

# 1601 The Emergence of the Celestial Amulet of Legacy

The first group of people whom Zhang Xuan managed to process consisted of Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen. They had grim looks on their faces.

On the opposite side were the four young men who emanated a vicious killing aura. Even before making a move, their auras had already permeated the entire room, as if signaling their dominance.

They were the four Otherworldly Demons who they had tailed here.

At close proximity, Zhang Xuan was finally able to get a clear look of the appearances of the four of them. Donned in a black robe, they had tall hats and a little stubble beneath their chins.

“These are the culprits who have kidnapped Zhao Ya, Wei Ruyan, and Yuan Tao...” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes menacingly as he casually placed his hand on his waist, ready to make a move at any moment.

“The final candidate has finally cleared the trial as well.”

In this moment, a calm voice sounded in the air, breaking the heavy tension in the air. The adolescent boy sculpture walked over and faced the crowd.

“Since you have successfully cleared your respective trials, you are qualified to inherit the treasure that Ancient Sage Ran Qiu has left here.”

Huala!

Right after those words were spoken, radiant light shimmered all around the room as a stone platform slowly rose from the ground. At the very center of the stone platform was an amulet the size of a palm.

Ancient inscriptions were carved on the amulet. While it appeared to hold no extraordinary prowess at all, if one attempt to peer into it through one's consciousness, one would immediately experience a searing sensation in the mind.

Is that the Celestial Amulet of Legacy? Zhang Xuan wondered with a frown as he hurried over to Luo Ruoxin's side.

The Prime Amulet was the very reason for their visit there. Since it had already emerged, it seemed like a fight could not be avoided anymore. Not only did they have to secure the amulet, they also had to capture those four and force them to reveal the whereabouts of Zhao Ya and the others!

"It has finally appeared!"

The four young men could not conceal the agitation from surfacing on their faces when they saw the Prime Amulet, and an excited gleam shone from their eyes.

Paying no heed to the group of four, Zhang Xuan discreetly looked at the young lady beside him and asked, "Are you fine?"

Since he had gone through so much danger in his trial, it was likely that Luo Ruoxin had encountered quite a bit of trouble as well.

"Don't worry, I'm fine." Luo Ruoxin shook his head as she glanced at the belt around Zhang Xuan's waist and nodded in approval. "It seems like you have gained quite a lot from your trial!"

Not expecting to be found out so quickly, Zhang Xuan scratched his head awkwardly. "Haha, I guess so!"

Really, it felt as if there was nothing that he could do that could escape from her sight!

"The Dragonbone Divine Spear is powerful. With your current strength, you won't be able to draw out even a hundredth of its full prowess, but even so, it's already more than sufficient!" Luo Ruoxin remarked with a smile.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

He was just about to continue speaking when the voice of adolescent boy sculpture sounded once more.

“I can tell that both sides desire to obtain this Celestial Amulet of Legacy... Since that’s the case, let’s decide the allocation through your strength then! Feel free to use any means at your disposal, and whoever manages to acquire it shall be the new owner of this Celestial Amulet of Legacy!” The adolescent boy sculpture chuckled softly as he addressed the crowd.

“Since the elder has already said such words, we shan’t stand on ceremony then!”

The scholarly young man of the group of four immediately dashed right toward the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, intending to swipe possession of it.

Weng!

However, before his hand could reach the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, it suddenly struck something hard. No matter how much might he exerted, he was unable to push his hand any closer toward the amulet.

It was an isolation barrier.

“You want to take away the amulet? Have you asked for my permission yet?” Wu Chen smirked disdainfully as he dashed forward as well.

Unlike the scholarly young man, his target was not the amulet. Devastating might rumbled in his hand as he directed it toward the back of the scholarly young man.

“Audacious!”

Seeing that Wu Chen was intending to make a move on one of their comrades, a fragile looking young man leaped forth, and with a furious roar, an ancient zither appeared at his fingertips. He stroked his fingers gracefully across the strings, and a ferocious melody burst forth.

Triiingg tingg!

“It’s indeed an artifact of Ancient Sage Yan Yan!” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

This zither was not the strongest of Ancient Sage Yan Yan's artifacts, but it had been personally refined by him. Even the slightest stroke could produce the most imposing of notes, as if an army of thousands charging forward with an unstoppable momentum!

Any Ancient Sage artifacts that could be preserved to this very day, even the simplest of them, were tools that could not be underestimated.

“Heh!”

Under the assault of the fragile young man, Wu Chen retracted his attack toward the scholarly young man and redirected his might to clash with the demonic tune. In the clash, ripples of shockwaves diffused into the surroundings.

Over the course of the clash, Zhang Xuan could tell that both the scholarly young man and the fragile young man wielded fighting prowess that could match Yang Shi! They had reached the pinnacle of Great Sage, the Sempiternal realm!

It was no wonder they could take Zhao Ya and the others away so easily! With their strength and the Ancient Sage artifacts in their possession, they were indeed a force that would be hard to stand against!

“Ruoxin, I'll be counting on you to stop the fellow attempting to snatch the Celestial Amulet of Legacy. If possible, try to find a way to snatch the amulet yourself. As for the rest, leave them to Wu Chen and me!” Zhang Xuan said.

Taking a deep breath, he touched the blood droplet in his palm, and a powerful surge of energy swiftly swept through his body.

Since the culprits who had kidnapped Zhao Ya and his other students were there, there was no need for him to stand on ceremony. He would pry open their mouths and get their locations out of them!

“Un.” Knowing that the current Zhang Xuan had the ability to deal with those four young men, Luo Ruoxin nodded before dashing toward the Celestial Amulet of Legacy.

“Heh, how can I possibly allow you take the amulet so easily?”

With a deafening roar, a dark-skinned young man dashed forth, intending to hinder Luo Ruoxin. But barely after he took a step forward, he felt an immense pressure crushing down on him, forcing him to stop in his tracks. The next moment, he saw that Zhang Xuan was already standing right before him with a cold smile on his face.

“Get your facts right! Your opponent is me!”

Astonished by Zhang Xuan’s sudden appearance, the dark-skinned young man instinctively realized that he would not be able to get past the other party easily, so he quickly barked an order to the last young man in the group. “What are you dawdling around for? Stop her!”

The last young man finally recovered from his daze and hurriedly nodded. “Alright!”

Following which, he stretched his hand forth to grab Luo Ruoxin.

This last young man was the tallest among the group of four, and his body was slightly bloated as well, giving an impression that he was not too nimble. However, the fighting prowess that he displayed was extraordinary, not losing out to the other three at all!

A powerful might rumbled from the last young man’s hand, as if he wielded strength comparable to a devastating bolt of lightning.

“Hahaha, don’t waste your effort! The two of you are mine!”

But before the last young man could get too far, a cold chuckle echoed in the air. Following which, a ferocious pressure pressed down on the last young man, dissipating whatever might he wielded in his hand.

Astonished, the four young men could not help but shoot a glance at Zhang Xuan, who was holding a pitch-black spear in his hand, emanating a cold and lofty aura.

Realizing that Zhang Xuan's strength was far beyond what they could deal with individually, the dark-skinned young man yelled anxiously, "Let's make a move together!"

Huala!

Thus, the dark-skinned young man and the last young man whipped out their swords and flicked two bolts of sword qi over simultaneously. Even space itself seemed to moan under the tremendous force of their sword qi, and it appeared as if the bolts would rip Zhang Xuan apart if they struck him.

"Let me show you just how frightening an existence you have provoked when you chose to kidnap Zhao Ya and my other students!"

With a flick of his wrist, a sound reminiscent of a dragon's roar sounded from Zhang Xuan's spear as it bolted forward.

Kacha! Kacha!

A black hole appeared in the point of collision between the spear and the two bolts of sword qi, causing the entire atrium to shake intensely.

Even though the folded space that they were in was extraordinary stable, it was ultimately still an artificial space. It could not possibly withstand such frightening might!

Peng! Peng!

The faces of the dark-skinned young man and the last young man warped in horror as their bodies were sent flying into the distance, as if they had been struck squarely by a hammer. They crashed heavily into the wall, creating a massive hole behind them as blood seeped down from the corners of their mouths.

With just a single flick of his spear, Zhang Xuan had successfully suppressed a coordinated attack from two Sempiternal realm experts.

For the first time, the ultimate fighting prowess derived from Kong shi's blood droplet and the Dragonbone Divine Spear was shown to the world!

# 1602 Otherworldly Demons Indeed!

“Where are Zhao Ya and my other students?”

After sending the two young men flying, Zhang Xuan continued walking toward them as a cold glint shone from the tip of his spear. In that instant, it felt as if he was a War God who had descended from the heavens.

Tringg tingggggg!

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to capture one of the young men for interrogation, a sonic wave swept in his direction, piercing toward his soul. Turning his head over, he saw the fragile young man wielding Ancient Sage Yan Yan’s artifact stroking his zither in his direction.

He immediately turned his sight to Wu Chen, only to see that the latter was currently bogged down by three Golden Warriors. These Golden Warriors wielded incredible strength that left the space around them crumbling with their punches. Even with Wu Chen’s strength, he was still unable to subdue them within a short period of time.

“They sure do have plenty of artifacts...”

These three Golden Warriors were similar to the ones that they had encountered when they entered the Ran Zi Hall. They were also the soldiers created by the personal writing of an Ancient Sage expert, harnessing his spirit and psyche.

However, unlike the Golden Warriors that had materialized previously, these three did not suppress their cultivation at all, and their coordination was impeccable. As a result, even Wu Chen was having some difficulty dealing with them!

A doubt arose in Zhang Xuan’s mind. Golden Warriors of Mentor’s Calligraphy, the ancient zither used by Ancient Sage Yan Yan... Are they really Otherworldly Demons?

Not even the Master Teacher Pavilion was able to whip out so many precious treasures at once. Yet, these Otherworldly Demons actually had so many in their possession, and they used them as if they were not worth much at all.

Could they possibly not be from the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe but from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers?

However, if those four young men were truly from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, who were Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen?

After all, Luo Ruoxin had told him personally that she was not an Otherworldly Demon, and he really wanted to trust her.

Flaws!

With such a doubt in mind, Zhang Xuan decisively activated the Library of Heaven's Path on them in hopes of uncovering their identity.

Weng!

The Library of Heaven's Path jolted, but no books were compiled.

What's going on? It can't be that they possess the Discarnate Constitution of Divination as well, right? There can't possibly be so many people who have that constitution in the world! Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

He could still accept not being able to read Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen, but why was he unable to read these young men? Just what was going on?

Those young men were currently executing their battle techniques, so he should have been able to read them easily!

Could it be... Yes, that seems to be very likely! Even if they don't possess the Discarnate Constitution of Divination, there's a very high chance that they might still have some artifacts on them that allow them to conceal themselves from the heavens... Otherwise, there's no way the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters and the Zhang Clan could have been unaware that they were going to kidnap Zhao Ya and the others! Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.



Given the importance of Zhao Ya, Wei Ruyan, and Yuan Tao in the expedition to the Temple of Confucius, the Master Teacher Pavilion had their most skillful seers keeping close tabs on them. If they were going to be captured, those seers definitely would have divined it, but that did not happen. The only reason for that was that the four young men were in possession of some method of concealing themselves from the view of the heavens!

In a sense, this was similar to how the Sage Xi's Tortoiseshell was concealed from the detection of the heavens under the isolation barrier of the Shrine of Seers back then.

It seems like I really should journey around the Shrine of Seers after leaving this ancient domain... Zhang Xuan thought.

If this went on, it felt like his Library of Heaven's Path would be rendered obsolete in no time!

It was really high time for him to upgrade his Library of Heaven's Path. If that did not work either, the least he could do was learn about the various means to avoid the detection of the heavens so that he would be able to deal with them in the future!

Forget it! Even if I can't see through them, I'll know after trying them out! Zhang Xuan thought as he glanced at the three men before him coldly.

Just because the Library of Heaven's Path could not see through them did not mean that he did not have any other ways of finding out!

Even if Otherworldly Demons were able to disguise themselves as humans, they were still unable to alter the fundamental nature of their zhenqi. In times of danger, their instinctive responses would immediately kick in, thus exposing their true identity.

Unless they were so powerful that they could deal with his attacks with ease...

However, considering the strength of the four young men, the possibility of such a situation happening was nonexistent. In

any case, Zhang Xuan did not believe that anyone beneath Ancient Sage would be able to hide their true forms from him!

“The three of you should come at me together!” Zhang Xuan roared in laughter as he flicked his wrist and thrust the spear forth.

Weng!

The sonic waves produced by the fragile young man were kept at bay by the spear tip, and taking a huge stride forward, Zhang Xuan swept his spear in a horizontal arc in front of him.

Huala!

The spear flew toward the dark-skinned young man closest to him.

“Humph!” With his flick of his wrist, the dark-skinned young man took out a brush to defend against Zhang Xuan’s spear sweep.

Ding ding ding ding ding!

The brush swiftly chipped away at the might of the Dragonbone Divine Spear with multiple strikes. While the dark-skinned young man was still forced to retreat eight steps in the end, he managed to walk out of this encounter relatively unscathed.

Is that brush another Ancient Sage artifact, too? Zhang Xuan wondered in astonishment.

However, knowing that this was not the time to allow his mind to wander, he smoothly maneuvered his spear into an upward flick to pierce the last young man.

Tzzzzzzzz!

A furious storm swept through the air like a hurricane, and the last young man’s face immediately paled in the face of the spear.

Trrriing ting!

Just as the spear was about to strike the last young man, the fragile young man’s zither started playing once more.

This time, Zhang Xuan did not resist the demonic tune. Instead, he drew the entire soul attack into his body.

Kacha!

In an instant, the metamorphosis that he had started under the pressure of the Dragonbone Divine Spear was immediately completed, and his soul began undergoing a qualitative change.

Zhang Xuan could clearly feel his soul cultivation being raised to a whole new level. While it had not reached the level of Great Sage yet, it had become much purer, and the size of his soul was also reduced by almost half.

With the current state of his soul, he was already able to pull off Soul Traverse.

Refreshed from his breakthrough, Zhang Xuan could not help but burst into laughter. “Hahaha, you have my deepest gratitude!”

Then, he took a step forward.

Cold sweat immediately rained down from the last young man as alarm bells rang endlessly in his head. He hurriedly retreated, but Zhang Xuan’s spear traced him relentlessly as if it was his shadow. No matter how the last young man maneuvered around the place, trying all kinds of movement techniques, he was unable to shake off the spear piercing toward him.

“Damn it!” the dark-skinned young man cursed beneath his breath as he poured ink all over the place and began painting swiftly.

In the blink of an eye, he had already painted a shield for the last young man to hide in.

Si la!

The Dragonbone Divine Spear collided with the painted shield and tore it apart with ease.

Nevertheless, the painted shield did manage to reduce the might of the spear’s pierce significantly. The last young man

swiftly turned around, and with all his might, he deflected the spear with his sword, thus surviving this ordeal.

Seeing how the last young man did not whip out any peculiar artifacts despite being driven to a corner, Zhang Xuan thought, It seems like this fellow doesn't have any Ancient Sage artifacts...

To be honest, while the combination of Kong shi's blood droplet and the Dragonbone Divine Spear did grant him incomparable fighting prowess, it would still take some time for him to capture those three young men alive.

