Origin...”

Lu exhaled slowly.

The system had always been shrouded in mystery to him.

Now, it felt as though the fog was gradually lifting.

The Primordial Starry Sky... must have some connection to the system.

Lu stored the North 冥 Fishing Rod. Like the Heaven-Stealing Tower, this Innate Spiritual Treasure had no special energy fluctuations, but its function was frightening.

“Unique Indestructible Divine Demons... perhaps they can help with the Indestructible Demon Body?”

“It seems after the Five Phoenixes ascends to Immortal-Martial, I’ll need to find an opportunity... to fish in the starry sky.”

Lu pondered.

As for the final reward—Dao Origin ×2—it held extraordinary significance for Lu.

“Two Dao Origins...”

Lu held two balls of light in his palm, excitement stirring in his heart.

He exhaled slowly.

Lu entered the Origin Space.

A vast and colossal Heavenly Dao star hung in the Origin Space.

The little Yinglong lay atop it, yawning.

The Dao Rhyme had been refined once more.

It was bored again.

Moreover, with the continued refinement of Dao Rhyme, even the little Yinglong no longer knew the extent of its own strength.

Seeing Lu appear, the little Yinglong immediately became excited.

Lu patted its head and placed it on his shoulder.

Then, with a flick of his finger,

the two Dao Origins shot forth.

BOOM!

The phoenix nurtured within the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao star spread its wings.

In the next moment, it let out a resounding cry and devoured the two Dao Origins.

BOOM!

When the Dao Origins were fully absorbed, immense energy immediately surged and released—a terrifying storm of Dao Rhyme.

It was as though quantity had finally turned into quality.

The phoenix within the Heavenly Dao star kept spreading its wings, flapping them.

The light grew brighter and brighter, more and more blinding.

Finally, it formed an incredibly powerful energy storm that swept outward.

Hm?

Lu's eyes suddenly lit up.

It was beginning.

He stared at the phoenix within the Heavenly Dao star—an entity formed by interwoven rules.

Its resounding cry continued to echo.

The little Yinglong lay on Lu's shoulder, flapping its fleshy wings, staring at the existence within the star.

“Immortal-Martial...”

The corners of Lu's mouth curved upward.

Just as expected—like a bottle already filled to the brim. One more drop caused the water to overflow.

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

dust from the explosion's aftermath still rolled through the void rift.

Deep within the rift,

a pair of eyes seemed to gaze across an abyss so dark it devoured even light—staring at the Five Phoenixes on the other side.

He desperately wanted to know what exactly Lu Ping'an was trying to do.

Why did the death of exactly ten Divine Demons bring such changes to the Five Phoenixes?

He couldn't figure it out.

He could only watch the changes in the Five Phoenixes to unravel the mystery in his heart.

Suddenly!

Deep within the void rift,

terrifying aura erupted—like a suppressed volcano unleashing light and heat without warning.

All the ancient Great Emperors in the rift were startled and looked toward the depths in confusion.

Deep within the rift,

the silence was suffocating.

At its most oppressive moment...

a hoarse, shocked voice rang out.

“No... impossible!”

“Lu Ping’an... who exactly... are you?!”

...

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

at the passage,

Tantai Xuan, Micah, and Lu Jiulian—three Third-Revolution Golden Immortals—sat in meditation.

Perhaps the death of the ten Divine Demons had placed immense pressure and threat on the Divine Demons beyond the passage.

Even though the passage had been open for so long,

no more Divine Demons had crossed through.

Tantai Xuan and Micah both felt a slight relief.

Perhaps the black-robed man's warning had been an exaggeration.

Suddenly,

the three of them—who had been sitting cross-legged in the void—snapped their eyes open.

They stared fixedly beyond the passage.

Deadly silence.

Beyond the passage lay the distant, ancient Primordial Starry Sky.

Everything was calm. Beautiful stars twinkled in the starry expanse.

Then,

in the gaze of Tantai Xuan, Micah, and Lu Jiulian,

the passage entrance was suddenly filled by a massive bloodshot eyeball.

Within that eye burned madness, excitement, and endless greed!

“Immortal-Martial... Immortal-Martial Dao Origin!”

...

In the Origin Space,

Lu smiled—as though he had figured something out. His mind opened wide.

He took out the Spirit-Pressure Chessboard.

He placed it on his lap.

