

Emperor 4271

Chapter 4271: Mighty Swords But I'm Still Stronger

There was a dao portal floating at the center of the cauldron. It seemed to be made from the oldest stones, already existing at the start of the world. The structure itself looked regular and untouched by time. Only the spatial passage was radiant with five different colors.

“Buzz.” Li Qiye appeared at the entrance and walked through. There was no danger going through the passage but the moment he got out, he was met with numerous destructive slashes.

“Not bad.” Li Qiye said and activated his supreme laws again, becoming the ultimate ruler of Eight Desolaces and looming above all else.

“Boom!” He easily stopped the closest slash with his bare hand.

More swords came with incredible might; each capable of slaying the likes of Vastsea Venerable and Earthraiser Vajra.

These slashes were the definition of invincibility and the apex of the sword dao. Cultivators in the outside world stood zero chance, whether it be the greatest geniuses or the experienced ancestors.

“Clank! Clank! Clank!” Alas, Li Qiye was a cosmic-level entity. Each wave of the hand repelled the incoming slashes.

Yes, he has arrived in the last domain - Sword World. This place rejected invaders and immediately attacked.

The fabrics of reality shattered before the slashes, leaving behind spatio-temporal maelstroms and black holes. Just one misstep would result in a terrible death.

Meanwhile, it seemed that the onslaught of blades was endless and could last for an eternity. They also became increasingly stronger and stacked on top of each other. The power was unlimited. Eventually, even the mightiest master would falter before the barrages.

This was the reason why Supreme Sovereigns didn't last long in Sword World. The first four domains weren't worth mentioning compared to the danger here.

There were deep abysses on the ground and unstable continents. On a particular one was the corpse of a relatively young man. It exuded the radiance of a dao lord bloodline.

The cause of death was a direct thrust piercing his heart. There was a badge hanging on the waist with the characters, “bestowed by Blessed.” That's right, even the dao child of Blessed Dao Lord fell in this place.

Another notable corpse floating in the air belonged to a draconic tiger. Its colossal body was split into two halves. Nonetheless, one could still recognize an ancient character written on its forehead - Profound. This meant that it was a king of the Profound True Tiger species.

In a remnant space was a heavenly woman with a hole on her forehead. She wore an old-style regal dress. She came from a hidden realm of the past, once adored and worshiped by all. Unfortunately, she died a lonely death here.

There were many others... They were all top characters of an era. Some were on the same level as dao lords. A few dao lords' mounts and followers met their end here too.

"Clank!" Li Qiye continued parrying the various sword dao. All of the affinities and laws of the world obeyed his command.

Thus, he was able to reverse the fundamental essences of the sword dao back to the source and effectively nullified them. This was a magnificent scene that the world didn't have the pleasure of witnessing. Even gods and devils would be in awe, unable to forget for the rest of their lives.

He eventually made it to the last part of Sword World and saw numerous stars. In reality, they were divine swords, each infinitely close to being at the immortal level and far more valuable than a dao lord sword.

One sword had a majestic aura, clearly of the defensive affinity. Another was the sword only to be wielded by a true king, granting its user the ability to govern. One more was a sword focusing solely on the dao, brimming with inscrutable mysteries...

These swords have turned into stars that would last for an eternity.

"Incredible." Li Qiye couldn't help but praise: "Immaculate craftsmanship, perfect beyond perfection."

Just one alone would drive Eight Desolaces crazy but there were a dozen here. However, Li Qiye only observed them and didn't grab any.

They were unique and each served as an individual sword dao. After meticulous observation, he was able to understand the mysteries within.

He found that the master had arranged them in chronological order of their journey - a maturity process. This person had reached an unbeatable state but was still searching for something greater.

While at the apex, taking each step meant breaking through the next limit to create an entirely new concept of power. Thus, each sword represented one step and limit.

This being could obliterate sovereigns and dao lords in the blink of an eye. This was not someone who could exist in Eight Desolaces.

Of course, Li Qiye knew of the master's identity, hence his visit to this place.

"Great swords, but unfortunately, they don't belong to me." The swords told a story of their master's dao improvement process.

Li Qiye figured it out and decided to leave, heading for an old ruin that has been around since antiquity.

It contained incredible ore mines gestated by chaos energy. This was a peerless treasure ground capable of producing top heavenly treasures. Even the richest sect in Eight Desolaces right now paled versus this land's natural resources.

Of course, Li Qiye didn't particularly care for the land or its riches. His focus fell on the inhabitants instead.

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" Metallic beatings continued in a rhythmic fashion. This seemed to have been going on for millions of years now.

Chapter 4272: Middle-aged Men

This blessed land was occupied by a few thousand members. They were busy at work and normally, this shouldn't be surprising.

However, this was the deepest region of Sword Burial Ground, the most dangerous area. Strangely enough, there was no fighting here - a stark contrast to the previous area. No outsider would believe the scene found here.

Most importantly, they were all the same person - exactly identical. The individuals performed different tasks - smelting ores, hammering, sharpening, controlling the flames and air...