Unfortunately, there was a time limit to Kong shi's blood droplet, so time was not a luxury that he could squander.

Since that was the case, it would be best for him to focus his attention on the weakest young man who did not have any Ancient Sage artifacts in possession!

Once one was down, it would be easier for him to take down the other two.

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan decisively launched his spear toward the last young man once more.

Tzzzzzzzz!

If the previous attack was just a maneuver to try the last young man's hand, this would be the true deadly strike. Before the spear could even reach the last young man, a deafening sonic boom had already permeated the entire atrium. As if a fragile sheet of paper, the space standing between the spear and the last young man was callously torn apart, causing multiple spatial ripples to diffuse into the surroundings.

Tiing trrrinnng! Triinnng ding!

Not expecting Zhang Xuan to neglect the other two of them and focus his offense solely on the last young man, the fragile young man hurriedly stroked his zither. But even though the demonic tune that he played held fearsome might, it was kept at bay by the spatial ripples diffusing outward.

Spatial Interference!

"Damn it!"

The dark-skinned young man hurriedly rushed forward to protect the last young man as well, but with just a flick of the Dragonbone Divine Spear, his brush was sent flying.

“Let me kill one of you first to quell my rage first!” Zhang Xuan bellowed coldly as he drove his spear forth.

The last young man’s face paled in fright. Knowing that he would be killed if he did not make a move, he raised his head and roared.

“Ahhh!”

Amid the deafening roar, his body swiftly increased in size. His already tall stature swiftly rose beyond two meters, and an overwhelming killing aura burst forth from his body, piercing into the heavens.

“You really are an Otherworldly Demon...” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes menacingly.

# 1603 Escape

His conviction had wavered when he saw the group of young men whipping out Ancient Sage artifacts one after another before him, and he had wondered if he might have got it wrong once more. However, with the tall young man's transformation, it was apparent that the group of young men before him were not from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers but Otherworldly Demons!

To be honest, even though he really wanted to trust Luo Ruoxin, there had been just a hint of doubt at the back of his mind that he could not shake off. For that, he had even attempted to check on Wu Chen as well...

In an instant, his face reddened in embarrassment.

Luo Ruoxin had trusted him unreservedly, sharing any news that she had with him without any hesitation. She even gave something as precious as Kong shi's personal handwriting to him as if it was nothing more than dirt. Yet, he had actually doubted her...

The more he thought about it, the more embarrassed he felt.

At the same time, Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen also swiftly noticed the last young man reverting back to its original form as an Otherworldly Demon, and they were visibly startled for a moment.

"Since you are an Otherworldly Demon, I shan't stand on ceremony!" Having verified the other party's identity, Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to waste his breath on words.

With a furious bellow, he thrust the spear toward the last young man once more.

Po!

Regaining his true strength after reverting to his true form, the last young man's fighting prowess became much stronger than before. Nevertheless, he was still far from a match for the Dragonbone Divine Spear-equipped Zhang Xuan.

Soon, he was pierced in his shoulder, and fresh blood gushed out from his gaping wound.

At the same time, the fragile young man and the dark-skinned young man also had their hands full with the powerful attacks that Zhang Xuan sent their way from time to time. They could hardly find any time to catch their breath, let alone assist the last young man!

Knowing that they would be defeated if this went on, the fragile young man bellowed anxiously, “Quick, grab the Celestial Amulet of Legacy!”

“Alright!” the scholarly young man before the amulet quickly replied.

He was currently in the midst of battling Luo Ruoxin.

The young lady’s attacks were neither fast nor powerful, but every strike carried some kind of unpredictable danger that would kill him the moment that he let his guard down. After trading a few blows, the scholarly young man found his arms becoming numb, and his face paled from the damage that he had accumulated thus far.

They were all Sempiternal realm cultivators, but for some reason, the members of trio before them were each more frightening than the last!

The tides were simply not in their favor. If this went on, they might really lose their lives. Thus, the scholarly young man gritted his teeth and tossed a book out.

Boom!

As soon as the book appeared, it warped into a cloth that could conceal even the heavens. It fell right upon Luo Ruoxin, isolating her from the rest of the world.

“The writings of an Ancient Sage?” Luo Ruoxin’s face darkened as she hurriedly raised her palm to strike the cloth around her.

However, all of the force that she exerted was completely absorbed by the cloth, preventing her from breaking out.

The writings of an Ancient Sage harnessed immense powers, such that even Half-Ancient Sage experts would be unable to break free, let alone Sempiternal realm cultivators!

“Hu!” Heaving a sigh of relief, the scholarly young man turned his sight toward the Celestial Amulet of Legacy.

With a flick of his wrist, he took out a token and pressed the token against the seal around the amulet lightly.

Weng!

As soon as the token came into contact with the seal, the latter began dissipating at a visible rate.

Huala!

With a swipe of his hands, the Celestial Amulet of Legacy was already in his grasp.

“Let’s go!” Having acquired the item that they had come for, the scholarly young man quickly beckoned to his comrades as he whipped out another jade token.

He crushed the jade token forcefully, and a spatial rift swiftly appeared around him and swallowed him whole.

Huala!

“Let’s go!”

Seeing that they had achieved their objective in the ancient domain, the fragile young man and dark-skinned young man quickly grabbed the exposed Otherworldly Demon before retrieving a similar-looking jade token and crushing it as well.

“Where do you think you are going?”

Not expecting the young man to actually have such a method of escape, Zhang Xuan quickly tapped his finger ahead.

Weng!

The space around the three young men froze in place.

The Spatial Quintessence of Sealing had the ability to seal all energy disturbances within a given space. The jade tokens that the young men were using were probably some sort of



Teleportation Formation, so by sealing the space, he would be able to prevent them from escaping!

As expected, the three young men who were just about to escape through the spatial rift abruptly froze in midair, unable to move or escape.

“Speak! Where did you take Zhao Ya and my other students?” Zhang Xuan roared with wintry killing intent.

“Zhao Ya? Do you mean the host of the Pure Yin Constitution?” the fragile young man asked.

“That’s right!” Zhang Xuan eyed the three of them with a threatening gaze.

“If you want to find them, meet us at the Temple of Confucius!”

With a cold sneer, the fragile young man crushed an amulet that had appeared in his hand at some point in time.

Huala!

A calamitous surge of sword qi suddenly burst forth from the crushed amulet, tearing the sealed space in an instant.

Weng!

With the disappearance of the sealed space, the silhouettes of the trio immediately became illusory, signaling that their teleportation would be successful the next instant.

“Since you aren’t willing to speak, you can die now!” With crimson eyes, Zhang Xuan drove his spear right toward the three.

He had gone easy on the trio in order to acquire news regarding Zhao Ya from them. However, since it was confirmed that they had taken her away, and they were already on the verge of escaping, he could not hold back his killing intent against them anymore.

Those three young men might be powerful, but against the current Zhang Xuan, they were not even close to being a match at all.

Huala!

With raging might, the spear thrust forth.

“Humph!”

With a cold harrumph, the fragile young man flicked his finger, and another surge of sword qi burst toward Zhang Xuan once more.

Zhang Xuan was intending to use his spear to crush right through the sword qi, but a force behind him suddenly tugged him away.

Hula!

Wherever the sword qi passed, the annihilation of space could be seen, leaving a long gorge of dark destruction.

Seeing such a sight, cold sweat dripped down Zhang Xuan’s head.

If someone had not pulled him back, he would have been sliced in two back there!

But in the moment that he dodged the attack, the three young men also successfully slipped through the spatial rift and vanished.

A myriad of emotions bottled up in Zhang Xuan—helplessness, frustration, and anger—culminated into a deep, long sigh. Turning around, he saw Luo Ruoxin standing right behind him with a disapproving frown on her forehead.

“Do you want to die? That’s an amulet left behind by an Ancient Sage, and it harnesses a tenth of an Ancient Sage’s strength... There’s no way you could have stood against something like that!”

“A tenth of an Ancient Sage’s strength?” Zhang Xuan’s face paled in realization of what he had just faced.

It was no wonder that surge of sword qi was so powerful! Even if it was just a tenth of an Ancient Sage’s might, it was not something that the current him could stand against.

“Humph! I didn’t think that they would have an Inscripted Amulet of an Ancient Sage and even a Dimension Flit

Amulet!” Wu Chen walked over with a complicated look on his face, seemingly pondering deeply over something.

“Dimension Flit Amulet?”

“It’s a special type of amulet inscribed by an Ancient Sage specializing in spatial arts. It works similar to a Teleportation Formation when crushed, transporting the user over a distance of a million li. To even have such an artifact in their possession, it seems like they must have spent a very long time preparing for this operation,” Luo Ruoxin explained grimly.

“It can transport a person over a million li away?” Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly.

If only he had known that those young men had such artifacts in their possession, he would have killed them right from the start!

Had he just crushed their cultivation, they would not have been able to use the Dimension Flit Amulet!

Even though the Dimension Flit Amulet allowed them to travel through space, if their cultivation was too low, they would not have been able to survive the spatial turbulence from the travel!

“After all the effort we have put into this, the Celestial Amulet of Legacy still ended up falling in their hands...” Wu Chen shook his head bitterly.

“It’s fine. No matter who obtains the amulet, they will have to unlock the seal at the Temple of Confucius eventually. As long as we camp there, we’ll be able to get in as well.”

It was a huge disappointment that the Celestial Amulet of Legacy had slipped through their fingers, so they could only console themselves as such.

“Fret not. They might have gotten away, but they didn’t manage to take the Celestial Amulet of Legacy away with them!” Zhang Xuan said.

“They didn’t manage to take the amulet away with them?”

Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen glanced at one another, unable to comprehend the young man’s words.

“Hehe!”

Instead of answering the doubts of the duo, Zhang Xuan turned his gaze toward the adolescent boy sculpture not too far away and asked, “May I ask if my words are correct... Celestial Amulet of Legacy?” “500,000 km

# 1604 Prime Amule

The adolescent boy sculpture was taken aback for an instant before he chuckled awkwardly. “W-what are you saying? I’m just an artifact spirit left here by Ancient Sage Ran Qiu to guide the visitors around!”

Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen also had perplexed looks on their faces.

This adolescent boy sculpture had been accompanying them around the Ran Zi Hall from the moment that they arrived there. They had always thought of the other party as an enchanted sculpture, so how did he turn out to be the Celestial Amulet of Legacy?

If that was really the case, how could the four young men before them not realize it despite the number of Ancient Sage artifacts that they possessed?

“Artifact spirit? May I know what kind of artifact spirit you are then? Would you care to share it with me?” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

“I am the artifact spirit birthed from this stone sculpture!” the adolescent boy sculpture exclaimed.

“An artifact spirit birthed from this stone sculpture?” Zhang Xuan’s lips curved up as he placed his hands behind his back and circled around the sculpture. “The material that you are made of is known as the Magi Rock. It’s found in the far northeastern Luxu Mountain of the continent, slowly tempered over an unimaginably long period of time through the grinding of tectonic plates, the currents of the ocean, and the searing heat of the underground lava. There aren’t many of these rocks in the continent, definitely numbering no more than ten!

“The greatest property of the Magi Rock lies in its ability to nourish a soul. Souls that are deposited into it will grow more resilient and powerful. Ironically, due to the overwhelming soul energy that is harnessed within the Magi Rocks, it’s

impossible to gather the huge bulk of soul energy together to give birth to a conscious spirit. In other words... no matter how skilled a spirit awakener is, it's impossible to successfully enchant a Magi Rock! You mentioned that you are the artifact spirit of this stone sculpture. Why don't you tell me who the person that granted you life is then?"

"I..." The adolescent boy sculpture was visibly stunned by those words. He did not think that the young man before him would actually be able to identify a rock as rare as him, and he subconsciously took a step back out of apprehension as he replied, "It's Ancient Sage Ran Qiu... The capabilities of an Ancient Sage go far beyond your imagination! Just because you aren't able to do it doesn't mean that others aren't able to do so!"

"Hahaha!"

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan's lips curled into a smile, as if he had managed to corner his prey. "Ancient Sage Ran Qiu is one of the Ten Apostles, and I am indeed incapable of fathoming the full extent of his capabilities. However, enchanted artifacts tend to have deep feelings for the spirit awakener that granted them life, thus making it extremely easy for the spirit awakener to tame them. Since Ancient Sage Ran Qiu left the Ran Zi Hall in your hands and entrusted you the mission of bringing the visitors around, I don't see why he wouldn't tame you. After all, there would be a risk that you could betray him otherwise... Yet, since meeting you, I've noticed that you have been addressing him as 'Ancient Sage Ran Qiu' instead of... master."

All enchanted artifacts harbored deep feelings for the spirit awakens that enchanted them, and it was such a property that allowed spirit awakens to easily control the artifacts that they had enchanted.

This was similar to how the golems that he had enchanted before had only been willing to listen to him and no one else.

Even a hatchling would view the very first life it saw as its parent, let alone an enchanted spirit.

Since Ancient Sage Ran Qiu had left the important Ran Zi Hall, which even contained his personal weapon, to the care of the adolescent boy sculpture, there was no reason why he would not tame the latter, especially since he should have been able to do so easily. Yet, ever since they had entered the Ran Zi Hall, the adolescent boy sculpture had never once addressed Ancient Sage Ran Qiu as ‘master’.

In fact, his attitude toward Ancient Sage Ran Qiu could not even be said to be respectful!

“I...” The adolescent boy sculpture was unable to refute Zhang Xuan’s words. Silence loomed for a moment before he anxiously rebutted, “Even if I didn’t acknowledge him as my master, I can’t possibly be the Celestial Amulet of Legacy either! Your deduction has no strong reasoning behind it at all!”

“It seems like you won’t admit it unless I spell it out clearly!” A glint flashed through Zhang Xuan’s eyes as he shook his head with a smile. “When we arrived at the Ran Zi Hall, I challenged two Golden Warriors simultaneously and sealed the space around them. You mentioned that I was the successor of Qiu Wu Zi and asked me to show mercy!”

“Indeed. What’s wrong with that?” The adolescent boy sculpture harrumphed doubtfully.

He did recall saying such words, and he did not see any problem with them.

“While Ancient Sage Qiu Wu might have been Kong shi’s subordinate, he was much older than Kong shi, and Kong shi addressed him as a peer. Considering how Ancient Sage Ran Qiu is a disciple of Kong shi, even he would have to address Ancient Sage Qiu Wu with the utmost respect, not daring to overstep his bounds at all!” Zhang Xuan said.

In a sense, this was similar to how even though Sun Qiang was his subordinate, Zheng Yang and the others still addressed him respectfully as ‘Uncle Sun’.

This was even more so for Ancient Sage Qiu Wu, who was much more aged than Kong shi. Even Kong shi regarded him

with much respect, so how could Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, as a student, dare to address him casually?

“On the other hand, you addressed Ancient Sage Qiu Wu directly as ‘Qiu Wu Zi’, and that’s an address that peers use to address one another!” Zhang Xuan continued. “As an artifact enchanted by Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, don’t you think it’s inappropriate for you to speak in such a manner?”

“Y-you...” Taken aback, the adolescent boy sculpture backed away several steps as he stared at Zhang Xuan with a horrified expression.

To be able to deduce that he was the Celestial Amulet of Legacy just by the method of address... The young man was frighteningly sharp!