On the chessboard, faint light shimmered. Patterns of light wove together, forming images of the mountains and seas of the Five Phoenix Continent.

One sleeve rolled up, one hand picked up a piece. He waved it above the board, and countless phantoms appeared.

Snap!

He placed the piece at the Heavenly Origin position.

Light surged along the chessboard's lines, crisscrossing and spreading.

In the next moment, Lu's eyes were engulfed in endless brilliance, turning pure white.

Lu looked up.

Vaguely, he felt as though he had merged with the phoenix within the Heavenly Dao star.

Bound by the Heavenly Dao star.

And what he needed to do... was break those bonds.

The day the bonds were broken

would be the day the Five Phoenixes achieved Immortal-Martial.

At this moment, today,

the Five Phoenixes charges toward Immortal-Martial!

Chapter 570: The Five Phoenixes—We Will Guard It Too

Today, we charge toward Immortal-Martial.

Before Lu floated the chessboard. His palm conjured countless phantoms, as though gently caressing the vast mountains and rivers of the Five Phoenix Continent.

When Lu first reincarnated into the Five Phoenixes, what he inherited was a desolate low-martial world.

After years of relentless effort,

the Five Phoenixes advanced from low-martial to mid-martial, then overcame countless hardships and trials, crushed the ambitions of countless powerhouses, and stepped into high-martial.

At the high-martial level, it faced innumerable crises—even the assault of the Ninth Heaven’s Heavenly Dao. In the end, it birthed its own Heavenly Dao, shattered the Void Heaven, severed itself from the Ninth Heaven, and stood alone as an independent realm.

The difficulties it overcame were far greater than those of mid-martial.

Yet it overcame them all.

Not just Lu—every cultivator of the Five Phoenixes had persevered through these trials alongside it.

They grew together with the Five Phoenixes, rising from weakness to the mighty existence it was today.

Immortal-Martial...

Lu's gaze blazed. White-hot light surged within his eyes, as though reflecting a starry sky filled with black holes.

He was truly curious—what kind of world was Immortal-Martial?

Was the Primordial Starry Sky an Immortal-Martial world?

Perhaps it was.

Regardless, Lu's goal now was to lead the Five Phoenixes to achieve Immortal-Martial.

From a derivative high-martial world... to Immortal-Martial!

BOOM!

An overwhelming aura erupted from Lu.

He seemed to merge completely with the Five Phoenix Continent.

The phoenix within struggled, desperately trying to break free from the Heavenly Dao star that bound it. That binding was like shackles—preventing the phoenix from spreading its wings, from soaring freely across heaven and earth.

Lu felt it keenly: the moment the phoenix within the Heavenly Dao star broke free would be the day the Five Phoenixes achieved Immortal-Martial.

Lu's eyes shone. The corners of his mouth curved upward.

He felt exhilarated. He felt boundless ambition.

He had waited so long for this moment.

And now, the chance had finally come.

But soon, Lu furrowed his brows slightly.

He could sense that once he entered the state of attempting Immortal-Martial ascension, he would be unable to divert his attention to external matters.

The moment the Five Phoenixes began its Immortal-Martial ascension, those in the Ninth Heaven would surely sense it.

He had no idea what they might do.

Moreover, the passage to the Primordial Starry Sky still posed a massive threat.

If high-tier Divine Demons—or even Immortal-tier Divine Demons—arrived during the ascension, it would be disastrous for the Five Phoenixes.

Lu exhaled slowly.

He withdrew his focus.

Ascending to Immortal-Martial was no easy task. To succeed, Lu had to give it his full attention.

Even ascending to high-martial had been fraught with danger and near-death experiences—let alone Immortal-Martial.

Besides, he trusted the current Five Phoenixes.

It was no longer the fragile world it once was.

His hand, conjuring countless phantoms above the chessboard, placed a piece. As his mind surged,

the grand momentum of the chess formation began to unfold.

Lu was curious: what exactly was the difference between high-martial and Immortal-Martial?

And this time, he seemed to have glimpsed it.

What was most important in high-martial?

Dao Rhyme. Dao Rhyme was the key to elevating the foundation of high-martial.

The Five Phoenixes had birthed its own Heavenly Dao—and that Heavenly Dao was the foundation of Immortal-Martial.

The Ninth Heaven might also qualify to attempt Immortal-Martial ascension, but there was a difference between its Heavenly Dao and the Five Phoenixes'. The Ninth Heaven's Heavenly Dao had already entered a period of decline—its ambition far exceeded its ability.