In other words, they were blacksmiths creating divine swords. Some worked in groups while a few worked alone from start to finish.

They seemed to be made from the same mold, looking exactly the same from appearance down to the expression.

Li Qiye had met them before - the middle-aged man who threw swords back into the abyss and ran away from Li Qiye.

Their long hair was a mess and draped downward, covering half of their face. They wore black robes that have turned white from being washed too many times, looking a bit poor and lonely - akin to someone down on their luck or a member of a weak sect.

Most would attribute this as an illusion. Alas, using the strongest heavenly gaze would still show them the same outcome. These men busy at work were real, not mere illusions.

Their mind was hellbent on crafting the swords; nothing else could distract them. Their action seemed to be in tune with something; there was a sense of joy in each action.

The tough labor shouldn't be enjoyable but this was indeed the case. Spectators wouldn't get tired of watching this beautiful scene. This phenomenon was difficult to describe and had to be experienced to understand.

The next question would be - who was the real body? They might not be illusions but one thing for certain - they were avatars of this middle-aged man.

It's just that he had reached an incredible level and his avatars were infinitely close to the original body. Because of this, techniques and special eyes still couldn't tell them apart.

Li Qiye watched the process with a smile. He became immersed in this scene and stood still like a statue.

All other sounds disappeared from the world, only the noises relating to blacksmithing remained. He eventually joined the group and performed his own task. The avatars didn't stop him and treated him as their own.

He came closer to one of them who was busy grinding a divine sword. It was extremely tough so only a small piece was morphed despite half a day of effort. Nonetheless, this avatar persevered and focused on the polishing process.

It seemed that in order to fully polish it, it would take several thousand years. Alas, the avatar seemed to be enjoying the process instead of finding it tedious.

"Edgeless blade yet the dao is sharp, not bad." He commented.

It turned out that the old man was focused on grinding down the tip of the blade. He would grind for a long time before taking a look at the tip then resumed the grinding.

He seemingly didn't hear Li Qiye. The latter patiently continued to watch.

After a long time, he finally responded: "Why is an edge necessary?" His voice was filled with the echoing rhythm of the dao.

"Just the user needs to be sharp." Li Qiye smiled.

The man continued to grind without looking up to see Li Qiye.

"I must be sharp." The words coming from this man cut like the sharpest divine swords, capable of dismembering the strongest cultivators.

However, Li Qiye was unaffected by his sharpness.

Chapter 4273: Sword Grinding

The grinding process was awfully slow but the man remained meticulous and patient. Grind then observe, grind then observe...

The spectator, Li Qiye, exercised patience as well. He seemed to be enjoying watching the man at work as if he was viewing gorgeous scenery.

In fact, those with sufficient cultivation and strength would find that each of the man's actions was in harmony with the grand dao. The thing he grinding wasn't the sword but rather, his grand dao.

"I'm already dead, you don't need to wait." The man suddenly said.

This would frighten listeners because there was nothing odd going on with him, simply another middle-aged man - alive.

In fact, outsiders had seen him back at the abyss. "Dead" didn't come up in their mind at all, only that he was mysterious.

He wasn't the only one no longer living. The rest of the avatars were the same way, the reason being that the true body had died long ago.

Nonetheless, they seemed to still be surviving here in a manner no different from other living people. People would only believe this after witnessing with their own eyes.

Alas, despite the lack of any discernible difference, his true body was indeed dead. His monstrous power simply prevented time from erasing his existence.

This didn't surprise Li Qiye because he already knew beforehand.

"There's nothing bad about being dead." He said.

"True." The man actually took the time to nod his head this time around: "Still far better than your position, on the verge of death."

"You're not wrong, but I must struggle beforehand, maybe I'll actually survive. That's what life is, an unending struggle." Li Qiye calmly responded with a smile.

The man didn't answer and kept on creating his blade, taking the time perfecting even the smallest line.

After a long while, he checked the edge again then the flames before asking: "To what do you entrust in?"

"You entrust the sword not because of its sharpness or because you need it. Rather, its very existence is significant for you."

The man had reached a frightening level beyond imagination when he was alive. He didn't need the sword because he himself was the strongest sword. Nonetheless, he still tried to create numerous divine swords.

Blacksmithing and the sword served as his symbol of hope instead of being weapons.

"And you?" The man asked again.

Li Qiye didn't respond and only stared at the sword in the man's hand.

"I've forgotten." He eventually answered.

"You can't let go." The man said something that didn't pertain to the conversation.

However, Li Qiye still understood.

"That is your weakness." The man continued.

"Is the sword your weakness?" Li Qiye responded.

The man didn't reply.

"Hope can make one stronger and more determined." Li Qiye said: "The lack of hope means the lack of shackles, this can destroy a person. In the beginning, all the dark existences certainly never thought that they would have to live in the shadows later on. They eventually lost themselves."

"Well said." The man pondered for a bit before agreeing.

Both of them had transcended the limitation of an epoch, capable of changing the course of the entire world, breaking and creating a new order.