Realizing that there was no longer any point in him concealing his true identity, the adolescent boy sculpture raised his head and asked, “When did you see through me?”

He was confident in his disguise. Even if an Ancient Sage stood before him, the other party would not necessarily be able to see through his disguise. So, when did the young man see through him?

“Earlier, before entering the passageway, I noticed the peculiarity in your material when I patted your shoulder, and that was when I began suspecting you,” Zhang Xuan replied.

When he entered the granite door previously, he had walked up to the adolescent boy sculpture and patted his shoulder so as to use the Library of Heaven’s Path on him.

Through the compiled book, he had learned that the material of the sculpture was not suitable for enchantment, but even so, he did not think too much about it. Or rather, with the danger that came right after, he did not have any time to think too much about it.

However, with the escape of the four young men, he had suddenly recalled this matter, and putting it together with the peculiar address that the adolescent boy sculpture used for Ancient Sage Qiu Wu, he would have to be really dense not to figure it out!



Considering how the Celestial Amulets of Legacy were artifacts that Kong shi had forged, it would not be inappropriate for them to address Ancient Sage Qiu Wu informally as Qiu Wu Zi. Even if they showed a lack of respect for Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, the latter would not say anything.

The true conclusive evidence was that he could feel a very familiar aura coming from the adolescent boy sculpture.

The other six Subordinate Amulets were forged using the blood essences of those possessing unique constitutions, but as for the Prime Amulet, if he was not mistaken, it was likely to have been forged using Kong shi's blood essence! In other words, the familiar aura that he was feeling was that of a fellow Celestial Master Teacher!

With such a feeling guiding him, it would not be too difficult for him to figure out who the adolescent boy sculpture truly was!

"I see... As expected of Qiu Wu Zi's successor! Not only have you mastered the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, you have also managed to tame the Dragonbone Divine Spear... Your eye of discernment is truly extraordinary..." Hearing Zhang Xuan's explanation, the adolescent boy sculpture confessed. "You're right, I am the Prime Amulet forged by Kong shi. What those young men have taken away is a mere imitation!"

Chuckling softly, a ray of light rose from the head of the adolescent boy sculpture and converged in the air. In just a few moments, he had already transformed into an amulet.

It was identical to the Celestial Amulet of Legacy that the scholarly young man had snatched earlier.

"I am the Prime Amulet that Kong shi forged. Only the one who holds me will be able to enter the Prime Hall in the Temple of Confucius! However, my one true master is Kong shi, and I won't bow down to just anyone. Putting aside the fact that you are Qiu Wu Zi's successor, even if Qiu Wu Zi stood before me this instant, there's no way he'd be able to make me submit to him!" the amulet declared regally.

In response to those words, Zhang Xuan simply chuckled softly. “You won’t submit to me?”

“Of course not!” the amulet replied pridefully.

“Very well. I’ll show you something first, and I’ll accept any decision you make right after!” Zhang Xuan raised his finger and tapped the amulet lightly.

“There’s nothing you can show me that will change my mind. As an artifact created by Kong shi, how can I possibly submit t-t-to...”

Just as the amulet was declaring its stand pridefully, it suddenly shuddered before frightfully crumpling together in the air. Following which, it hurriedly stood in front of Zhang Xuan like an erect card and said in a fawning voice, “Little Amulet pays respect to Master!”

# 1605 I Want to Go to the Luo Clan

“That’s more like it!” Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction as he held the amulet between his fingertips.

Since the other party had been forged using Kong shi’s blood essence, he was confident a Celestial Master Teacher that he could get it to submit to him by revealing his true identity.

And everything did go according to his expectations.

“...” Wu Chen opened his eyes wide in disbelief.

He was a veteran who could be considered one of the most knowledgeable individuals on the Master Teacher Continent, but the shocks that he had encountered that day were far more than a lifetime’s worth for him. At this point, he really had to bow down to the young man.

The amulet forged by Kong shi did not even regard Ancient Sage Qiu Wu or Ancient Sage Ran Qiu as much, and yet, with a light fondle, it actually submitted to the young man!

Is there nothing that you can’t tame with those fingers of yours?

But what had truly left him shocked was not just that. Rather, after taming the Prime Amulet, which countless would murder to gain possession of, Zhang Xuan actually flicked it lightly into Luo Ruoxin’s grasp!

“Ruoxin, I’ll entrust this Prime Amulet to you. In any case, it won’t be much use in my hands!”

Wu Chen’s body froze in utter incredulity.

Those four young men before them had been willing to whip out Ancient Sage artifacts one after another in order to snatch it away, and that was more than enough to show how valuable the Prime Amulet truly was. Yet, the young man did not hesitate to give it away to Luo Ruoxin...

But what was even more shocking was soon to come...

“Since the Prime Amulet has acknowledged you as its master, it’ll do for you to keep it. I have even less use for it here...”

Luo Ruoxin shook her head coolly as she passed the Prime Amulet back to Zhang Xuan. “It’ll suffice as long as you bring me in when the Temple of Confucius opens.”

After hesitating for a moment, Zhang Xuan took the Prime Amulet back and nodded. “Alright then.”

No matter how formidable the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn was, as one who possessed the Library of Heaven’s Path, Zhang Xuan did not think that it was something that he would necessarily require, let alone a mere Prime Amulet.

The reason he had gone to this ancient domain was solely because Luo Ruoxin had invited him there. He had intended to uncover the identity of the culprits who had taken Zhao Ya and his other students away, as well as to clarify the misunderstanding of the engagement to her...

As long as she would not use it to harm mankind, he did not mind giving away the precious Prime Amulet to her!

But who could have thought that the young lady would have little regard for it as well.

Seeing that it was pushed and shoved around, the Prime Amulet was on the verge of bursting into tears.

As an artifact forged personally by Kong shi, not even Ancient Sage Ran Qiu was qualified to tame it, and yet, there it was, tossed around from person to person as if it was useless trash that no one wanted...

Don’t stop me, let me bang my head on the pillar and die!

Oh right, I am just a sheet of paper. Even if I bang my head against the wall, I can’t die...

Just as it was feeling deeply stifled, its new master suddenly turned his gaze to it with a greedy glint in his eyes.

“Little Amulet. Since you have already acknowledged me as your master, shouldn’t you show me some sincerity? There

should be other treasures in the ancient domain, right? Come, bring me to them!”

“...” The Prime Amulet twitched upon hearing those words. “There aren’t any treasures left in here...”

“How can there be no treasures in here? Aren’t there ninety-nine doors? Since the door that I went through has the Dragonbone Divine Spear, surely the others should contain some kind of valuable treasure, right?” Zhang Xuan exclaimed in agitation.

“The other passageways are really just trials consisting of Slaughter Formations or Illusory Formations. There are no treasures in the rest...” the Prime Amulet replied.

“Really?” Zhang Xuan turned his doubtful gaze to Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen, only to see the latter two nodding in agreement.

“It’s right. The passageways that we went through are really just trials. There was no treasure at the end.”

“Is that so?” Zhang Xuan could not help but lower his head in disappointment.

He had thought that each of the ninety-nine granite doors would contain top-notch treasures comparable to the Dragonbone Divine Spear, but it seemed like he had set his expectations too high.

Since that was the case, Zhang Xuan had no choice but to compromise.

“Right, I’ll have to trouble you to help me gouge out the three words, ‘Ran Zi Hall’, on the entrance plaque. Those are good, too!”

“...” Prime Amulet.

He had met plenty of stingy people in his time, but this was the first time he had seen anyone like that. That was the entrance plaque to the Ran Zi Hall, and yet, he would not even let it go...

Other people sought to claim swords, spears, and legendary treasures from ancient domains, and yet, Zhang Xuan snatched even the very face of the esteemed Ran Zi Hall.

...

Paying no heed to the tearful Prime Amulet, Zhang Xuan did as he pleased and took everything that was of the slightest value away from the Ran Zi Hall before leaving with a satisfied grin.

As the old adage goes, only the breadwinner of a family knows how expensive every grain of rice is.

It had not been easy for Zhang Xuan to happen upon such a rich household, so it was a given that he had to fill his pockets to the brim in case of rainy days!

“Teleport us out!” Zhang Xuan instructed the Prime Amulet.

The Prime Amulet’s paper body crumpled together, and a shadow devoured their bodies. The next instant, they were already standing in the midst of the White Creek Mountain once more.

As soon as Wu Chen regained his balance, he clasped his fist and bowed deeply. “Milady, Zhang shi, I have some matters that I have to attend to, so I’ll have to bid my farewell right now. I’ll find you all once more after my business is done!”

There was a deeply worried look on his face.

“What happened? Do you need help?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“It’s just a couple of trifling matters. I am very grateful for your offer, Zhang shi, but I’ll be able to resolve them on my own!” Wu Chen nodded.

“That’s good.” Zhang Xuan nodded in response.

“Go on. Look for me after you are done with whatever you have on hand,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

“Thank you, Milady!”

With a tap of his finger, a spatial wormhole appeared before Wu Chen, and he leaped right in. In the blink of an eye, he had already vanished from sight.

With his departure, Zhang Xuan turned his gaze to the young lady before him and smiled. “Ruoxin, what do you intend to do now?”

Having obtained the Prime Amulet, it no longer mattered whether they found the remaining Subordinate Amulets or not. The only thing that they had to do was wait for the Temple of Confucius to open.

“I don’t have anything on at the moment,” replied Luo Ruoxin as she shook her head.

“Since that’s the case, why don’t you come to the Zhang Clan with me?” Zhang Xuan said with a smile. “We left too hurriedly the previous time around, and I didn’t get to introduce you to my parents!”

To be honest, he still felt a little awkward around his parents, especially since they had only reunited with one another a few days ago.

But no matter what, they were still his blood kin, so it was only right for him to introduce his girlfriend to them. Furthermore, this would also show Luo Ruoxin that he was serious about her.

“This...” A hint of redness crept onto Luo Ruoxin’s fair complexion as she replied with a slight hint of fluster in her voice, “I snatched you away from the Luo Clan, causing a fallout between the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan... Isn’t it a bad time for me to pay them a visit?”

“There’s nothing bad about the timing. Don’t worry, my parents are very open people!” Zhang Xuan reassured with a smile.

Despite the slight awkwardness in their relationship—he had not even gotten around to calling them father and mother yet—he had to admit that the Xingmeng Sword Saints were extremely doting.

Putting everything aside, what he had done back at the Luo Clan had snubbed not only the reputation of the Luo Clan but that of the Zhang Clan as well. Had it been any other parents, they would have already killed that unfilial son of theirs, yet his parents actually offered him their full support!

Just from that alone, he wanted to try accepting his parents.

“This...” Luo Ruoxin was still a little hesitant and worried about meeting Zhang Xuan’s parents.

She could remain cold and nonchalant toward anything in the world, such that not even the prized Prime Amulet could cause the slightest fluctuation in her emotions. Yet, a simple matter like this actually left her at a loss.

“There’s nothing to worry about, I’m around. It’s only a matter of time before we’ll have to meet them to affirm our relationship!” Knowing what Luo Ruoxin was worried about, Zhang Xuan held her hand tightly and consoled her. “Let’s meet them, alright?”

“I...” Looking into Zhang Xuan’s eyes, Luo Ruoxin hesitated for a moment before eventually sighing deeply. “Alright, I’ll meet your parents.”

“Un!” Seeing that Luo Ruoxin had agreed to it, a bright smile crept on Zhang Xuan’s face. At this moment, he suddenly recalled something and added, “But before we head back to the Zhang Clan, I want to drop by the Luo Clan first!”

“You want to drop by the Luo Clan?” Luo Ruoxin frowned.



# 1606 Luo Tianya

After the huge upset with the Luo Clan, the latter would skin Zhang Xuan alive if they ever got their hands on him, so why did he want to head over?

Even though Luo Ruoxin had a lot of doubts in her mind, she did not think that he was heading to the Luo Clan to have a rendezvous with Luo Qiqi.

She might be unfamiliar with love, but she was still able to tell that the feelings that Zhang Xuan had for Luo Qiqi did not transcend those of a teacher-student relationship.

“That’s right.” Zhang Xuan nodded. “I have done them a huge injustice during the engagement ceremony, and since I have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, I want to impart it to them so as to compensate them for what I have done!”

“It’s indeed unfair that they had to go through such a matter, and it’s only right for you to make it up to them. However, I fear that if you visit them right now, not only will they not appreciate your help, it might even worsen the conflict between the two clans,” Luo Ruoxin replied grimly.

Were it not for Yang Shi and the Master Teacher Pavilion mediating by the side, a full-blown war between the two clans could have broken out during the engagement ceremony!

Even if Zhang Xuan did not bear any malicious intent toward the Luo Clan, his goodwill toward them was unlikely to be looked favorably upon.

In the worst-case scenario, they might even come to blows with one another!

“That’s also something that I am extremely concerned about. So, I was thinking of disguising myself so as to prevent any misunderstandings from happening!” Knowing full well that he had already become the archenemy of every single member of the Luo Clan, Zhang Xuan shook his head helplessly.

“The Spatial Quintessence of Sealing has always been an exclusive secret art of the Luo Clan. As far as I know, there has been no one in their clan who has been able to comprehend it ever since the era of their founder, so I believe this will be the best way to make it up to them.”

If he had tried to look into who the little princess was instead of rushing into the engagement, such a huge misunderstanding would not have happened. At the same time, the Luo Clan would not have been embarrassed before so many experts.

There was a slight moment of silence before Luo Ruoxin replied with a nod. “I think it’s a good idea.”

Seeing how readily the young lady expressed her approval toward the matter, Zhang Xuan could not help but ask, “Aren’t you... angry?”

Honestly speaking, considering how he and Luo Qiqi had nearly become a couple, he could understand it if Luo Ruoxin felt uncomfortable about this matter. To accept this matter so readily, did she really have no qualms about it?”

“Of course not!” Luo Ruoxin replied with a light chuckle reminiscent of a blooming flower.

To be honest, this was probably the reason that she liked Zhang Xuan in the first place. To remain humble in the face of success, constantly maintaining a low profile, never hesitating to admit his faults, keeping a magnanimous heart toward the world...

Those were traits that a true man should have!

And this was the kind of man that she, Luo Ruoxin, loved.

“Let’s set out then!” Laughing heartily, Zhang Xuan grabbed Luo Ruoxin’s hands tightly as he felt a surge of bliss racing through his heart.

...

With his deepened understanding of space, through tapping into the prowess of the Dragonbone Divine Spear, Zhang Xuan was able to find spatial wormholes and travel through them as

well. With this, the speed of their journey was hastened significantly.

It did not take long for them to arrive in the perimeter of the Luo Clan.

“It’s true that even 9-star master teachers will have trouble seeing through your disguise, but you still won’t be able to fool some of the unique identification artifacts. I have an amulet here that is used specifically for disguise. It should be able to bypass the detection of most unique identification artifacts.”

After closely inspecting Zhang Xuan’s disguise, Luo Ruoxin took out a piece of paper.

“That will really be a great help!” Zhang Xuan took the amulet over excitedly.

The previous time he tried to disguise himself carefully, he had still ended up being seen through by Yang Shi. As such, if anything could further augment his disguise, he would take it willingly just to lower the risk of him being revealed.