The Five Phoenixes' Heavenly Dao, nourished by the Dao Origins Lu had obtained, was now bursting with vitality.

Combined with the unity of all beings in the Five Phoenixes, this created the grand momentum for Immortal-Martial ascension.

BOOM!

The entire Origin Space trembled violently.

The Heavenly Dao star was like an egg.

And the phoenix within that egg was the bound Immortal Origin—only by breaking free could it soar freely.

At this moment, Lu had merged with the phoenix and was relentlessly striking against its bonds.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The vortex-like Origin Space began to churn wildly. Countless stars floated within.

With each violent impact, ripples of Dao Rhyme transformed into storms that swept outward.

Each sweep shattered one Origin Star.

It was as though dust was exploding outward.

The Origin Space... was faintly beginning to collapse!

Break and rebuild?!

But at this moment, Lu could no longer pay attention to such things.

His expression was solemn. In a state of unity between man and heaven, his primordial spirit surged wildly as he poured everything into achieving Immortal-Martial.

The little Yinglong, frightened by the anomaly, hurriedly fled the Origin Space and returned to the central island.

It patted its chest with its little claws, utterly terrified.

Too scary.

...

While Lu was attempting Immortal-Martial ascension,

the entire Five Phoenix Continent underwent dramatic changes.

The concentration of spiritual energy in heaven and earth rose at a visible speed.

Many mortals, bathed in this dense spiritual energy, were cured of all ailments and granted longer lives.

Cultivators felt it most clearly—their eyes flickered with countless insights.

“The world is undergoing a great transformation!”

Countless cultivators were ecstatic. Ancient records spoke of several great transformations in the Five Phoenixes—each one bringing immense fortune.

Countless powerhouses would rise in such moments. Seizing this opportunity meant seizing the era!

Buzz...

Cultivators looked up at the sky.

Vaguely, they could see countless profound patterns surging across the heavens. Dao Rhyme moved like divine dragons.

The rules of heaven and earth manifested. Chains of order leaped and danced.

Mortals trembled in awe. Cultivators shook with excitement.

The terrain of the Five Phoenixes began to change. Hidden paradises and blessed lands rose higher and higher, piercing the heavens like sharp swords wreathed in dense immortal qi.

Valleys cracked open, forming abyssal depths where thick immortal qi also floated.

Between some paradises and blessed lands, spiritual energy condensed into water, forming cascading waterfalls like white dragons hanging between mountain ravines.

These phenomena told the world: heaven and earth were about to undergo a monumental shift.

...

In the void starry sky,

the entire void starry sky was affected.

With rumbling sounds, the energy density on every life star increased dramatically.

Many powerhouses were astonished.

Saint Realm powerhouses stood on their life stars, gazing toward the Five Phoenixes. Vaguely, they could see a divine phoenix slowly spreading its wings above the vast continent.

In the Abyss of Nothingness,

the various races of the Five Phoenixes guarding the passage sensed it. They turned back toward the Five Phoenixes.

“The Five Phoenixes is transforming again...”

“This transformation feels far grander than any before.”

“The Five Phoenixes is already a derivative high-martial world. What will it become after this transformation?”

The Hegemon and others murmured, then fell into stunned silence.

They couldn't even imagine.

“It is an honor to witness. No matter how the Five Phoenixes changes, it remains our world.”

Kong Nanfei held his wine gourd, took a drink, and laughed heartily.

In this moment, he felt like composing a poem.

He glanced around.

Seeing the twelve Witch Kings, the Hegemon, Tang Yimo, and the others,

he shook his head and gave up the idea.

A bunch of brutes—they wouldn't appreciate his poetry. Reciting now would be like playing the lute to a cow.

Inside the abyss,

the Golden Immortals had no time to feel these changes.

Because the passage—which had been quiet for a while—suddenly erupted with an incomparably terrifying and oppressive aura.

“Immortal... Immortal-Martial?!”

Within that massive eyeball burned astonishment and wild joy.

Tantai Xuan, Micah, and Lu Jiulian all felt immense pressure.

The Divine Demon beyond the passage was no longer one of the early-tier Divine Demons they had easily crushed before. It was likely high-tier—or even... Immortal-tier!

“Why has such a powerful Divine Demon appeared so suddenly?”

Micah’s expression changed.