Power gave them untethered freedom. The only thing capable of holding them back was hope and entrustment. This kept them grounded and sane.

“Thus, my unwillingness to give up is not a weakness. It will make me stronger, strong enough to overcome the monsters and even the villainous heaven.”

“It may not be possible.” The man observed the white-snow sword near completion and was happy with the brilliant product.

“It’ll be done because I’ve set my mind on it.” Li Qiye uttered with conviction and confidence.

“Someone’s looking for you.” The man changed the topic.

“I’m aware, I’m looking for him as well.” Li Qiye didn’t feel pressured.

“And that’s why you’re here to find me.” The man said.

“If my intelligence is correct, you’ve fought him during the distant chaotic years.” Li Qiye smiled.

“Indeed, and that’s why I am dead.” The man revealed.

“Sword Immortal might be dead but the sword lives on.” Li Qiye replied.

The world has never heard of this being referred to as Sword Immortal before. After all, there were no immortals in this world.

Nonetheless, those who knew him wouldn’t find this title inappropriate. This was a testament to his power. Alas, he still fell to that person.

“I’m afraid he knows more about you than vice versa.” The man said.

“Not too surprising, I’m sure he has been researching for a long time now. Therefore, I’m here to ask you some questions.” Li Qiye smiled.

“What I know might not be useful to you, things have changed throughout the years.” The man paused for a bit before speaking.

“Still better than lacking knowledge.” Li Qiye replied.

“What do you want to know?” The man nodded and agreed.

“I want to know the details of the battle.” Li Qiye became serious.

“Mmm.” The man’s eyes erupted with sword rays. Just this slight hint of his sword intent could crush top cultivators in history. This was the true manifestation of invincibility with the sword.

He was recalling the battle back then - the most brilliant out of them all. He had no regrets despite meeting his end.

Chapter 4274: Unbeatable

He became spirited and his aura soared, exerting its dominance. His current state alone commanded respect and reverence even though he has yet to activate his power.

The battle must have been unimaginable. Regular cultivators couldn't even envision it due to a complete difference in power scale. Li Qiye didn't have this problem and could understand the details.

"My slash eliminated the myriad eras." The man ended the summary with this. Flames sparked in his eyes and he returned to the past once more. Even the cosmo was only a speck of dust compared to his sword.

He wasn't exaggerating or being poetic. His slash actually wielded this power.

History on the river of time became nothingness by that slash along with the current world. If this happened in Eight Desolaces, the eight worlds and their inhabitants would disappear in the blink of an eye.

The man stopped after this last phrase. The light flashing in his eyes also gradually dissipated. He calmed down and stopped looking solemn.

"But I still lost." The man let out a wistful sigh.

He then stared at Li Qiye and said: "My sword was unbeatable, no other dao could touch me."

His world had terrifying existences yet he remained supreme with his sword dao. Any of his opponents would have shocked Eight Desolaces.

"He used the sword to defeat me." He stared at Li Qiye and revealed the shocking truth.

His sword dao was absolutely untouchable for many epochs. This was no exaggeration. Alas, that person used the sword to kill him, meaning that there was still a superior sword dao.

"And, the sword dao might not be his main." He went on to say, meaning that person didn't even use his strongest dao.

The latter didn't need to go all out against an apex existence. This reality was truly daunting. What was his actual dao? Just how powerful would it be?

"Unbeatable." Li Qiye concluded.

He knew just how powerful this man was. Thus, the outcome of this battle painted a better picture for his future opponent.

"Why must you fight him?" The man stared at Li Qiye.

"Why not?" Li Qiye said flatly.

"Why not? Haha, well said." The man laughed after hearing the reason.

"But ultimately, my opponent is not him." Li Qiye added.

The man paused for a while before agreeing: "Yes, our opponent isn't someone else."

"Indeed, only ourselves." Li Qiye said.

Weaker cultivators usually viewed their rivals or certain challenges as their targets. However, for Li Qiye and this man, they only sought to surpass themselves.

“Your goal isn’t a fight, it’s part of your research.” The man said.

“It’s an illness, I don’t like uncertainties and unknowns.” Li Qiye replied.

“I am the same way.” The man enjoyed the conversation and lamented their late meeting.

“What would you do if there is a possibility of you and him teaming up?” He then asked.

“That’s an interesting scenario. What would you say is his pursuit?” Li Qiye smiled.

“Hmm...” The man pondered, then shook his head: “It would be presumptuous for me to comment since I know very little about him. But I’m sure that he’ll start on the journey again just like before.”

“Can’t rest when the villainous heaven looms above.” Li Qiye agreed since existences like them would inevitably embark on this journey.

“So teaming up is a possibility?” The man inquired again.

“The choice isn’t there.” Li Qiye shook his head.

“You’re right.” The man agreed because ultimately, only one person would make it to the end.

“Would you like to pick one?” He then looked up at the stars above.

“Those swords are magnificent but they aren’t meant for me. It would be a waste.” Li Qiye said.

“I see.” The man stared at Li Qiye and started thinking for a bit: “Well, I believe a battle between you two is inevitable.”