Zhang Xuan took a closer look at the amulet and saw unfamiliar characters and patterns inscribed on it. He had no idea what they meant, but he sensed tremendous energy from them.

He tried to scan them with his Spiritual Perception, but he found that he could not see through it at all.

Curious, he tried placing it lightly on his forehead.

Weng!

As soon as the paper came into contact with his face, it swiftly dissipated into a surge of energy that delved right into his body. With just a thought, Zhang Xuan’s body swiftly morphed into the form of a middle-aged man in his forties.

A lanky figure with yellowish, wrinkled skin, he would appear unspectacular at first glance. However, upon taking another look, one would swiftly notice that he had a pair of sharp eyes reminiscent of those of eagles, reflecting acuity and wisdom.

“This is a true treasure!” Zhang Xuan exclaimed in astonishment.

He had used his Spiritual Perception to scan his appearance multiple times, but he could not see any openings that suggested that he was different from how he appeared. In fact, even the Eye of Insight was unable to see through his own disguise!

This disguise amulet was indeed far more effective than the disguise techniques that he usually used. With this, even if he met Yang shi once more, the latter would not dare doubt his true identity!

After checking on himself, he turned his gaze to the young lady not too far away and saw that she had already morphed into the appearance of a middle-aged lady to match him. Even though she had concealed her ravishing countenance, her grace still showed through her subtle gestures.

“Hahaha, this disguise is superb. Say, why don’t we try creating a reputation for ourselves as the next ‘Calamitous Couple’?” Zhang Xuan proposed with a chuckle.

As the patriarch and matriarch of the Zhang Clan, as well as top-notch experts on the continent, no one would dare speak badly of the Xingmeng Sword Saint openly. While they addressed them respectfully as Sword Saint Xing and Sword Saint Meng on the surface, they did not neglect to spitefully label them as the Calamitous Couple behind their back!

Considering that the two of them were a middle-aged couple and their prowess stood at the top of the continent as well, it would not take too long for them to forge such a reputation for themselves!

“Who are you calling a couple? We are just... siblings!” Luo Ruoxin’s face reddened upon hearing those words.

“Siblings? But siblings usually look similar to one another, no? Is it because... I’m too handsome? Is that the reason I’m so well-liked by others?” Zhang Xuan stroked his lower jaw contemplatively.

“Narcissist!” Luo Ruoxin burst into laughter.

She had still been a little reluctant to pass off as a couple a moment ago, but all of a sudden, she felt that it might not be so bad after all. “Fine, let’s act as a couple then. However, we have to choose a name to call ourselves. Otherwise, it will appear suspicious if we can’t even introduce ourselves when others ask who we are.”

“My parents took a character from each of their names to derive the nickname Xingmeng Sword Saint. I think we can try doing the same too... How does Xuanxin Sword Saint sound to you?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Luo Ruoxin rolled her eyes. “What’s the point of the disguise then?”

“Right... I have used Yang Xuan, Sun Qiang, Wu Zhangxuan, and several other aliases before, so I should find a new one this time around... Right, I should pass myself off as a member of the Luo Clan. They should feel much safer around me if I’m one of them, especially given the fact that I’m going to impart the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to them. Otherwise, they might just think that I have stolen their heritage and try to kill me!” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up.

Since he was going to come up with a persona anyway, it would help in his cause if he assumed the identity of a member of the Luo Clan.

After all, the heritage of sealing space had remained a unique heritage of the Luo Clan for many years.

On top of that, the Luo Clan had also grown too big over the tens of thousands of years for it to track all of its members accurately. They would have no way of verifying it even if he claimed to be from their distant side family.

Such was the case in the Zhang Clan as well. There were distant relatives of the Zhang Clan, due to their Zhang Clan bloodline being too thin, who would not even be recorded in the clan genealogy.

“I think that’s a good idea. I should come up with a name for myself too... How about Lingxi? I haven’t given much

thought to the surname yet, but I think Lingxi should do,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“Lingxi? Two hearts united by a profound connection... That is a wonderful name! Since that’s the case, I’ll call myself Luo Tianya! No matter how far away we are from one another, even if the boundaries of the world sever us so, our hearts will remain connected together with one another!” Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

“That sounds great.” Luo Ruoxin nodded with a slight smile.

After resolving the issue regarding their names, the two of them quickly flew in the direction of the Luo Clan.

The current Luo Clan was still in the midst of reconstructing their damaged buildings and returning the gifts that the many powers had sent to them.

There were people scattered all around the area, and the place looked incredibly messy.

Zhang Xuan was intending to exploit this chaos to find Luo Xuanqing or Luo Qiqi to impart the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to them when he heard a gust of wind right above him.

A few figures suddenly appeared above, and a deafening voice echoed in the air.

“Nangong Yuanfeng from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers’ Great Phrontistery of Confucianism has come with a couple of juniors to pay a visit to the head of the Luo Clan! “The name ‘Lingxi’ is derived from an idiom which literally means two hearts are connected by a telepathic connection. It’s not exclusively used for couples, but it tends to have such a connotation. It’s usually used to describe people whose thoughts are in sync with one another. The name ‘Tianya’ literally means ‘the boundary of the world’. In the past, people believed that the world is cuboid in shape, so naturally, if a person were to just walk in one direction, they would eventually reach the boundary of the world.

# 1607 The Hundred Schools of Philosophers Wants a Duel

“They’re from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers?” Taken aback, Zhang Xuan raised his head to carefully assess the five people floating above.

The person who was speaking was a middle-aged man in his forties. He had a gray, flowy beard and a tall hat, reminiscent of the typical image of ancient scholars. The long robe that he wore was similar to that of a master teacher robe, the only difference being that it was black in color. From afar, he appeared a little severe.

“He’s wearing the same clothes as the four Otherworldly Demons who took Zhao Ya and the others away!” Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up.

The middle-aged man was wearing the exact same attire as the four Otherworldly Demons that they had just encountered in Ancient Sage Ran Qiu’s ancient domain! From the looks of it, it seemed like the four young men were intending to pose as experts from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers so as to fool Little Amulet!

Yet, under the assault of the Dragonbone Divine Spear, they had still been forced to show their true form.

There were four young men who appeared to be in their late twenties standing around Nangong Yuanfeng. Each of them carried the imposing aura of an expert.

“They are all Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence cultivators,” Luo Ruoxin remarked with a nod. “If I recall correctly, Nangong Yuanfeng is the offspring of Ancient Sage Zi Rong, a Scholastic Master of the Great Phrontistry of Confucianism!”

“Ancient Sage Zi Rong?” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before nodding.

Ancient Sage Zi Rong was one of the Kong shi's seventy-two direct disciples, and he was famed as a sage. While his fame did not come close to matching Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, Ancient Sage Bo Shang, or Ancient Sage Yan Yan, his name was still remembered even after the passing of so many years, and he continued to command the respect of many cultivators.

To think that Nangong Yuanfeng would actually be his descendant!

“What’s the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism?” Zhang Xuan asked curiously.

“The Great Phrontistery of Confucianism is somewhat similar to the Master Teacher Pavilion of the continent. However, while the Master Teacher Pavilion seeks to impart knowledge and values to ordinary mortals and cultivators, the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism specializes solely in the research and impartation of Kong shi’s teachings to the cultivated. Typically speaking, only cultivators who have reached Great Sage are qualified to join its ranks,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

“Only Great Sage cultivators are qualified to join the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism?” Zhang Xuan was astonished.

He had thought that the Sanctum of Sages was the highest academy of the Master Teacher Continent, but who knew that the Hundred Schools of Philosophers would actually have a Great Phrontistery of Confucianism to top that!

Zhang Xuan was just about to continue asking about it when a voice suddenly boomed in the air.

“I’m the deputy clan head of the Luo Clan, Luo Ganzhen. It’s my pleasure to meet you, Elder Nangong. This way please!”

Following which, Luo Xuanqing’s father, followed by Luo Qingchen and the numerous other elders of the Luo Clan, flew out and clasped their fists courteously.

“Let’s head down!” Seeing that the deputy clan head had come to welcome them, Nangong Yuanfeng returned the greetings before descending to the ground with the four young men.

The crowd from the Luo Clan quickly did the same as well.



“For those of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers to appear at this moment, something must be up! Let’s follow them!” Zhang Xuan sent a telepathic message to Luo Ruoxin.

He knew that those from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had come to the Master Teacher Continent, but he did not expect five of them to suddenly pay a visit to the Luo Clan abruptly. Considering the timing, it was likely that their visit had something to do with the opening of the Temple of Confucius.

“Un.” Luo Ruoxin nodded.

With the extraordinary strength of the two and the chaotic situation that the Luo Clan was in, they were able to successfully advance into the depths of the Luo Clan without drawing anyone’s attention. Of course, to be safe, they chose to keep a safe distance from Luo Ganzhen and Nangong Yuanfeng.

Dong dong dong dong!

Just as they were planning to sneak into the main hall, the loud chimes of a bell suddenly echoed throughout the Luo Clan.

“That’s the Assembly Bell of the Luo Clan? Did something happen?”

Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up in astonishment as he and Luo Ruoxin quickly followed the crowd from the Luo Clan to where the bell was chiming from.

Not too long later, he arrived at a relatively spacious square. By that time, a huge crowd had already gathered in the area. As soon as the bell started chiming, all members of the Luo Clan had rushed over as fast as possible.

Across the crowd, Zhang Xuan saw Nangong Yuanfeng and the others from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers sitting on top of an elevated platform at the center of the square, and Luo Ganzhen, Luo Qingchen, and the others were seated opposite them.

Zhang Xuan scanned the crowd and quickly found a couple of Luo Clan offspring dressed in clothes that suggested that they were core members discussing quietly among one another. He

quickly walked up to them and asked, “Excuse me, may I ask what has happened? Why was the Assembly Bell rung?”

It just so happened that all members of the Luo Clan were gathered there, so it was impossible for the other party to recognize all of the faces there.

“You are...” Seeing an unfamiliar face before them, one of the core members frowned.

“I am Luo Tianya, a member from the side family!” Zhang Xuan replied.

“Ah, I see!” The core member of the Luo Clan nodded. “Based on what I have heard so far, it seems like the Hundred Schools of Philosophers wishes to acquire something that the Luo Clan has, but our deputy clan head is reluctant to hand it over. Thus, Nangong Yuanfeng proposed a duel of spatial arts between the four students that he has brought with him and the offspring of the Luo Clan who are beneath a hundred years old... If they achieve victory, the Luo Clan will have to place the treasure under the care of their Great Phrontistery of Confucianism. On the other hand, if they lose, they will hand over an equivalent treasure to the Luo Clan as compensation for their disrespect!”

“What treasure did Nangong Yuanfeng offer in return?” Zhang Xuan asked.

There was little doubt that the treasure that the Hundred Schools of Philosophers wanted was the Celestial Amulet of Legacy. In order to goad the Luo Clan into accepting the duel, the treasure that they would have to stake had to be of considerable value as well.

“It’s a sword that was once used by Ancient Sage Zi Rong!” the core member of the Luo Clan replied as he pointed onto the elevated platform ahead. “There, you should be able to see it!”

Tracing the core member’s finger, Zhang Xuan saw a sword floating quietly above the elevated platform. Even though it was unsheathed, one could still feel a disquieting, chilling air emanating from it.

Luo Ruoxin took a glance at the sword as well before sending a telepathic message to Zhang Xuan. “It’s a Great Sage artifact, but as it was once used by Ancient Sage Zi Rong, its might is comparable to most Half-Ancient Sage artifacts... That being said, it comes nowhere close to competing with your Dragonbone Divine Spear.”

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

It was too far away for him to come into contact with it, making it impossible for him to accurately gauge the true rank of the sword. Nevertheless, with his current eye of discernment, he could tell that it was a formidable weapon, albeit far beneath his Dragonbone Divine Spear.

After all, the Dragonbone Divine Spear was the weapon that Ancient Sage Ran Qiu had wielded at his peak. Back in the ancient era, there was no one who would not tremble in the face of the Dragonbone Divine Spear! Thus, how could a sword that Ancient Sage Zi Rong had only used before possibly match it?

Luo Ganzhen scanned the crowd and declared loudly, “Offspring of the Luo Clan, Elder Nangong of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers has brought his students here in order to challenge the members of our Luo Clan to a duel of spatial arts. As long as you are beneath a hundred years old, you’ll be eligible to challenge them. Is there anyone who would like to challenge our guests here?”

His voice sounded composed on the surface, but Zhang Xuan could detect a furious undertone beneath the calm exterior.

It seemed like despite the treasure offered by the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, he did not intend to accept the duel. Most likely, the group from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had resorted to some degree of blackmail to force the Luo Clan to do their bidding.

Considering how the Luo Clan had suffered a huge setback, they were indeed in no position to clash with the Hundred Schools of Philosophers at the moment.

“Allow me to test the strength of our guests over here!” With a loud bellow, a figure leaped onto the elevated platform in the middle.

Glancing over, Zhang Xuan saw that the person who had volunteered himself was none other than Luo Xuanqing.

“I’ll face them, too!”

“I’m willing to give it a try as well!”

“They might be our guests, but aren’t they too insolent to challenge our Luo Clan to a duel of spatial arts? Humph, that’s no different from courting death!”

...

Another three young men leaped onto the elevated platform in the middle.

They were all young experts of the Luo Clan, and every single one of them emanated a powerful aura. In fact, two of them had reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle, just like Zhang Xuan, and they were already serving as elders in the Luo Clan.

“Very well!” Seeing that their men had stepped up to the challenge, Luo Ganzhen nodded in approval.

He turned his gaze to Nangong Yuanfeng and said, “Elder Nangong, what do you propose for the format of the duel of spatial arts?”

# 1608 Spatial Top

“I have a Spatial Top with me, which is able to gauge the stability of a space and determine one’s level of control over a certain space. Whoever is able to keep this top spinning for the longest time possible will be deemed to have the deeper understanding of space!”

As Nangong Yuanfeng spoke, he flicked his finger, and a top of roughly a chi long appeared before everyone’s sight. It stood motionlessly on the elevated platform, and even though there was no energy emanating from it, there were still many slight dimensional rifts around it.

The presence of dimensional rifts hinted that the space was not stable. In order to get the Spatial Top to stand, one had to reconstruct a stable space, or to put it in simpler terms, mend the dimensional rifts around.

As simple as that sounded, it was actually easier said than done. It required knowledge of the fourth level of the Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel, Creation.

“This...” Luo Ganzhen could also see through that, and his complexion turned rather awful.

While the offspring of their Luo Clan did have a deep understanding of spatial laws, especially since their bloodline bestowed them with natural aptitude in that field, it would still be difficult for them to achieve.

If Nangong Yuanfeng’s students were really able to achieve this feat, then things were looking bad for them.

“Mo-er, you’ll go first. Give a demonstration to the experts of the Luo Clan!” Nangong Yuanfeng took a glance at Luo Ganzhen’s dark expression and chuckled softly before issuing an instruction to one of the four young men that had come with him.

“Yes!”

The young man known as Mo-er appeared to be in his late twenties. He strutted out from the group arrogantly, walked up to the Spatial Top, and clenched his fist tightly together.

Weng!

There was a slight hum in the air as a surge of spatial energy wrapped around the Spatial Top.