A high-tier Divine Demon was equivalent to Great Emperor level.

Though they had completed three revolutions of their sea of destiny and were comparable to Great Emperors, truly fighting a Great Emperor in a life-or-death battle would still be difficult. Against stronger Great Emperors, they would be forced to retreat.

To truly contend with—or even suppress—a Great Emperor, they would need to reach Sixth-Revolution Golden Immortal.

“Because of the transformation happening in the Five Phoenixes.”

Tantai Xuan held the Life-and-Death Register. He turned to look toward the Five Phoenixes, his gaze deep yet gleaming with excitement.

Having grown alongside the Five Phoenixes from its weakest days to now,

Tantai Xuan knew full well the importance of this transformation—it was an upgrade in the world’s very level.

From low-martial to mid-martial to high-martial, and now this transformation...

Tantai Xuan exhaled slowly.

This transformation would bring many incredible changes.

But with opportunity came terrifying crisis.

Tantai Xuan’s gaze sharpened as he looked back toward the passage entrance.

The passage was now completely dominated by that terrifying Divine Demon.

The unabashed greed in its aura pressed down on Tantai Xuan, Micah, and Lu Jiulian.

“The Five Phoenixes is transforming?”

Micah reacted as well.

Though he had not grown up alongside the Five Phoenixes, he understood the importance of this moment.

“This is common...”

“Every great transformation of the Five Phoenixes attracts envious eyes seeking to pluck the fruit.”

Tantai Xuan gripped the Life-and-Death Register. His aura grew even more imposing, karma surging.

“At times like this, what we must do is kill them.”

“For those with ill intent, show no mercy—kill them dead!”

Tantai Xuan said coldly.

“The Five Phoenixes belongs not only to Young Master Lu, but to all of us—every living being!”

“The Five Phoenixes—we will guard it too!”

His words rang with unshakable resolve.

With a thought, his powerful primordial spirit surged outward like a whirlwind.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Outside the abyss,

the vast army of Netherworld Yin Soldiers stationed there received Tantai Xuan's summons. Armor clanged as Yin Soldiers marched forth, charging into the abyss.

Lu Julian stood with his hands behind his back. His azure lotus robes fluttered. Countless azure lotuses spun around him.

Micah clenched his fists and grinned.

Indeed... joining the Five Phoenixes had been his wisest decision.

In hundreds of thousands of years in the Ninth Heaven, he had never even swung a fist.

In the short time since arriving in the Five Phoenixes, he had fought countless life-or-death battles.

“Guard the Five Phoenixes!”

Roar!

The Netherworld Yin Soldiers’ shouts exploded in the abyss.

Lu Jiulian raised his hand.

The immortals of the Ascended Realm boarded warships, their robes fluttering as they crossed the void and charged into the abyss.

The twelve Witch Kings laughed heartily. The Witch Race forces gathered behind them.

The Golden Crow Demon Saint glanced at the twelve Witch Kings, then raised his hand. The Demon Race army assembled in grand formation.

Gu Mangran drew a deep breath. His expression was grave, yet beneath it lay relief and familiarity.

“This is perhaps the essence of the Five Phoenixes... always testing life and death with madness.”

Gu Mangran smiled.

Nowadays, he no longer felt chest pains from shock.

He no longer needed divine herbs to calm himself.

Now, he fought once more for the Five Phoenixes.

BOOM!

It was as though a flood surged. The Sea Clan powerhouses roared.

Sima Qingshan, Bai Qingniao, and Nie Changqing—the newly ascended Golden Immortals—had seas of destiny swirling around them.

They hovered in the abyss, staring gravely toward the powerful being beyond the passage.

The Five Phoenixes was transforming.

And they were here to stop those who harbored ill intent toward it.

It seemed the united momentum of the Five Phoenixes' cultivators had reached the ferocious being beyond the passage.

That massive eyeball suddenly vanished. In the next moment, it transformed into a gaping, blood-red maw.

An earth-shaking roar erupted from within, unleashing terrifying energy waves.

Buzz...

Lightning-like figures flashed toward them.

They were Divine Demons.

Early-tier Divine Demons poured through the passage. Though fear showed on their faces, the威势 of the powerful Divine Demon behind them forced them forward—they dared not retreat.

“They’re coming!”

Tantai Xuan’s eyes narrowed.

In the next moment, he swung the Life-and-Death Register.

Life-and-death qi surged forth, blasting the early-tier Divine Demons back out of the passage.