“Who knows? It’s not up to me.” Li Qiye responded.

“I have a sword technique.” The man’s tone suddenly became serious as he revealed his true intention.

Judging by this, this technique should be superior to the star swords above.

“I couldn’t win when I was alive.” The man elaborated: “I had a particular idea going. Alas, since I was the sword, I couldn’t be unsheathed. Now that I’m dead, this sword has been gestating and growing boundlessly.”

“I can only imagine.” Li Qiye knew that he would be impressed by this technique even without seeing it.

“My regret is not being able to use it.” He said.

“You wish to give me this sword.” Li Qiye stared at him.

“Yes.” The man was direct: “I can’t fight again since I’m dead, the battle would be meaningless. This isn’t the case for you. It will shine in your grasp.”

“I can’t win using your sword.” Li Qiye disagreed.

“I’m satisfied with it being unsheathed.” He smiled: “No need to try and win with it, just don’t let my effort in crafting go to waste.”

“I understand. I’ll give it a shot.” Li Qiye accepted.

Chapter 4275: Sky Border

Sky Border was one of the eight desolaces. Some considered it to be the strongest region.

It wasn't the largest but was still home to many powerful cultivators. Many believed that it had produced the most dao lords and experts. This seemed to be proven by the records.

Because of this, no other region dared to place itself in front of Sky Border regardless of the criteria. At best, they would only consider themselves equal to Sky Border.

Thus, it became a popular destination for cultivators from other regions. In a sense, all dao lords must visit this place.

It included boundless oceans and endless deserts... It was impossible to have an accurate gauge of all the territories.

Many mighty existences could spend a lifetime only to fail in fully mapping the region. The prime example of this was a field known as Desolate Wild.

Naturally, it had plenty of monstrous lineages. Some reclusive clans and sects - seemingly weak and small - had existences capable of repelling dao lords.

Though it was one of the Eight Desolaces, it actually had five desolaces of its own. Their demarcation was predicated on geographic and political divides. They represented the five strongest powers that were praised even by the dao lords from the other regions.

They were known as North, South, West, East, and Central. The central region was also known as Wild Central or Desolate Wild. The latter was the most mysterious area; even dao lords thought twice before entering.

The other four also varied greatly from each other.

The north belonged to True Immortal Sect and was the home of Blessed Dao Lord during its golden age.

The west focused on the three thousand dao. Whenever this region popped up amidst conversations, people would immediately think of Dao Sanqian - a cultivator that had dominated for eras and was well-respected by the dao lords.

The south had many kingdoms with Lion's Roar at the top. This particular dynasty had brilliant subjects and officials. Most importantly, it had a particular existence. Though this person hasn't shown up for years, their notoriety remained.

The east was a land of freedom inhabited by many clans. From freedom came development and prosperity.

Someone once said that any of these five regions could dominate the other seven desolaces. This might be an exaggeration but the big shots believed that it wasn't too far off from the truth.

Today, a traveler strolled freely with a relaxed expression, seemingly having no destination in mind. He was a bit dirty and appeared absentminded.

He was none other than Li Qiye, except not as well-kempt as normal, being only slightly cleaner than a beggar.

His eyes were empty, causing him to look like a moving corpse. Of course, this wasn't the case.

He simply expelled his own true fate and soul, freeing his body in the process. Under this particular state, his body could linger in a small corner for several years like a beggar or travel through the domains including Desolate Wild with just one step. Nothing in the world could hinder his physical prowess.

When he showed up in a legendary land, two figures appeared with speed beyond time itself. Alas, he was even faster and had already left.

If he didn't want anyone to catch him, even the strongest existence wouldn't be able to catch a glimpse.

The two figures were supreme beauties - one was sexy while the other elegant. Either would captivate all spectators; both being in the same place had an even greater effect.

"Did you sense that?" The lovely woman asked the noble lady.

"Yes, it's him." The latter nodded.

"Indeed, I can sense your emotions fluctuating." The lovely woman said.

"Ridiculous." The lady denied.

"Haha, I already know." The woman's smile could herald overwhelming joy.

"Hmm, he's actually still alive." The lady ignored her and murmured.

"No one in this world can kill him, but why did he return?" The woman said.

"There must be a reason." The lady knew that both the nine worlds and Eight Desolace had nothing to hold this supreme man back. Thus, his return truly astounded her.

"What else can it be but to see you? It's your fault for being so attractive." The woman teased.

"Be serious now." The lady gave her the side-eye.

The woman stopped smiling right away; her eyes narrowed as she contemplated. They flashed with a frightening light containing the celestials and the myriad laws. This was the sign of a mighty cultivator.

"No woman in this world can hold him back." The woman said. She was simply teasing her senior sister earlier. She knew that his reason for coming back must be something earth-shattering and unfathomable.

Though they were unbeatable, this was merely the case in their own world. However, his reach extended far above that.

"I can feel the stench of blood incoming." She commented.

This has always been the case every time this man appeared in the past. Blind masters and arrogant sects were reduced to ashes.