In an instant, the tattered space around the Spatial Top was mended, and it slowly stood up. However, it lasted for no more than three seconds before faltering and collapsing back onto the ground.

Hu!

By the time he ended the demonstration, the young man known as Mo-er was already sweating profusely, and he was panting heavily from exhaustion. He clasped his fist toward the Luo Clan before retreating to his group.

“Mo-er is the weakest among my students here, so it’s a little difficult for him to make the Spatial Top stand on its end. I beg your pardon for this embarrassing demonstration!” Nangong Yuanfeng chuckled softly as he addressed the crowd. He turned his gaze back to Luo Ganzhen and said, “Deputy Clan Head Luo, shall we begin the duel?”

Luo Ganzhen’s face had turned utterly livid.

The other party had well and truly cornered him.

By showing a demonstration, it would reflect badly on the Luo Clan if they backed out of the duel at this juncture. Whether they liked it or not, they would have to accept this challenge.

“Deputy clan head, allow me to give it a try!”

One of the two elders who had stepped up to the challenge earlier clasped his fist and volunteered to go first.

“I’ll be troubling you then, Elder Luo Fu!” Luo Ganzhen nodded.

Elder Luo Fu stepped forward and took a deep breath before clenching his fist together as well, just like Mo-er had done earlier.

Weng!

The same humming sound echoed around the Spatial Top, and it shook a little.

With sweat dripping profusely from his head, Elder Luo Fu exerted his strength to his limit, to the point where he spurted a mouthful of blood and staggered backward weakly.

But till the very end, the Spatial Top still did not stand up.

With a pale face and trembling body, Elder Luo Fu apologized feebly, "I'm sorry, deputy clan head..."

When he saw that Mo-er achieving the feat easily, he had thought that he would be able to pull it off easily as well. But despite using his full strength, he still was not able to make the Spatial Top stand up at all. It was no wonder the Hundred Schools of Philosophers dared to challenge them in their field of specialty. They did have confidence to achieve victory!

"Let me give it a try!"

The other Luo Clan elder walked up and tried to mend the dimension rifts around the top. A moment later, blood spewed out of his mouth. Just like Elder Luo Fu, he was unable to get the Spatial Top to stand up.

This was a challenge that appeared deceptively easy on the surface. Only when one was trying to raise the Spatial Top with one's spatial prowess would one realize that it was heavier than a mountain! As long as one's comprehension of spatial laws was not deep enough, putting aside making it stand up, even making it move was a difficult feat in itself!

Seeing that two of his clan members had failed, Luo Ganzhen's complexion turned even more awful.

The Hundred Schools of Philosophers had indeed come to claim their clan's Celestial Amulet of Legacy. Given the dangers that their predecessors had gone through to acquire it, there was no way that they could simply give it away so easily.

However, the other party had brought the Decree of the Ancient Sages left behind by the predecessors of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, as well as the rules that Kong shi had

set back in his era. Left with no choice, they could only accept the duel.

He had thought that even though none of the clan members had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, given their expertise in spatial laws, it should not be too difficult for them to achieve victory. Yet, who would have thought that they would be outdone so spectacularly?

The Hundred Schools of Philosopher sure was fearsome!

“Deputy Clan Head Luo, is there no offspring in the Luo Clan who can make the Spatial Top rise? If so, I won’t stand on ceremony anymore!” Expecting such an outcome, Nangong Yuanfeng stroked his beard and chuckled softly.

“Wait for a moment!” A bellow suddenly sounded from the elevated platform, and Luo Xuanqing took a step forward. “The Spatial Top is an artifact that you have brought out, so there’s no way we can be certain that you haven’t tampered with it beforehand such that our clan members won’t be able to make it stand.

“Furthermore, despite all that has been said and done, don’t you think what’s most important is to be able to utilize one’s spatial arts effectively in a battle? Why don’t we have a duel instead? Your students will lower their cultivation to fight with us, and if they are able to win, we’ll admit our defeat. Otherwise, I’m afraid that we can’t go with your judgement!”

“You are suggesting a duel?” Nangong Yuanfeng queried.

“That’s right!” Luo Xuanqing nodded.

Ultimately, the main purpose of comprehending spatial laws was to raise one’s cultivation and fighting prowess. Since that was the case, why should they waste their effort on something as extraneous as moving the Spatial Top? A duel would be a far more direct method to determine their qualification!

“You seem to be very confident. Very well, our Hundred Schools of Philosophers will go with your proposal!” Nangong Yuanfeng chuckled confidently.

The heritage of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers originated from Kong shi, and they had received the complete



inheritance from the predecessors. Not to mention, these students were all from the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism; they were elites who could easily fend off hundreds by themselves! There was no way they would fear battle!

To challenge them to a duel was utter foolishness!

“Deputy Clan Head Luo, can I take his word for it?” Nangong Yuanfeng turned to Luo Ganzhen and asked.

“... Of course!” Luo Ganzhen nodded.

At the rate things were going, it was unlikely that there would be any eligible Luo Clan member who would be able to get the Spatial Top to stand up. In fact, even he did not have absolute confidence that he could do it.

At the very least, there was still a hope of success if it was just a simple duel.

“Since that’s the case... Mo-er, you’ll be their opponent!” Hearing that Luo Ganzhen had agreed to the matter, Nangong Yuanfeng nodded. “While Mo-er might have exerted himself quite a bit in order to drive the Spatial Top, he should still suffice to deal with the juniors of the Luo Clan!”

Hearing Nangong Yuanfeng words, Luo Ganzhen’s nostrils flared in fury.

That was blatant disdain for their Luo Clan!

It was just a moment ago that the Zhang Clan had trampled on their pride and humiliated them, and now, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers were doing the same. Were the heavens really heralding the fall of their Luo Clan?

Equally infuriated by Nangong Yuanfeng’s words was Luo Xuanqing, and with a furious bellow, he walked to the center of the elevated platform and roared, “Come on then, let me see just how powerful you are!”

“Heh!” The young man known as Mo-er chuckled softly as he walked up and said, “You are at Saint 8-dan Dimension Sundering realm primary stage. I shan’t take advantage of you and will lower my cultivation to the same level as you!”

Huala!

After saying those words, Mo-er's aura swiftly declined to Luo Xuanqing's level.

"Alright, let's begin!" Seeing that Mo-er had finished suppressing his cultivation, Luo Xuanqing immediately dashed forward and thrust his palm forth.

Kacha!

The rumbling of thunder reverberated through the air as devastating might poured forth from Luo Xuanqing's palm.

His fighting prowess had advanced significantly since the last time he clashed with Zhang Xuan at the Sanctum of Sages. While he still had not achieved a breakthrough in his cultivation, he was not too far away from Dimension Sundering realm intermediate stage anymore. 1 chi = 33cm

# 1609 Why Don't I Give It a Try Too?

“Luo Xuanqing won't be a match for him!” Zhang Xuan could not help but shake his head.

“The fact that the young man from the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism is able to make the Spatial Top stand for several seconds means that his grasp over space is already nearing the level of Spatial Quintessence.” Luo Ruoxin nodded in agreement. “In comparison, Luo Xuanqing still has much to improve on. Furthermore, the battle techniques that they cultivate are not on the same tier. It's only a matter of time before Luo Xuanqing loses.”

The Hundred Schools of Philosophers were filled with experts who had inherited Kong shi's heritage. They had all kinds of powerful battle techniques that were on par with, if not surpassing, those of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters. No matter how powerful the Luo Clan's battle techniques were, there was no way that they could compete with them.

Zhang Xuan sighed deeply in response as he continued watching the battle on the stage.

At this moment, Mo-er had already begun launching his counterattack. His movements were extremely simple; he raised his finger and tapped the space in front of him lightly.

Huala!

The space around Luo Xuanqing was immediately sealed up tightly, unable to be broken no matter how much force one exerted against it. Luo Xuanqing swiftly executed a series of ferocious assault in order to break free from the sealed space but to no avail.

Recognizing the technique used, Luo Ruoxin explained, “This is a spatial art known as the ‘Mirror Sealing Art’.”

“Mirror Sealing Art?”

“It serves to seal a person within a completely isolated space, a little reminiscent to the world within a mirror. No matter how those within a mirror struggle, they will never be able to break free of their constraints and harm those on the other side of the mirror... That is basically the principle of the battle technique. To utilize the power of space to seal others in another dimension, unable to break free,” Luo Ruoxin explained grimly. “In terms of prowess, it’s inferior to your Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, but the effects are roughly similar.

“It’s indeed a formidable move, but... it’s true that Luo Xuanqing won’t be able to harm the other party if he is sealed within a mirror-like space, but won’t the other party be unable to attack him?”

As powerful as the battle technique sounded, it had a fatal flaw.

The effect worked both ways. While the cultivator inside the sealed space was unable to harm those outside, those outside would not be able to harm the cultivator inside.

It went without saying, it would still be a formidable technique in a group battle, but in a one-on-one duel, it seemed to be a waste of time and energy. After all, nothing would be achieved from this move!

In contrast, there were some variations of spatial sealing arts where the caster could travel freely in and out of the sealed space in principle, which would make them a more efficient technique in a one-on-one.

“It’s true that the other party won’t be able to harm Luo Xuanqing unless the mirror-like space is destroyed... Nevertheless, the fact that the other party controls the mirror means that he has the initiative in the battle, thus putting him in a favorable position,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“I see...” Zhang Xuan nodded slightly before falling silent.

Being in control of the mirror-like space meant that Mo-er could decide where and when the space should break, thus allowing him to make a move whenever he wanted and catch the person within the space off guard.

“I admit that this mirror-like space is a good concept, but it isn’t that easy to trap Luo Xuanqing!” Zhang Xuan said.

Right after those words were spoken, Luo Xuanqing’s hair suddenly rose, and a unique surge of energy wrapped itself on the surface of his body. His aura grew more powerful and imposing, reminiscent of a ferocious tiger.

He thrust his palm forward forcefully.

Huala!

The mirror-like space shattered into innumerable fragments.

“He has activated his bloodline?” Luo Ruoxin frowned.

With her eye of discernment, she could tell that Mo-er’s mastery of space far surpassed that of Luo Xuanqing, and Luo Xuanqing himself should have realized that fact as well. Cornered, Luo Xuanqing had no choice but to activate his bloodline ability.

With the augmentation of the Luo Clan’s bloodline, Luo Xuanqing’s sensitivity toward space was enhanced tremendously, thus allowing him to break the mirror-like space and attack Mo-er directly.

Boom!

As the two palms collided, a furious gale raged in the area.

Countless cracks surfaced on the floor of the elevated platform like a spider’s web.

“Luo Xuanqing has lost...” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

“The other party’s comprehension of spatial laws, cultivation, and battle techniques are all above his. There’s no way Luo Xuanqing could have won...” Luo Ruoxin shook her head and sighed.

Right after those words were spoken, Luo Xuanqing was forced to retreat eight steps before a frenzied spurt of blood spewed from his mouth. His body wavered a little before eventually collapsing to the ground.

“Teacher!”

After subduing Luo Xuanqing with a single palm strike, Mo-er clasped his fist before turning around and returning to the group with a nonchalant look on his face, as if he had just accomplished something insignificant.

“Young Master Xuanqing!”

An elder hurriedly rushed forward to feed Luo Xuanqing a pill and infused some zhenqi into him, and only then did the latter recover a little.

The injuries that he had sustained and the side effects from activating his bloodline had left his limbs with a wobbly feeling, devoid of any strength.

“I have embarrassed the clan. Please punish me...” With a pale face, Luo Xuanqing staggered up to his father and kneeled down.

“Rise. You aren’t to be blamed for this matter...” In that moment, Luo Ganzhen looked as if he had aged ten years.

All along, while he would not be so arrogant as to say that the heritage of their Luo Clan was the top in the world, he did not think that they were too far from it. Yet, who would have thought that they would be utterly defeated in their field of specialty?

Throughout the entire battle, that Mo-er person had only executed spatial arts, and faced with such a situation, they really had no choice but to admit their defeat.

“Yes...” Luo Xuanqing lowered his head shamefully.

It was one thing for him to be unable to defeat Zhang Xuan in the same cultivation realm, but to think that he would not be a match for these people either... The feeling of superiority that he had always felt as a genius of the Luo Clan suddenly popped like a bubble, leaving not a single trace behind.

“Father, what do we do now?” Luo Xuanqing asked telepathically with clenched fists.

While his cultivation was only at Dimension Sundering realm primary stage, due to the purity of his bloodline, he could already be considered the strongest expert among the younger

generation of the Luo Clan. While there were plenty of other Luo Clan offspring beneath a hundred years old who were in a higher cultivation realm than him, they were unlikely to be a match for the crowd from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers in a fight in the same cultivation realm.

Furthermore, based on what Nangong Yuanfeng had said, it seemed like the person whom he had faced was the weakest of their group, and yet, he did not stand the slightest chance at victory at all... Things really were not in their favor!

Luo Ganzhen hesitated for a moment before replying. "There's nothing we can do... unless your younger sister is willing to make a move!"

Currently, the person who commanded the highest control over space was not him or any other elders but that daughter of his!

Having assimilated the Dimension Silencer, while she had not comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing yet, her ability to manipulate space would never lose against those fellows before them.

"But ever since the Zhang Clan departed, she's locked herself in her room, unwilling to come out," Luo Xuanqing said gloomily.

As Luo Qiqi's elder brother, he could feel the deep emotions that she had for Zhang Xuan, and for Zhang Xuan to reject her publicly and leave with another woman... this blow was simply too great for someone as young as her to take.

She needed some time to come to terms with the matter, and he was unwilling to bother her at a time like this.

"This is an emergency situation, so it's no time for her to be throwing a tantrum. Quick, call her out!" Luo Ganzhen instructed.

"... Yes!"

After a moment of hesitation, Luo Xuanqing nodded before rising to his feet, intending to head off to find his younger sister. However, at this moment, Nangong Yuanfeng suddenly chuckled softly and said, "Deputy Clan Head Luo, if this is the capability that you and your clan members wield, you

shouldn't send them up here to publicly embarrass themselves. No matter how many weaklings come up to challenge my students, it's only a waste of time and effort. So, if you don't have anyone more formidable than him, I suggest that you admit defeat. At the very least, you will be able to preserve a shred of dignity for your Luo Clan!"

"You..." Hearing Nangong Yuanfeng's words, Luo Ganzhen nearly exploded on the spot. He was just about to refute those words when a calm voice suddenly sounded from beneath.

"It's just a duel, so why don't I..."

Following which, a middle-aged man with yellowish, wrinkled skin leaped onto the elevated platform from the crowd beneath.

"... give it a try too?"



# 1610 The Spatial Top Wouldn't Stop

“Who is that fellow?”

“I have no idea!”

“I don't recall seeing such a face before. He's probably from the side family, right?”

“I know most of the more notable individuals from the side family, but his face doesn't seem familiar... Why is he running up at this moment?”

“I don't know that, but he doesn't seem too weak. Perhaps, he might just be able to pull something off!”

...

Seeing that a middle-aged man had barged out of nowhere, a huge commotion broke out beneath the stage. Everyone glanced at one another in confusion, unsure of what was going on.

Most of the notable figures in the side family tended to know one another, but the middle-aged man's appearance did not seem to jog anyone's memory. Shockingly, it appeared that no one recognized him at all!