Micah’s body seemed to expand to ten thousand zhang, blocking the passage entrance. He punched again and again.

Each punch unleashed terrifying fist might, shattering space into voids.

Because the passage entrance had its limits, only early-tier Divine Demons could enter—and in limited numbers. Thus, Tantai Xuan and Micah alone were able to hold them back.

Beyond the passage entrance,

those sharp eyes revealed murderous intent—clearly dissatisfied with the result!

Thus, terrifying aura surged.

An early-tier Divine Demon was hurled into the passage entrance.

Then... it exploded!

The self-detonation of an early-tier Divine Demon unleashed terrifying energy waves.

Tantai Xuan and Micah's expressions changed dramatically.

The explosive energy slammed into the passage entrance.

Crack...

The passage entrance tore wider, expanding slightly.

But even the self-destruction of an early-tier Divine Demon could not fully widen the passage—likely due to mysterious rules governing it.

Still, it had some effect.

The massive eyeball revealed wild excitement.

One early-tier Divine Demon after another was hurled forth and detonated at the passage entrance. Countless blood lights surged. Shattered Divine Demon corpses scattered everywhere.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Explosions rocked the passage entrance, shattering space again and again.

This was a terrifying barrage.

“So ruthless!”

“Aren’t these Divine Demons of the same race? How can they be so cruel to their own kind? They don’t even value their lives.”

Tantai Xuan and Micah gasped.

Not just them—

the cultivators of the Five Phoenixes all changed expressions.

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor, wrapped in black robes, watched the explosions and felt his heart sink slightly.

He had almost left the Five Phoenixes, only to sense the anomaly and return—never expecting the Divine Demons to launch such a terrifying assault.

Back when the Ninth Heaven's Heavenly Dao opened, the Divine Demons had never been this insane.

What exactly was in the Five Phoenixes that attracted these Divine Demons so fiercely?

“The hierarchy among Divine Demons is strict. High-tier Divine Demons exert overwhelming suppression over early-tier ones. Only an Immortal-tier Divine Demon could command so many early-tier Divine Demons to throw their lives away without hesitation.”

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor spoke.

His words caused Tantai Xuan, Micah, and Lu Jiulian's expressions to change drastically.

“You mean... an Immortal-tier Divine Demon exists beyond this passage?”

The Heavenly Spirit Ancient Emperor exhaled.

The Five Phoenixes faced the crisis of destruction.

Yet strangely, he felt no joy.

“Even if not Immortal-tier, it is at least a peak high-tier Divine Demon—one that has begun to touch Immortal power. Otherwise, it could not command countless early-tier Divine Demons to die. Such an existence... is not something you can resist.”

The black-robed man’s words weighed heavily on everyone’s hearts.

Immortal-tier—that was Peak Emperor realm.

Could they truly withstand such a being?

Zhu Long reappeared in the abyss. Her body radiated immense energy fluctuations.

Her small face was filled with stubborn determination.

“Block them.”

Zhu Long closed her eyes. She held the massive Innate Yin-Yang Grinding Disc. Like an autumn leaf—quietly beautiful—her eyelashes trembled. Her red lips parted, speaking two firm words.

They must be blocked.

Father was doing something extremely important.

They absolutely could not let these beings disturb Father’s great endeavor.

...

In the Ninth Heaven,

deep within the void rift,

terrifying aura surged, startling every ancient Great Emperor.

Of course, they soon sensed something unusual.

“The Five Phoenixes... what is the Five Phoenixes doing?”

“Impossible! This is a transformation—from derivative high-martial to something greater!”

“The Ninth Heaven couldn’t do it—how can the Five Phoenixes? Is this Lu Ping’an’s doing? Is he messing with our minds again?”

The ancient Great Emperors gasped at the Five Phoenixes’ transformation.

After all, for even the existence deep within the rift to lose control of its emotions, this transformation must be truly astonishing.

The Five Phoenixes was already an independent world not inferior to the Ninth Heaven.

If it transformed again and grew stronger... wouldn’t it surpass the Ninth Heaven?

What level lay beyond derivative high-martial?!

Perhaps a path beyond Emperor Realm would be born?!

And at the other end of the Abyss of Nothingness,

thick clouds surged like a thousand drifts of snow.

Then, a figure of light gradually condensed.

This was the Heavenly Dao of the Ninth Heaven—cold and emotionless—manifesting as a figure of light.