The commotion this time might be louder than the previous, perhaps capable of flipping Eight Desolaces over.

"I hope people will grow eyes." The lady said.

"It's the opposite for me, I'm hoping those fools provoke him so that there will be a fun show to watch." The sexy woman was also quite mischievous, wanting more chaos everywhere.

"Just seeing him is enough for me." The lady glanced at her before shifting her gaze towards the horizon.

"I guess our senior sister can't wait to see the man in her dream." The woman smiled again.

"And you don't?" The lady asked without looking back.

The woman fell into a silence. Even if it had nothing to do with romance, she still wanted to see him again.

First, there were only a few acquaintances and friends still around but most importantly, she was curious regarding the reason for his appearance.

Chapter 4276: Small Shop

The sands in this desert flew like the waves and burned travelers. There was no end in sight, only heat and sand. Even the birds avoided shitting in this place.

Strangely enough, there was a small tavern located in this desert. It was built from wooden planks in a shabby manner.

There were only two tables, looking old from an unknown era. The surface was black and ashen, not its original color. They seemed feeble and would break with some weight, this was the case for the wooden stools as well.

There was a piece of cloth hanging outside with the character, "hai". It has been too long so it was barely legible. Plus, it was written in an ancient language. Ordinary people wouldn't be able to recognize it. [re] Hai means ocean[/ref]

It was tattered as well; a strong gust of wind could rip it to pieces. This also applied to the rest of the shop. Only one worker was here, serving as both the boss and the waiter.

He curled up in a corner, seemingly asleep. His hair was ashen white but not the same white due to age. The strands seemed to have withered up for some other reason. Time had left a mark on his face given the number of wrinkles. Some would question if he was still alive while sitting there.

The only positive feature was his eyebrows. They were sharp and long, looking like unsheathed divine swords. The old man must have been dashing and perhaps handsome during his youth.

No guests would ever come to this desert but he didn't seem to mind. Not selling a single cup after a thousand years didn't affect him. His choice of location was indeed inscrutable.

Today, a dozen or so disciples came across this place by chance.

“What the heck? Why is there a wine shop in this bizarre place? Let’s have a drink.” One of them suggested.

“Boss, give us a round.” Another shouted at the old man.

“Old man, did you hear that? Bring us some drinks!” They became impatient since he didn’t respond.

“Is he dead?” One of them wondered.

The leading senior took a look and shook his head.

The old man finally looked up to see the customers. He opened his eyes and revealed how muddled they were.

The cultivators thought that given his appearance, he might not last another day. Nonetheless, it wasn’t any of their business.

“Please bring us a round of wine.” An older cultivator politely asked.

The man took his time getting out some bowls and a jar of wine. The bowls were covered in dust, clearly not washed for a long time. Some even had holes in them.

The old man didn’t have a problem with this and poured wine into the bowls.

Some frowned after seeing this. The cultivation world was tough so not all of them needed luxury and fine wine. However, this was just too crude and dirty.

One of them ignored this and lifted up the bowl for a drink. He immediately spat it out and shouted: “What the hell is this? Horse’s piss probably tastes better!”

“Pah! People can’t drink this crap!” Others spat as well and were quite annoyed.

The old man didn’t seem to care about their reception.

“Old man, don’t you have anything better? Give us a different jar.” One of them shouted.

“No.” The old man glanced at him.

Some were quite unhappy with his attitude. They were customers but he didn’t treat them as such. Most importantly, the drinks weren’t meant for human consumption.

“You should have an advertisement sign that your shop serves horses’ piss, not wine.” A youth was furious.

The old man had zero reaction to the insult.

“Forget it, forget it.” A senior brother didn’t want to argue with this old man and said: “How much?”

“50,000 jades.” The old man had a bigger reaction this time as he held up five fingers.

“50,000?! You’re really trying to sell this shitty wine for 50,000?!” Another shrieked.

The old man flipped his palm over, seemingly determined to get his money.

“What kind of shady establishment is this? Your wine isn’t worth five coins.” One more disciple interjected.

“It’s fine, we’re paying.” Their senior paid up and told the group to leave.

Once they were outside, one disciple couldn’t help but ask: “Uncle, why did you pay him?”

The senior looked back at the shop and said: “Opening a shop in this desolate desert, he has to be insane, right?”

The juniors didn’t respond. Only a madman would try to make a living by opening a shop here. Not to mention making a profit, the owner would starve to death in no time at all.

“If he isn’t insane, then he is an eccentric cultivator and they don’t play nice. It’s best not to cause trouble.” The senior added.

The juniors agreed with him and nodded repeatedly.

“So why did he open a shop here?” One more became curious.

“Don’t try to understand, we can’t.” The senior concluded.

Chapter 4277: Another Acquaintance

The one constant in this desert was its unbearable heat and sandstorms.

The old man continued to be in a drowsy state, curling up in the corner as if nothing in the world could interest him. This was his position for millions of years, seemingly wanting to die and become sands.

His decision to stay here was truly puzzling. Nonetheless, he outlasted the rise and fall of sects outside. Geniuses came and went yet he remained in this place.