“You are...?” Luo Ganzhen asked with a frown.

“I am Luo Tianya, a distant relative of the Luo Clan. I am not often in the clan, so it's normal that you don't recognize me, deputy clan head!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist and reported.

Since he was there to compensate the Luo Clan, this was a good opportunity to recoup the reputation of the Luo Clan.

Thus, after hearing Nangong Yuanfeng's words, he had not hesitated much before leaping right up.

“Luo Tianya?” Luo Ganzhen shot a glance toward the First Elder Luo Qingchen, only to see that the latter was equally

confused.

It seemed like not even the First Elder was aware of whom the other party was.

Luo Qingchen stared at the middle-aged man before him for a long while, but he found that he was unable to identify the other party, so he could only respond with an awkward chuckle. “The Luo Clan’s heritage has been passed down for tens of thousands of years, and its offspring have spread far and wide across the Master Teacher Continent. There isn’t a genealogy book for the side family, so there’s no way to confirm his identity for certain. Nevertheless, we can’t deny the possibility that there might be a member of the side family who has worked hard and climbed up with his own ability...”

This was a problem that arose when a clan got too big. Each year, there would be a lot of disciples who headed out to venture into the world, and no one could guarantee that they would not have affairs outside. If they bore offspring, it would be hard to tell if that person was truly a member of the Luo Clan without checking their bloodline.

“Un!” Understanding this logic, Luo Ganzhen shook his head helplessly before turning back to the man before him. “Tianya, I understand your wish to stand up for the clan, but they are the experts from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, and the topic of the duel is comprehension of spatial laws. This isn’t a problem that can be resolved with just sheer strength...”

Honestly, he did not think that it was likely that a member of the side family would be able to defeat the Hundred Schools of Philosophers.

Even Luo Xuanqing, who boasted one of the purest Luo Clan bloodline, had ended up suffering a tragic loss, so he dared not wish that a member of the side family would really be able to achieve victory.

“Why don’t you allow me to give it a try? I am a member of the side family, so even if I lose, it won’t bring shame to the Luo Clan!” Zhang Xuan said.

Luo Ganzhen fell into deep contemplation.

The other party was right. They had already embarrassed themselves enough as it was, so even if another member of the side family lost in the duel, it would not really worsen the plight that they were in anyway.

It also happened that they needed to buy some time for his daughter to get there.

“Very well then!” Luo Ganzhen nodded. Turning to Nangong Yuanfeng, he said, “Elder Nangong, Luo Tianya over here wishes to challenge your student...”

But before Nangong Yuanfeng could say a word, Mo-er had already exclaimed with the utmost contempt, “Challenge? You want us to fight a mere side family offspring of the Luo Clan?”

It seemed like the Luo Clan had really gotten so desperate that they would clutch at every straw they had!

Nangong Yuanfeng’s eyebrows shot up in displeasure as well. “The blood of Ancient Sage Zi Rong flows in through veins of the offspring of our Nangong Clan. The rules of propriety from Kong shi state that one should regard a guest with courtesy and respect. Do you think that it’s appropriate for a member of the Luo Clan’s side family to challenge us, or is the Luo Clan trying to humiliate us through this?”

Even the core members were not a match for them, so to find a nobody from the side family to challenge them... the Luo Clan really was not taking them seriously!

“Humiliate?” Before Luo Ganzhen could respond to those words, Zhang Xuan had already shaken his head and uttered disdainfully, “You sure have a grand view of yourselves! Worry not, a bunch of weaklings like you aren’t worthy of me going out of my way to humiliate!”

“You...” Not expecting to be despised by a mere offspring of the side family, Nangong Yuanfeng narrowed his eyes threateningly.

“If you dare not battle against me, just say so. There’s no need to find so many excuses!” Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and spoke nonchalantly.

“Arrogance of the ignorant!” Mo-er harrumphed coldly.

It was one thing for offspring of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers like them to come down to a place as remote as this, but to think that these countryside bumpkins would still dare to say such words to them! Did that fellow really not know how insignificant he was before them?

Mo-er was not the only one who had such thoughts. By the side, Luo Ganzhen also clutched his forehead in distress.

Did this member of the side family really not know the significance of the term ‘Hundred Schools of Philosophers’ on the Master Teacher Continent?

Otherwise, how could he bring himself to utter such ridiculous words?

He’s really as shameless as that Zhang Xuan! Luo Xuanqing harrumphed coldly on the inside.

As an ex-friend of Zhang Xuan’s, I have seen just how shameless that man was... However, as shameless as that man was, he did have the capabilities to back it up. As for you... is it really good for you to be saying such words?

Even though Mo-er was so furious that he could kill, he still had to the reputation of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers to maintain, so he pointed to the Spatial Top by the side and said, “Fine, I’ll have a duel with you if you like. However, you should at least show that you have the qualifications to challenge me first. If you can at least get this Spatial Top to stand, I’ll give you a chance!”

“You want me to make it stand?” Zhang Xuan asked as he shot a glance at the Spatial Top. All of a sudden, the lazing top suddenly sprung up and began spinning non-stop, as if fearing that it would be struck to death if it showed the slightest hint of indolence. “Do you mean like this?”

Mo-er rubbed his eyes in disbelief.

With his current proficiency, the most he could do was get the top to stand up. He still was not capable of making it spin. In fact, the only person who was capable of doing so was his teacher, Nangong Yuanfeng. Even so, his teacher would still

have to put in a great deal of effort. Yet, for the Spatial Top to start spinning from a mere glance...

Did that fellow shoot lasers out of his eyes or something?

Nangong Yuanfeng was equally stunned by the abrupt happenings.

He had thought that this was a play staged by Luo Ganzhen in order to reduce this duel to a farce, but after witnessing this sight, it had become apparent to him that the inconspicuous-looking middle-aged man was actually a true expert.

At the same time, Luo Ganzhen, Luo Xuanqing, and the members of the Luo Clan stared at the sight with mouths agape, almost as if they had seen a ghost.

“Could it be...” Luo Ganzhen suddenly thought of something, and he quickly turned his gaze toward the First Elder Luo Qingchen.

“That’s likely the case. Other than the person who has comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, I really can’t think of another man who has the ability to make the Spatial Top spin like that!” Luo Qingchen nodded.

“We have been looking for him among the inner clan members... but who would have thought that he was from the distant side family!” Luo Ganzhen’s face reddened in agitation.

He had already resolved himself to face a tragic loss, and he had thought that the Luo Clan would be utterly humiliated. Not even in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that the anonymous expert whom they had been searching for all this time would appear at this crucial moment to save them from the crisis!

On top of that, the other party was a member of a distant side family that even the First Elder did not recognize!

“I have really underestimated the Luo Clan. It seems like they still have many formidable experts hidden among them...”

Taking a deep breath, Nangong Yuanfeng suppressed his astonishment and instructed, “Mo-er, you have to tread

carefully. His comprehension of spatial laws is surely nowhere beneath yours!”

“Yes, Teacher!” Knowing that the middle-aged man standing before him would not be an easy target to deal with either, Mo-er quickly swallowed his complacency as he walked back to the center of the elevated platform. He clasped his fist and bowed, “Feel free to choose the format of your duel!”

“The format of the duel?” With his hands still behind his back, taking on a seemingly unguarded position, Zhang Xuan shot an impassive glance at Mo-er and said, “Do you think that you are worthy of dueling me?”

“You...” Mo-er’s face reddened in fury.

“Let that old fellow face me by himself, or if you still find that unreasonable, I’ll allow the five of you to come at me together,” Zhang Xuan said calmly.

# 1611 I'll Give You One Second

“Audacious!”

“You scoundrel, do you know whom you are talking to?”

“I advise you not to let your ego get the better of you. Just because you have some talent, you’ve become so complacent as if there’s no one better than you in the world. It seems like I really should pound some humility into those haughty bones of yours!”

...

Upon hearing his words, the other three students of Nangong Yuanfeng glared at him furiously. If not for their position, they would have dashed right up and torn that fellow’s mouth apart.

To challenge the five of them simultaneously... Who do you think you are?

Do you think that you are Kong Shiyao?

At the same time, Luo Ganzhen and Luo Xuanqing’s lips also twitched uncontrollably upon hearing those words.

That middle-aged man is truly daring! To dare to humiliate even the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, is he really unafraid of death?

That being said... why does it feel so exhilarating to hear him say such words?

Calm down, calm down, I mustn’t laugh at this moment... That would be too embarrassing!

In truth, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had appeared several times in the Master Teacher Continent before, but they had always taken a high and mighty position, which was also understandable since they had succeeded the heritage of Kong shi and his seventy-two direct disciples... However, from the

man's tone, it seemed as if those lot from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers were the true countryside bumpkins!

Really, so what if they were from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers? Was it really something worth bragging about?

“Well said!”

“Weren't you all arrogant just now?”

“Screw them all! This is the kind of dominance that our Luo Clan should have! If we had maintained such an attitude from the very start, do you think that Zhang Xuan would have dared to reject the engagement with our little princess?”

“Hah! Even if that Zhang Xuan inflated his ego tenfold, he would not dare say such words!”

While those on the elevated platform were still astonished by the turn of events, the many spectators beneath were so excited that they almost began dancing.

After all of the grievances that they had suffered, there was finally an outlet for them to vent their frustration!

“A duel is not won by having a sharp mouth! I hope that you have the strength to match your words!”

With a livid expression, Nangong Yuanfeng flicked his wrist and raised his head. “The fact that you are able to keep the Spatial Top spinning shows that your comprehension of spatial laws has already reached the fourth level. As such, it's indeed true that Mo-er would not be a match of you. Why don't you propose the format of the duel that is fair for the both of us then?”

“Don't worry, I won't take advantage of you all. There's not much point competing over a mere top. So, just like Luo Xuanqing, I'll challenge you all to a battle of strength!”

As long as Zhang Xuan willed it, he could get the Spatial Top to spin for many days without falling, but that would not be enough to recoup the Luo Clan's reputation. Since he had already chosen to deal with the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, he should go all out.



Before Nangong Yuanfeng could say anything, Mo-er narrowed his eyes. “You wish to challenge us to a battle of strength? Are you certain?”

His comprehension of space was not on par with the other party, but as a genius of the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism, he was skilled in all kinds of top-notch battle techniques. On top of that, his cultivation was also higher than the other party’s, so if they fought in a normal duel, he was confident that he would be able to achieve victory!

This was an ideal opportunity to teach that arrogant brat a lesson and grind some humility into his bones!

“Of course I’m certain! Make your move!” Zhang Xuan replied arrogantly.

Chuckling softly, a hint of viciousness flickered across Mo-er’s eyes. “Very well then. I won’t take advantage of you either, so I’ll suppress my cultivation down to Saint 9-dan pinnacle...”

He swiftly suppressed his strength, and in the blink of an eye, his cultivation had already fallen to Saint 9-dan pinnacle.

After that was done, Mo-er clenched his fists tightly and dashed forward, intending to make the first move.

“Mo-er, exercise some prudence when you attack him. Make sure not to hurt him too much...” Nangong Yuanfeng sent a telepathic message over.

“Teacher, rest assured. I understand!” Mo-er replied telepathically as he suddenly morphed into a gust of wind, and his silhouette vanished completely from the spot.

“Where is he?”

“Why did he suddenly disappear from view?”

A huge commotion broke out from the crowd.

Clearly, Mo-er had not gone all out when he fought with Luo Xuanqing earlier. Perhaps viewing Zhang Xuan to be a dangerous opponent, he had gone all out from the very start and vanished from the elevated platform, leaving Zhang Xuan alone in the middle.

“That’s a unique spatial art! It utilizes the distortion of space to erase one’s presence from the surroundings, allowing one to go into concealment!” Luo Ganzhen’s face darkened.

Putting aside Luo Xuanqing, not even Luo Ganzhen himself was confident that he would be able to overcome this move!

“Utilizes the distortion of space?” Luo Xuanqing frowned in confusion.

“Light moves in a straight line, and that’s how our vision work. The other party is exploiting this very property of light through warping the space around him, making it impossible for us to see him at all. Not only so, as it’s a complete distortion of space, not just a simple refraction of light, it’s impossible for our Spiritual Perception to perceive it. Of course, this manipulation is extremely straining, making it infeasible to maintain it for an extended period of time, but considering how a battle could be determined within a fraction of a second, it could be a powerful tool if used under the right circumstances!” Luo Ganzhen explained.

“This... Doesn’t that mean that the geniuses of our clan don’t stand a chance at victory at all?” Luo Xuanqing’s face paled.

If one could not even locate one’s opponent, how could one possibly win a battle?

“It seems like the chances at victory are extremely slim...” Luo Ganzhen shook his head gloomily.

Meanwhile, at the center of the elevated platform, Luo Tianya’s eyebrows shot up in displeasure as he complained grumpily, “What are you leaping around for? You are giving me a headache over here!”

Right after saying those words, he flicked his palm out and struck the air.

Pah!

There was a crisp feedback to that slap. A figure was instantaneously squeezed out of a space that was supposed to be completely empty, and the figure crashed heavily down from the elevated platform and spurted a mouthful of blood before passing out.

“Mo-er!”

“Junior Mo!”

Seeing the unconscious figure twitching on the ground, the faces of Nangong Yuanfeng and his three other students warped in horror.

Even they would be hard pressed to locate Mo-er once he had activated that technique, and yet, without even taking a single step, the middle-aged man had actually been able to send Mo-er flying with a slap... Just how in the world was this possible?

Luo Ganzhen was also rendered speechless by that feat.

He had just said a moment ago that their chances of victory were slim, but then the expert from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had been sent flying the next instant... Was that Luo Tianya not a little too fearsome?

The three young men quickly rushed down to pop a pill into Mo-er's mouth. A few moments later, Mo-er slowly regained consciousness. He stared at the sky with a dazed look, almost as if he had lost his soul.

Even at that moment, he still could not understand how the middle-aged man had managed to find him and slap him out of the distorted space.

“Teacher, I wish to challenge him to a duel!” Knowing that Mo-er had suffered a heavy setback and needed some time to recover, one of the young men from the remaining three students clasped his fist and bowed.

“Alright, go ahead!” Nangong Yuanfeng said as he clenched his fists tightly together. “There's something weird about that fellow. Be careful.”

At this moment, he knew better than to continue underestimating the man.

“Teacher, rest assured!” The young man nodded.

He turned to Zhang Xuan, and a cold glint flashed across his eyes. “I wish to challenge you to a duel. Are you willing to accept the challenge?”

“You?” Zhang Xuan clicked his tongue impatiently and shook his head.

“Like I said, you all should come me at once, or else all you will be getting is a good pummeling... Fine, I won’t take advantage of you. I’ll give you a second to do whatever you want, and I won’t retaliate at all!”

# 1612 Full Strength

Those words really provoked the young man. Rage surged into his head, and his face looked so red that it seemed as if it would explode at any moment.

He felt as if he would die of anger if he said a word more to the other party,

To those of their cultivation realm, putting aside an entire second, even a tenth of a second was enough for them to claim a person's life in the midst of an intense battle. To give a second to him to do whatever he pleased without retaliating... that was really showing him utter contempt!

"I don't need it! I dare you to use whatever you have at your disposal and let me see the full extent of your strength!" The young man gritted his teeth and howled.