It gazed toward the other side of the abyss.

There...

The Heavenly Dao of the Five Phoenixes was transforming—undergoing a transformation it envied.

The world fell into dead silence.

A moment passed—or perhaps an eternity.

ROAR!

The Ninth Heaven's Heavenly Dao let out an unwilling roar toward the Five Phoenixes on the other side of the abyss!

Within the void rift,

hearing the Heavenly Dao's roar,

countless rules and orders descended, transforming into a boiling sea of rule blades.

From deep within the rift, an extremely powerful will surged.

“The Five Phoenixes will not succeed. Immortal-Martial... how could it be so easily achieved? This act has already drawn the attention of the Immortal-tier Divine Demon ‘Evil Eye.’ Rather than letting the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao be devoured by Divine Demons and become mere food, it would be better to merge it into the Ninth Heaven...”

“To attempt Immortal-Martial ascension, the Five Phoenix Heavenly Dao must possess some special quality we do not yet understand.”

The calm voice carried gravity.

“The Heavenly Dao is so unwilling and unable to enter the Five Phoenixes alone. Fire Spirit Ancient Emperor—you will emerge ahead of time and carry the Heavenly Dao into the Five Phoenixes!”

BOOM!

As the words fell,

endless flames surged from the rift entrance.

A heaven-shaking laugh exploded across the sky.

Then, a ten-thousand-zhang fire giant stepped forth from the rift, gradually condensing into human form.

Clad in flame-crystal armor, its hair burned like fire.

Buzz...

The Heavenly Dao surged and fused into the Fire Spirit Ancient Emperor's body.

The Fire Spirit Ancient Emperor's aura soared.

Flames beneath his feet transformed into raging rivers.

He tore through the Abyss of Nothingness and charged inside.

...

In the Origin Space,

the Origin Space now resembled shattered glass—covered in cracks. A single misstep could cause it to collapse entirely.

Lu's mind was taut. He was relentlessly breaking through.

It was like an extremely profound game of chess.

With every piece placed, rules scattered.

Buzz...

Lu opened his eyes. Gravity filled his gaze.

“The Nine Phoenixes finally couldn’t sit still... they’ve sent someone out ahead of time.”

Lu’s mouth twitched.

In the next moment, he raised his hand and waved gently.

The Heaven-Stealing Tower and the Phoenix Plume Sword transformed into streaks of light and shot out of the Origin Space.

On the central island,

Ning Zhao stood amid the peach grove. Her white skirt fluttered. Peach petals danced, brushing her black hair.

Suddenly, Ning Zhao sensed something.

The void shattered. A white jade pagoda emerged.

“Take the Heaven-Stealing Tower. Aid the abyss.”

Lu’s voice echoed.

Yi Yue appeared from the shadows. The blazing Phoenix Plume Sword coiled around her.

“Take the Phoenix Plume Sword. Aid the abyss.”

Lu’s voice sounded in her ear.

Ni Yu carried her black pot. The little Yinglong, lounging on the Origin Lake, was suddenly kicked like a ball and landed on Ni Yu’s head.

“Take this guy. Aid the abyss.”

Lu said.

Ning Zhao, Yi Yue, and Ni Yu—the three attendants—bowed.

“Understood.”

Then the three shot into the sky, transforming into streaks of light and vanishing between heaven and earth.

At the same time,

on the Five Phoenix Continent,

two figures—one black, one gray—rose into the sky and sped toward the abyss.

In the vast sea,

within the ancient tomb,

Bu Nanxing stood respectfully in a corner. He was very low-key—low-key enough that no one could tell he was a half-step Profound Immortal powerhouse.

Lu Changkong opened his eyes. In the distance lay the blackened corpse of the Scorpion Divine Demon.

At this moment, Lu Changkong's aura was incomparably powerful and terrifying. He... had casually become an Emperor.

He had achieved Golden Immortal.

Moreover, he had ascended without any tribulation—calm and effortless.

This made Bu Nanxing even more respectful. Great Master was truly Great Master—even heavenly thunder had to give him some face.

“The Five Phoenixes is undergoing another transformation...”

Lu Changkong said slowly, hands behind his back.

“This transformation has attracted many envious eyes. Fan'er seems to be doing something very important... It seems, as his father, I should step forward as well.”

“Let the world know that the Young Master of White Jade Capital... has a father too.”