Of course, no one paid that much attention to the old man outside of mere curiosity. They didn’t have time to linger around. Plus, they couldn’t figure out his mysteries anyway.

This trend stopped today. A traveler walked on the scorching desert. Sand had gotten through his dirty robe but he trod onward, undeterred.

It’s not that he didn’t notice the high temperature and the danger looming there. His eyes were muddled as if the soul was no longer there.

He was none other than Li Qiye, still in his ethereal state. When his mind left the body, he could see everything in the world including the myriad dao.

The abandoned body appeared to be a helpless mortal without dao knowledge. However, this state was even more dangerous and destructive. He somehow made his way into the shop and sat down on the creaking bench.

The old man was alert and knew who was entering the desert at the first second. Thus, he also noticed Li Qiye but wasn’t too interested at first.

As time passed, Li Qiye still sat there without uttering a single word. His existence didn’t affect the shop in the slightest. The only audible noise was the cloth piece in front of the entrance fluttering to the wind.

After an unknown trek of time, the old man finally looked up and stared at Li Qiye. This was rather surprising because he wouldn't even look up at the sky falling down.

The moment he got a better look at Li Qiye, his eyes widened as he became emotional. They flashed with an eternal light capable of dissecting heaven and earth.

This man was immensely strong. The current lords in this era couldn't withstand a single move from him. However, Li Qiye didn't react to the uninvited gaze.

"Want a drink?" The old man asked.

Previous visitors would be shocked to see this. Some big shots had been curious enough to visit several times. Alas, they were all ignored. Today, he took the initiative to speak?

"Sure." Li Qiye answered without thinking, still being stuck in a dazed state.

This was only possible since the old man was capable of channeling his voice and intent through to Li Qiye - a testament to his power.

In Li Qiye's state, the rest of the world became mute to him. He couldn't see or hear them at all but the old man successfully communicated.

The latter searched the corner for a long time before finding a bottle of wine. He opened it and out came a salivating aroma.

This was absolutely the finest of wine, unlike what he had given to other guests - the difference between the heavenly nectar and horse's piss.

He poured a full bowl for Li Qiye. The latter took a drink instinctively without looking at the bowl.

In his current state, even the most precious wine was nothing more than water. The old man didn't know this and poured another full cup for Li Qiye, wanting to satisfy his customer.

One man drank while the other poured. This scene was bizarre due to the circumstances. Nonetheless, it still felt natural between these two.

Who knows how many drinks Li Qiye had gotten but he wasn't close to getting drunk. His stomach didn't fill up either.

This time around, the old man poured another cup but Li Qiye opened his eyes and regained his sentience and soul.

"Why did you turn into this abomination?" Li Qiye asked, clearly aware of who the old man was.

The old man responded: "The path ended, I couldn't accept and chose a new one."

"This dao Yu Zhengfeng passed down to you will do nothing except await death. Even if you grow stronger, you're nothing more than a walking corpse." Li Qiye said flatly.

The old man didn't respond. When he was younger, he was a peerless and handsome genius. He dominated the entire world and was loved by numerous ladies. His golden age was rather resplendent.

Chapter 4278: Always The Same

He was a dragon among men, possessing both authority and an impressive harem. He enjoyed the best life possible, becoming the target of envy and jealousy.

However, he wasn't satisfied with just being a matchless God Monarch and chose an entirely new path.

Sure enough, he gained immense power - an ability insane enough to frighten gods and devils. Unfortunately, this stopped mattering to him once he embarked on this path.

The dao resulted in him despising everything, even the goal that made him abandon everything. Power became meaningless.

In the past, he couldn't help desiring ultimate power and a higher path. His new path indeed granted him more power but now, it escalated to the point where he didn't even wish to fight, let alone dominate the world.

He wouldn't have the urge to fight a mortal enemy right now. There was nothing but indifference and distaste.

"No one has been able to change this path." Li Qiye commented. This happened to Immortal Emperor Mu Zhuo then Yu Zhengfeng.

"Mu Zhuo did it due to external circumstances and Yu Zhengfeng's heart desired this. What about you?" Li Qiye asked.

"It doesn't matter anymore." The old man said.

This path was one of hatred. The user would hate and be hated by everything else. They would lose their emotions and desires.

Alas, they also gained immense longevity. Thus, death would be salvation but it wasn't that easy to die. Only time could kill them, but how long?

"How pitiful." Li Qiye smiled and closed his eyes again, assuming his astral state.

The old man sighed and didn't continue the conversation. His former self would have been overwhelmed with curiosity after meeting Li Qiye. He would have asked numerous questions, especially the reason for Li Qiye's return.

After all, no Immortal Emperors and dao lords came back to their world, not even the most capable ones. Li Qiye was an exception with access to numerous secrets.

The geniuses in the past craved to know what's above the nine heavens - the secrets of the myriad dao.

But now, the old man was no longer interested. He didn't have the desire to live, let alone external matters.

He went back to the corner and curled up again. What happened just now was an ephemeral spark, completely trivial.