"Are you certain?" Zhang Xuan frowned doubtfully.

"Why not? I'm not like Nangong Mo, who can only rely on movement techniques. Don't worry, I'll use my strongest move as well and show you that those from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers aren't to be humiliated!"

Hong long!

With a roar, the young man's aura surged. Even though his cultivation was suppressed at Saint 9-dan pinnacle as well, his aura felt almost on par with that of a Great Sage expert, powerful and inviolable.

"Since that's the case, I'll be making my move then!" Hearing the young man's response, Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction.

"Feel free! I'll make my..."

The young man raised his palm, intending to make a move, but before he could do anything, a blur flashed before him.

Following which, he felt an intense pain assaulting his chest.

Kacha! Kacha!

With several bones of his ribcage shattered, he was immediately sent flying into the distance. He crashed heavily onto the ground, and just like Mo-er, he ended up blacking out. Even so, his body continued twitching uncontrollably as if he was suffering from a stroke.

“You were the one who told me to use my full strength and not hold back at all,” Zhang Xuan remarked as he gazed down on the young man lying on the ground with an innocent look on his face. “All of you should have heard how I offered him a second’s advantage earlier, but he turned me down... I guess the Hundred Schools of Philosophers does value its reputation a lot. However, that might not necessarily be a good thing as it could very well be tarnished very soon!”

“You are courting death!” Hearing how the middle-aged man was shooting his mouth so smugly after knocking out one of their peers, the remaining two young men roared furiously.

They stepped out with gritted teeth, fully revealing their intention to tear the young man before them to pieces.

Never has there been anyone on the Master Teacher Continent who dared offend our Hundred Schools of Philosophers!

The two young men took their positions on either side of Zhang Xuan, and the young man on the left growled, “You are Luo Tianya, right? Do you care to duel with us?”

If looks could kill, Zhang Xuan would have burst into flames under their fiery gaze.

“Yes, the two of you should just come at me together. We’ll save some time this way. I don’t know how it is for the two of you, but honestly, I’m getting tired of this already!” Zhang Xuan said with a disdainful wave of his hand.

“Tired?”

“Tired your head! All you have done is execute a slap and a kick, and you are already tired after that?”

The lips of the two young men twitched.

You sent Mo-er flying with a punch and our other junior with a kick... yet you still dare to complain about getting tired?

Can you at least be any more perfunctory than that?

“This annoying vibe... Why does it feel so familiar to me?”

Luo Xuanqing was startled for a moment before he swiftly shook away that feeling and turned his gaze back to the confrontation.

These two young men were clearly stronger than the previous two, and they would form a formidable foe if they coordinated with one another. Even though he had some confidence in Luo Tianya, he still could not help but worry.

In this crucial moment, just as it seemed like a battle would break out at any moment, a deep voice suddenly echoed across the air. “Both of you, stand down!”

The two young men quickly turned their heads around, only to see that their teacher had stood up and was looking at them.

“Teacher...”

“Our friend over there has not only comprehended the fourth level of spatial sealing, his cultivation is equally exceptional as well. It would be no exaggeration to say that he’s invincible in his class... Even if the two of you collaborate with one another to fight against him, it’s highly unlikely that you’ll be able to match him!” Nangong Yuanfeng said grimly.

While the fellow who had popped out of the Luo Clan all of a sudden had an unseemly appearance, his true strength had really struck fear into their hearts.

Those students that he had brought with him had been carefully selected among the student populace, the elites of the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism. Of course, they were still lacking compared to those high rankers on the Heaven Board and Earth Board, but they could definitely match up to most talented master teachers and combat masters!

Yet, for two of them to be defeated so easily... the prowess of the middle-aged man could only be described with a single word—horrrifying!

Even though his remaining two students were the stronger ones of the group, it was unlikely that they would be able to win against him.

“But he insulted the Hundred Schools of Philosophers!”  
Hearing their teacher proclaiming their likely loss, the two young men clashed their fists tightly in frustration.

“The reputation of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers is built through our might. It’s not so fragile as to be torn down by just a couple words of insults!” Nangong Yuanfeng harrumphed.

Following which, he turned a grim look toward Zhang Xuan and said, “I know it’s inappropriate for an old man like me to be challenging you, but that item is something that the Hundred Schools of Philosophers is determined to obtain regardless of the cost. I can’t afford to return empty-handed, so allow me to apologize in advance...”

Boom!

An overwhelming aura burst into the clouds as distortions appeared in the surrounding space. It felt as if even the heavens would collapse down from the immense amount of energy pouring into it.

The very pinnacle of Great Sage, Sempiternal realm!

He was an expert on par with the four Otherworldly Demons from before!

“Like I said earlier, the five of you should have come at me together! Look, isn’t the outcome still the same at the very end?” Zhang Xuan glanced at Nangong Yuanfeng indifferently.

When it came to a duel of equal cultivation realm, not even the Dragonbone Divine Spear was a match for him. Those four young men were not weaklings, but they were still a long way off from catching up to Zhang Xuan. Perhaps, this Nangong Yuanfeng might still be able to entertain him for a bit.

“Very well!” Taking a deep breath, Nangong Yuanfeng quickly suppressed the energy in his body, and in the blink of an eye, his cultivation was lowered to Zhang Xuan’s level.

Given his standing and seniority, it was indeed inappropriate for him to be challenging a Saint 9-dan cultivator.



However, the Celestial Amulet of Legacy was of the utmost importance to the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. This was a mission from the upper echelons, and if he returned empty-handed, even if he was the descendant of an Ancient Sage, he still would not be able to bear the consequences.

“Please!” Nangong Yuanfeng beckoned with his hand, gesturing for Zhang Xuan to make the first move.

He could tell from the two earlier battles that once he suppressed his cultivation, it would be hard for him to match the middle-aged man. If he really wanted to win, he would have to give it his all.

Of course, the prerequisite to that was that the middle-aged man had really used his full prowess in the fight against his other two students earlier.

With such a thought in mind, Nangong Yuanfeng clasped his fist and said, “Brother Tianya, I have a request for make of you. I hope that you’ll fight me with your full prowess!”

“With my full prowess?” Zhang Xuan frowned. “Are you sure?”

He did not even use his full strength when he fought with the Dragonbone Divine Spear, so would the other party really be able to withstand his full might?

“Of course! I am a descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Rong, so even if my strength is lacking, I still have my dignity to uphold... I hope that you can accede to my request!” Nangong Yuanfeng clasped his fist.

If it was found out that a teacher of the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism, a descendant of an Ancient Sage, had won only by having his opponent giving him some leeway, he would never be able to raise his head even if he returned to the Hundred Schools of Philosophers.

“This... Fine, I accept your request!” Seeing the earnest look on Nangong Yuanfeng’s face, Zhang Xuan nodded. “I’ll be exerting my full force from now on then...”

“Let me see how formidable an expert who has reached the fourth level of spatial laws is!” With a grand wave of his hand,

Nangong Yuanfeng bellowed as he drove his zhenqi through his body.

But barely after he had said those words, one of his students behind him exclaimed, “Teacher, be careful!”

Sou!

Before he could even react, Nangong Yuanfeng felt a stabbing pain assaulting his chest, and the next instant, the scenery around him retreated swiftly. The buildings of the massive Ethereal Shrouding City swiftly minimized into nothing more than a little black dot before completely vanishing from sight.

# 1613 Please Be Our Clan Head!

“Pu!”

Only at that moment did Nangong Yuanfeng realize how powerless he was. There was a surge of energy that was coursing through his body relentlessly, and it almost felt as if he would explode from it.

Unable to take it anymore, he spewed a mouthful of blood. Knowing that he might die if this continued, he immediately released the seal on his cultivation.

Hong long long!

Introspective Convalescence realm, Aureate Body realm, Intuitive Impulse realm...

In an instant, his cultivation reverted to the level of Sempiternal realm, and by driving his zhenqi desperately, he finally managed to stabilize himself. Nevertheless, his face still remained ghastly pale from the near-death experience that he had just had.

He scanned his surroundings, only to find himself in a completely foreign land. Just how freaking far had he flown out for even something as large as the Luo Clan's Ethereal Shrouding City to have completely vanished from sight?

“This... Have I actually flown tens of thousands of li?” Nangong Yuanfeng did a quick calculation, and it was almost as if a mini explosion broke out in his head.

It was just earlier that he had told the other party to use his full strength. To be honest, he had already resolved himself for defeat, but he did not expect it to come so quickly and decisively!

The might that he had just been struck with was something that even Introspective Convalescence realm cultivators who

had reached the level of Consummation would not necessarily be able to bring out!

But as a Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivator, he actually managed to pull it off...

“Is this his true strength? It’s no wonder he requested for the five of us to go at him together... We are indeed no match for him!” Nangong Yuanfeng could not help but shudder from fear upon recalling what had just happened.

If he had not released his cultivation at the crucial moment and restored his strength to the Sempiternal realm, he could very well have been crushed into bits!

More importantly, had the other party focused his strength not on ramming him but killing him, even though his body had already achieved the level of Sempiternal, the strike would have still penetrated through him, bringing instantaneous death upon him...

Terrifying!

How could there be such a powerful Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivator in the world?

In terms of talent, it feels like he’s on par with even Kong Shiyao... To think that there would be such a person on the Master Teacher Continent! Nangong Yuanfeng thought in astonishment.

With that single punch, it was already apparent who the winner of the duel was.

It seemed like he would be punished when he returned back to the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism.

However, there was nothing he could do. A loss was a loss. As a descendant of an Ancient Sage, he could not abandon his dignity and steal from the Luo Clan just because he had lost the gamble.

“Forget it, I’ll think about it later!” Nangong Yuanfeng sighed deeply as he quickly headed back to the Luo Clan.

...

“You’re back!”

As soon as Nangong Yuanfeng returned to the square, he saw Luo Tianya sitting on his seat, and there was a steaming hot pot right in front of him. With a pair of chopsticks in his hand, Luo Tianya devoured the food before him greedily as he remarked, “We got hungry while waiting for you to come back, so we decided to have some food first. Do you want to join in?”

“...” Nangong Yuanfeng suddenly felt a deep pain in his chest.

So frustrating!

It was obvious that Luo Tianya was intentionally eating hot pot at this moment so as to embarrass them.

If it was found out that experts from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had come to challenge the Luo Clan, only to be sent flying with a single strike... And by the time they returned, the Luo Clan had already moved on to dinner...

Their reputation would be completely tarnished!

Knowing that they would only embarrass themselves more the longer they remained here, Nangong Yuanfeng stowed the Spatial Top into his storage ring and clasped his fist. “I, Nangong Yuanfeng, admit my loss. Farewell!”

After which, he beckoned his four students over and said, “Let’s go!”

After saying those words, they swiftly flew off and disappeared from sight in the blink of an eye.

“Let’s go...”

“Did we just defeat the Hundred Schools of Philosophers?”

“Long live Tianya!”

“Tianya, you have just made a fan out of me! I want to bear your babies!”

“From now on, my role model shall be Tianya! I shall strive hard to become like him...”

...

There was a brief moment of silence before a deafening commotion broke out all around the Luo Clan.

Everyone had thought that the Luo Clan would be humiliated like earlier, especially considering that their opponents were from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. Yet, who would have thought that Luo Tianya would single-handedly turn the tables around and restore honor to the Luo Clan!

In an instant, from a nobody whom no one had ever heard of, Luo Tianya had become the most respected and admired individual in the Luo Clan, the idol of both youths and elders alike!

“This...” Looking at the reinvigorated looks of the clan members all around him, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

His rejection of the engagement with the Luo Clan had indubitably dealt a heavy blow not only to their reputation but their morale as well. However, it seemed like this incident had helped them recover from the trauma and unite as one again.

“Brother Tianya, allow me to thank you on behalf of the entire clan for saving us from this dishonor,” Luo Ganzhen said as he walked to the center of the elevated platform.

With a wave of his hand, the sword left behind by Ancient Sage Zi Rong, which had been floating in the air all along, flew into his grasp, and he presented it to Zhang Xuan. “This is the gift that Nangong Yuanfeng offered for the bet. Of the entire Luo Clan, there’s no one more suited than you to wield it!”

Zhang Xuan was visibly taken aback by how generous Luo Ganzhen was being.

To be honest, he had helped the Luo Clan in order to soothe his guilt-ridden heart, so he had not expected to receive anything in return. Thus, he quickly waved his hand and said, “This is my responsibility as an offspring of the Luo Clan. This sword belongs to the entire Luo Clan, so I shan’t overstep my bounds...”

“There’s no need to stand on ceremony, Brother Tianya. You have saved the entire clan and united us once more. You are

the only one among us who is worthy of holding this sword!” Luo Qingchen insisted with a smile.

“This...” Noticing the intent gazes that others were shooting him, Zhang Xuan swiftly realized that there was no other way out of this. Thus, he could only nod his head helplessly and take the sword. “Since you have said so, I won’t stand on ceremony...”

Possessing the Dragonbone Divine Spear, he did not have the slightest interest in Ancient Sage Zi Rong’s sword. But in any case, he could always slip it back to the Luo Clan’s treasure vault at a later date. If not, it would make a good weapon for Zhao Ya once he had rescued her.

Luo Ganzhen heaved sigh of relief internally after seeing Zhang Xuan taking the blade before asking, “If I’m not mistaken, the person who induced the Submission of the Predecessors earlier on was you, right?”

“The Submission of the Predecessors?” Zhang Xuan frowned doubtfully.

“You are a member of the side family, so it’s understandable that you are unaware of it. Our Luo Clan is founded on the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, and if a person in the world comprehends such a Quintessence, they will be able to attain the acknowledgement of our founder and make the predecessors fall in submission!” Luo Ganzhen explained.

“Ah! That should probably be me then!” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

After leaving the Luo Clan earlier, he had gone to White Creek Mountain with Luo Ruoxin. Considering that the ‘Submission of the Predecessors’ phenomenon occurred during this period of time and was related to the comprehension of the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, it was likely that it was really due to him.

“The fact that you have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing makes you eligible to become the head of the Luo Clan!” Luo Ganzhen said before hurriedly

clasping his fist and bowing down. “Brother Tianya, I implore you to lead our Luo Clan to greater heights!”

“What? You want me to become the clan head? No no no, how can that do?” Zhang Xuan had still been wondering where this was going to when he heard the other party requesting for him to become the head of the Luo Clan, and he immediately leaped in fright.

He was not even a member of the Luo Clan, so how could he possibly be its clan head?

“The Luo Clan has just suffered the worst humiliation in its dozens of millenniums of history. That so-called young prodigy of the Zhang Clan publicly annulled the engagement with our Luo Clan before the top powers on the Master Teacher Continent, trampling on our dignity. You are the only one with the prestige and ability to unite the Luo Clan once more and restore confidence in it! Please lead our Luo Clan to greatness!” Luo Ganzhen bent his back perpendicular to the ground, fully displaying the sincerity in his request.

“Please lead our Luo Clan!”

Luo Qingchen and the other elders echoed Luo Ganzhen’s plea and bowed deeply too.

“This...” Zhang Xuan was frenzied.

He had come here to compensate the Luo Clan for wronging it previously, not to become its clan head...

What the heck is this?

How in the world could this happen to me?