Time passed and Li Qiye's body started moving again. He left the shop and the old man didn't stop him.

His shoes became filled with sand. He eventually disappeared into the desert.

On the other side, the shop remained; the only constant being the cloth sign fluttering to the wind. The old man slumbered once more, awaiting death. The scorching heat during the day and the chilling breezes at night couldn't wake him up.

He was once a dashing cultivator who stood at the apex and had many companions. Now, only time was his companion and eventually, his killer.

On the other hand, Li Qiye's footprints gradually disappeared from the surface.

The two of them had a deep understanding and experience with time. However, their dao path was completely opposite.

One day, this vast desert could disappear or turn into a great ocean. These two would certainly outlast it.

This was more so the case for Li Qiye. The old man would die eventually so in a sense, Li Qiye's torture was worse.

Li Qiye's body continued its long journey, truly acting as a passerby without any senses. However, once he made it to an old city, his soul returned again since memories of old friends beckoned him.

This happened again in another ruin. The tiles and broken walls made him think twice. He sat here and gave out orders in the past. Those he loved and those who loved him have disappeared on the river of time.

Once enough time had passed, he would truly be alone. This had happened several times in his long history.

In reality, the monstrous existences and overlords have suffered this fate as well. Only they were strong enough to survive while their friends and loved ones couldn't overcome death.

This was the reason why they became unshackled. Joining the darkness was far easier, a simple choice that has nothing to do with morality.

Only those with an indomitable dao heart could move forward without being tempted by the darkness.

There has been no lack of supreme existences in history. Alas, only a few shared the same characteristic as Li Qiye.

He continued to observe the world and the myriad dao during this journey. The whole thing seemed like a dream.

Chapter 4279: Chi Jinlin

In this soulless state, Li Qiye removed all emotions and attachments. The world and its inhabitants were nothing more than connected dots of various shapes and sizes.

Without his soul, these dots would never catch his attention. Only mighty beings could overcome this and communicate with him.

Of course, this corpse-like state didn't mean that he was weak either. Just his body alone could suppress everything on top of being impervious to damage.

He crossed through deserts and worlds of ice and snow, volcanoes and mountains filled with blades...

Some areas were bypassed with a single step regardless of the looming dangers. He took his time with some others but nothing could touch him. Each step, regardless of his speed, was unstoppable and cleared out all obstacles.

He also visited densely-populated cities and other prosperous places. They weren't as dangerous but a few still caused trouble because Li Qiye resembled a beggar right now.

His eyes were muddled so he appeared to be a fool. Some idle bums or children would tease Li Qiye but none could bypass his seal.

Today, he walked on the street of an old city and became the target of a few children.

"I got him!" A kid tossed mud at Li Qiye.

"Bam! Bam! Bam!" He became dirty but still didn't react.

"Is he stupid?" They laughed happily and teased him in various fashions.

Since he ignored them and kept on moving forward, an older teen had a malicious suggestion: "Let's tie him up, we'll see if he can ignore us forever."

"Right, let's tie him up and throw him into the river." His friend took it a step further.

"Okay." They agreed. One of them took out some iron chains.

"What are you doing?!" A middle-aged man who was passing by saw this and shouted at them.

He dressed humbly but looked exceptional due to his muscular physique and gallant eyes. Though he wasn't handsome, his features were righteous and resolute. His eyes were spirited. Alas, there seemed to be a hint of sorrow hidden deep in there, not usually seen from someone his age.

"None of your business!" One teen shouted back.

The man glared at the teen, successfully intimidating the guy without needing to show wrath. He was a cultivator while the teens were mere mortals.

They nearly pissed their pants from fear, dropped the chains, and started to run. After all, mortals were mere insects compared to a cultivator.

The man frowned after seeing the lack of humanity. He wanted to leave but couldn't due to Li Qiye's condition.

He became interested in Li Qiye. He merely yelled at the teens earlier since he didn't wish to see a crime committed.

However, as he was about to leave, he felt a special aura coming from Li Qiye, albeit only for a split second.

He approached closer and carefully observed. The guy appeared to be a dirty beggar but intuition told him that this was another cultivator.

However, he couldn't assess Li Qiye's cultivation. The guy was empty, akin to a mortal.

He was naturally too weak to see Li Qiye's current soulless state. Either way, even if Li Qiye wasn't in this state, he still wouldn't be able to see anything.

"My name is Chi Jinlin." He politely introduced himself despite Li Qiye's ridiculous state. He cupped his fist and continued: "May I have your name?"

Of course, Li Qiye ignored him since the entire world was made of connected dots in his eyes right now. Only a top master like the old man in the wine shop could reach Li Qiye.

The man didn't give up and continued: "Where are you going, Brother?"

Li Qiye still didn't respond and continued moving onward.

The man confirmed that this youth must have had some problem with cultivation or a traumatizing experience. This resulted in him losing his senses and awareness.

This made him sympathetic due to his own experience. He said: "The path towards the dao is unpredictable, no need to be so down, Brother. How about staying at my place for a bit?"

He thought that if this continued, Li Qiye could lose his life. He was helpless and death seemed inevitable. For example, those wicked teens earlier could have killed him.

"My place has verdant hills and green waters, how about it?" He asked again, wanting to help Li Qiye.

Despite a lack of response, he still forcefully brought Li Qiye back to his place.

Sure enough, he lived alone beneath a peak with beautiful scenery. He cultivated alone next to a waterfall and a lake.

In reality, he was once a noble but suffered serious setbacks and moved here to focus on cultivation.

This was his main focus, nothing else outside of the occasional trips back to the city. The diligent man could spend days cultivating. Alas, he couldn't overcome the current bottleneck.

Chapter 4280: Arduous Dao

The yin and yang circled around him along with dao images. Chaos energy emerged akin to the start of a new world.

His body was being melted, resembling an entity at the start of time. This chaos energy far exceeded his current cultivation level. One could hear bestial roars due to this majestic energy.

Once the channeling reached its peak, a divine lion from time immemorial woke up and let out a devastating roar. The image of one appeared next to him - dominating and tyrannical.

These characteristics spread over to him as well. He grew in size and became a tyrant.

"Clank! Clank! Clank!" Alas, as his chaos energy and dao were reaching their limit, chains suddenly appeared and sealed them.

“Boom!” His true fate was stopped and couldn’t channel energy any further. This was the bottleneck mentioned prior. The process thus far came to an abrupt halt and everything receded like the tides.

He felt empty and couldn’t restart the process. This made breaking through an impossibility.

“Again?” He smashed the ground from rage, leaving a deep pit behind. Various emotions surfaced - ire, helplessness, and despair.

He had experienced this numerous times already but didn’t give up. Unfortunately, this bottleneck seemed impossible. Another dao seemed to be binding his own and prevented him from improving.

“Why is this happening to me?!” He shouted indignantly.

If it wasn’t for this dao seal, he would have soared above the nine firmaments. He was once the most talented descendant of the royal clan.

His cultivation speed was the fastest; this didn’t mean that his foundation was rushed either. Though he was the son of a concubine, he still had plenty of supporters due to his talent. They believed that he could become something great, perhaps the throne wasn’t out of the question. Thus, his reputation and fame were unmatched.

Unfortunately, the dao shackles happened and he stopped improving abruptly. The other geniuses caught up and even surpassed him as a result.

Years went by and the great genius became the laughingstock of the royal clan. His status cratered afterward.

The royal clan had treated him well and gave him everything necessary for cultivation. But now, his unfavorable background annoyed others and his talent couldn’t hide this fact any longer. This was one of the reasons why he left the capital.

“Is it impossible?” He murmured in a daze.

In recent years, there were still ancestors who have yet to give up on him. The flashes of brilliance in the past justified them trying numerous methods and medicines to break this dao shackle. Alas, nothing worked.

Eventually, all of them had to give up and chose other juniors instead. After all, they needed capable leaders in the future.

He didn’t hate the seniors for abandoning him. After all, they certainly helped during his prime and had tried numerous methods to solve the bottleneck. Abandoning him was pragmatic.

It’s just that falling from the peak all the way to the abyss was unbearable. Others also kicked him while he was down.

He sighed and thought that maybe the heaven didn’t want to see him improve. He took a deep breath and regained his composure for another session.

He channeled chaos energy and dao again. It’s a shame that his effort was not rewarded this time either. Pessimism came but was defeated by determination. He had no intention of giving up just yet.

“Boom!” Another session resulted in his energy and dao receding back into his body.

“What else can I do?” He had tried countless times but the result was always the same. Not even the tiniest improvement occurred.

Worst of all, the experiments didn’t point out a potential problem to him. He didn’t know why this was happening.

He had no injuries and no sign of qi deviation either. His merit laws had no flaws and mistakes either. The ancestors agreed that his comprehension of the merit laws was impeccable, going as far as being superior to members of the previous generation. Alas, he was still stuck in the yin yang realm.

“The way you’re doing it, a million more attempts won’t help.” He suddenly heard someone nearby.

He turned around and saw that the beggar was looking at him. Ever since he brought this person back, he has been in a stupefied state, not eating or drinking.

“You’re awake?” He was happy to see lucidity in Li Qiye’s eyes.

“Are you okay now?” He assumed that Li Qiye’s injuries had gotten better.

He wasn’t a stranger to injuries and knew how traumatic it could be.

“Of course.” Li Qiye responded.

“Brother, what did you mean earlier? Do you know something about my condition?” He recalled Li Qiye’s comment and lowered his head.

He naturally had no hope in this because even the mighty ancestors failed. Alas, he was desperate enough to do anything.

“Forcefully breaking through is useless.” Li Qiye said: “Your Tyrannical Physique requires the true fate’s approval.”

“Approval? My true fate?” He mumbled and pondered. Suddenly, a light flashed in his head.

“Brother, are you saying that I should...” He became excited and looked over only to find that Li Qiye had returned to his drowsy state.

He tried several times but Li Qiye didn’t respond.