Where did the fairness and justice of the world go to?

Is it my fault for being so outstanding and welcoming?

If only I’d known that, I would have acted average. Just that... what in the world is ordinary?

Is it my fault for not knowing what average is?

Please, can anyone save me from this... Why is being ordinary so difficult?



# 1614 Zhang Xuan Is from the Luo Clan?

Frenzied, Zhang Xuan turned to Luo Ruoxin amid the crowd, only to see her directing an indifferent, brilliant smile at him. It was almost as if she was saying, ‘This is something that you stirred up, so solve it by yourself. You reap what you sow.’

Zhang Xuan immediately realized that she could not be relied on to get him out of this mess, so he could only face Luo Ganzhen and the other elders alone.

“I can understand your feelings, but... I’m too used to living a carefree life. I’m afraid that I’m really not suited to being a clan head!”

“Brother Tianya, if that’s your concern, there’s really nothing to worry about. You can leave the miscellaneous matters to First Elder Luo Qingchen and me. All you have to do is help rally our Luo Clan together in times of need or during crucial moments. You can still spend the rest of your time traveling freely around the world or go into seclusion if you like!” Luo Ganzhen hurriedly said.

The rejection from the Zhang Clan had cost the Luo Clan its prestige and honor. At a time like this, they needed a strong leader to convince their followers that the Luo Clan had not fallen yet!

Given how Luo Tianya had managed to subdue even the experts from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, if he could become the head of the Luo Clan, they would be able to rebuild the Luo Clan’s reputation and let the whole world know that they were not a force to be trifled with!

At the same time, they would also show the world that those of the Zhang Clan were fools for turning their backs on them!

“I...” Seeing that it was impossible for him to turn down this matter, Zhang Xuan could only resort to his trump card. “Even

though my surname is Luo, I am only a very distant relative of the Luo Clan. My Luo Clan bloodline is so thin that it might not even be detectable at all. I fear that it might not be too appropriate for me to become the head of the Luo Clan...”

“That’s not an issue at all. First Elder, bring the Bloodline Basin over,” Luo Ganzhen instructed before turning his gaze back to Zhang Xuan. “Brother Tianya, if it isn’t too much trouble for you, please allow us to check your bloodline!”

“Check my bloodline?” Zhang Xuan nodded slowly. “If the purity of my bloodline is too low, I’d ask you not to ask me to become the head of the Luo Clan anymore!”

Given that he had nothing to do with the Luo Clan at all, it was a given that the check would end with a negative result. With that, he would have a good reason to turn down Luo Ganzhen’s request.

Luo Ganzhen hesitated for a moment before nodding. “Very well!”

If the middle-aged man’s bloodline was truly too thin, he would just have to marry his daughter to the other party to bind him to their Luo Clan.

In other words, no matter what happened, the person who had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing would have to become the head of their Luo Clan. Otherwise, just the very existence of a man who had unlocked the secrets of the Luo Clan’s heritage was enough to bring about the Luo Clan’s gradual fall from grace.

Upon hearing Luo Ganzhen’s orders, First Elder Luo Qingchen quickly rushed away. He returned not too long later, and with a flick of his wrist, a compass-like object materialized right in front of him.

It floated quietly in the midst of the elevated platform.

“This is the Bloodline Basin. It’s used to gauge the level of purity of the Luo Clan bloodline within a cultivator. All in all, there are ten levels, and each level denotes a tenth of the founder’s bloodline. In other words, ‘1’ means that the cultivator possesses a tenth of the founder’s bloodline, and

‘10’ means that the cultivator’s bloodline is on par with the founder’s! One has to have a purity level of at least ‘3’ to qualify as an inner member and ‘1’ to qualify as an ordinary member... Anything beneath that will result in the individual being banished to the side family!” Luo Qingchen explained.

He raised his head to look at Zhang Xuan expectantly.

“Brother Tianya, even though you are from the side family, the fact that you have managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing shows that the talent you wield is unparalleled! As long as your bloodline surpasses ‘1’, you will already be eligible to become our clan head. No one in the Luo Clan would dare to voice their objection to the matter!”

“Surpasses ‘1’?” Zhang Xuan did not think that there would be such a classification for bloodlines within Sage Clans. It was likely that it was through an artifact similar to the Bloodline Basin that he had been deemed to be an unparalleled prodigy of the Zhang Clan before he was even born.

Thinking about it now, he had probably been an ‘8’, ‘9’, or perhaps very close to a ‘10’ in terms of Zhang Clan bloodline back then!

“That’s right! Brother Tianya, you just have to place a droplet of blood on the Bloodline Basin, and the compass will immediately reflect the result!” Luo Qingchen said.

“Alright then. However, I’ll just say in advance that my bloodline is so thin that it’s almost negligible... I hope that you won’t raise the matter of having me become the head of the Luo Clan anymore after this test!” Zhang Xuan said.

As an offspring of the Zhang Clan, his bloodline definitely had no ties to that of the Luo Clan at all, so there was no need for him to worry at all.

Hu!

He flicked a droplet of his blood into the Bloodline Basin, and it fell into the groove at its very center.

Weng!

A slight whirring sound echoed in the air, and the droplet of blood suddenly burst into flames. Seemingly triggered by

some unknown energy, the compass needle began spinning frenziedly.

Jiya!

A while later, it came to a stop. The number that it was pointing at... '9'!

“How could it be 9? This Bloodline Basin must be spoilt!” As if a streak of lightning flashed across Zhang Xuan’s mind, he nearly lost his mind at that ridiculous result.

He was an offspring of the Zhang Clan! How could he possibly have the Luo Clan bloodline... and such a pure one at that!

Or... did the Xingmeng Sword Saints make a mistake? But his blood did fuse perfectly with that of Meng Sword Saint! Wait a moment, he did check for the Zhang Clan bloodline in him, and there was not the slightest trace of it at all. Did that mean that...

A mini explosion occurred in Zhang Xuan’s head at this moment, preventing him from thinking any deeper than that.

While Zhang Xuan was still completely frenzied by the outcome, Luo Ganzhen, Luo Qingchen, and the others froze on the spot. Indescribable joy slowly coursed through their entire beings, and their bodies began trembling intensely in reaction. If not in consideration of their standing, they might have even begun skipping around the place excitedly!

A bloodline purity of '9'... That effectively meant that the middle-aged man was not just a member of their Luo Clan—he was even a core member that was even more crucial than any one of them present!

It was no wonder he could comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing! Even if he had not done so, just his bloodline alone would have qualified him to become their next clan head!

Knowing that this was the opportune moment to make his move, Luo Ganzhen clasped his fist and bowed down. “Paying respects to our clan head!”

The wily elders also swiftly understood Luo Ganzhen's intention, and they quickly bowed down too. "Paying respects to our clan head!"

If it was because they had no other choice that they were pressuring the middle-aged man to be their clan head before, after seeing the sheer purity of the bloodline he possessed, there was no way that they could possibly let him get away!

They eyed Zhang Xuan intently as if cougars who had found their prey.

"I... I really am from the side family. I can't possibly qualify to become your clan head..." Zhang Xuan protested feebly.

Thinking that the middle-aged man was just too shocked by the abrupt turn of events, Luo Ganzhen explained with a radiant smile on his face. "Brother Tianya, you need not be so humble. The heritage of our Luo Clan bloodline happens by chance. Those from the main family can very well birth offspring whose Luo Clan bloodlines are negligibly thin. Similarly, from time to time, there are offspring from the side family whose bloodlines are even purer than that of the main family, leaving countless stumped by how such a thing could happen..."

"It's for this reason that the clan conducts a bloodline test on all offspring of the Luo Clan, regardless of whether they are from the main family or the side family. You might be from the side family, but due to the purity of your bloodline alone, you are more than qualified to return to the main family and become our next clan head!"

It would not be inaccurate to say that the inheritance of a bloodline was a random event.

In fact, there were many cases throughout the Luo Clan's history where the Luo Clan bloodline in the main family had suddenly died out, and someone else from the side family had risen to power instead.

While the Luo Clan did conduct bloodline checks on all newborns of the main family and side family, it was inevitable that there would be lapses in their checks from time to time,

especially considering how huge the Luo Clan had become over the ages. There were cases in history where a grown up from the side family had suddenly been shown to possess unbelievably pure Luo Clan bloodline, so Luo Ganzhen and the others were not too surprised by the matter.

“Brother Tianya, I beseech you to lead our Luo Clan to greatness! Your bloodline has been shown to be one of the purest in the history of our Luo Clan, and you have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing as well. There’s no one who could be more worthy than you to take on this role!”

“Our Luo Clan has just suffered a major setback. At a time like this, we need a powerful leader like you to rally everyone!”

“You are the only one who can unite our members together!”

“If you don’t agree to it, our Luo Clan will really fall into decline!”

The elders also swiftly voiced their pleas as well, upping the pressure on the middle-aged man.

On the receiving end of the pleas, Zhang Xuan clutched his hair in frenzy.

He had only agreed to the bloodline test in order to create a legitimate excuse to reject the Luo Clan. Who could have thought he would end up cornering himself instead?

After soothing the stifled feeling in his heart, Zhang Xuan took a deep breath and said, “I... To be honest with you, the reason I came here today is to impart the method of cultivating the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to you all. I didn’t come here for honor or power...”

Putong!

But before he could finish his words, and a pair of knees fell to the ground. Luo Xuanqing was kneeling before him with a determined look in his eyes.

“Luo Xuanqing pays respects to teacher!”

“Eh?”

Zhang Xuan was stunned.

You said that I was fast, but aren't you way faster than I am?  
To actually acknowledge me as your master all of a sudden, is  
this really fine?

# 1615 Becoming the Clan Head Once More

Zhang Xuan was completely stupefied.

He quickly shook himself out of his daze and walked forward to hold Luo Xuanqing's arms, supporting the latter back to his feet. "There's no need to stand on ceremony! You can just think of me as a friend..."

To be honest, while Luo Xuanqing's recklessness had left him with a splitting headache on many occasions, he was actually quite fond of the other party's forthright personality. While it was a pity that the other party did not become his brother-in-law in the end, his impression of the other party still remained rather favorable.

I thought that you were my brother, but you actually wanted to become my pupil instead...

"The Zhang Clan's Zhang Xuan has infringed on the honor of our Luo Clan and broken my younger sister's heart. I can never forgive him for all that he has done! I know that given the limitations of my talents, I'll never be able to catch up with him alone, so I implore you to impart the method to comprehending the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to me! After I master the Spatial Quintessence, I shall exact vengeance and slaughter that wretched b\*stard!" Luo Xuanqing declared with gritted teeth, refusing to stand up at all.

"..." Zhang Xuan staggered slightly as a feeling of helpless despair arose in his mind. With a splitting headache once more, he took a deep breath and attempted to counsel the reckless young man. "Ahem... Have you ever considered the possibility Zhang Xuan also didn't intend for all of this to happen either?"

I thought of you as my brother, but not only do you want to become my pupil, you are even intending to use the skills you



wish to learn from me to kill me! Just what in the world did I do in my previous life to deserve such retribution?

“Just because he didn’t intend for it to happen, he can break my younger sister’s heart and abandon her during the engagement ceremony? Just because he didn’t intend for it to happen, he can humiliate our Luo Clan and trample our dignity as if it was worthless dirt?” Luo Xuanqing raised his head as he spat with suppressed rage. “Elder, I implore you to help me in my vengeance! As long as you are willing to take me in as your student, I’ll devote my entire life to serving you once I have exacted my vengeance!”

“This...” Zhang Xuan really had no idea what he should say.

If only he had known that this would happen, he never would have come to the Luo Clan. He really was asking for trouble!

It’s one thing for me to be forced to become the clan head, but even the one friend that I have made wanted to become my student... and the motive for doing so is to kill me in cold blood...

What am I supposed to do? Am I to teach you or not?

Completely distressed by the situation he was in, Zhang Xuan directed another pleading gaze toward Luo Ruoxin, asking for her help. However, the young lady simply looked back at him with a knowing smile on her face, as if she had known that this would happen from the very start.

Zhang Xuan sent a telepathic message over and asked, “Ruoxin, did you know that I would be tested to have the Luo Clan bloodline? Wait a moment... is it the effect of your disguise amulet?”

Despite the doubt he had earlier, the fact that his history was a perfect fit with the young prodigy of the Zhang Clan and his ability to trigger the Zhang Clan bloodline were more than enough proof that he was from the Zhang Clan.

Since that was the case, the only possible reason that he could think of for the Bloodline Basin revealing a ‘9’ was the disguise amulet that Luo Ruoxin had given him!

“Un. The amulet is made from condensing the zhenqi of cultivators possessing unique constitutions. Not only is it able to alter one’s appearance and aura, it’s even able to disguise one’s bloodline as well, such that even Ancient Sages would not be able to see through it! Besides, given that you have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, if you reach Ancient Sage as well, the bloodline that you pass down to your offspring will be largely similar to that of the Luo Clan. It’s no surprise that the test with the Bloodline Basin showed a ‘9’,” Luo Ruoxin replied calmly.

“This...” Zhang Xuan’s face twitched upon hearing those words.

In the end, the fault lay in the disguise amulet! If he had known that this would happen, he never would have used it in the first place!

Just that... he did not think that the amulet would be able to disguise one’s bloodline as well. Such an ability meant that one would be able to create an impeccable disguise in the truest sense!

Why had he not heard of such an artifact in the world before?

Seeing the many emotions flickering across Zhang Xuan’s face, Luo Ganzhen thought that the middle-aged man was intending to turn them down, so he quickly bowed his head deeper and urged, “Brother Tianya, please stop turning us down. The Luo Clan urgently needs a powerful clan head to lead us during this time of need!”

“It’s not that I’m unwilling to do so, but I’m really not suited to become the head of the Luo Clan!” Zhang Xuan released an exasperated sigh. “Give me some time. I need to consult my wife on this matter first!”

Really, Ruoxin should have told him in advance that the disguise amulet had such an effect! He never would have agreed to the bloodline test if he had known this would happen!

Since it was partially her fault, she could not blame him for using her as an excuse...

Hearing that the middle-aged man was going to consult his wife, Luo Ganzhen was visibly surprised for a moment before asking, “Oh? Is our sister-in-law here, too?”

“Indeed!” Zhang Xuan replied with a bright smile as he turned his gaze to the crowd and beckoned. “Lingxi, come here!”

“...”

Luo Ruoxin did not think that Zhang Xuan would really toss the ball to her. With everyone looking in her direction, she realized that she would not be able to continue watching the drama unfold as an idle spectator anymore. With a helpless sigh, she leaped onto the elevated platform as well.

“Clan Head Luo, I don’t mean any disrespect, but power and authority mean nothing to me and my wife. We have vowed to spend our life traveling freely around the world, so I fear that I can only turn down your goodwill!”

Holding Luo Ruoxin’s hand tightly, Zhang Xuan sent a telepathic message over and said, “Ruoxin, help me turn him down!”

“This...” Having her hand held in front of so many people, Luo Ruoxin’s face reddened slightly. She discreetly shot Zhang Xuan a irked look before turning her gaze to face Luo Ganzhen. “Since my husband has asked for my opinion, I’ll give my view on this matter then. Actually... I don’t think it’s an issue for Tianya to become your clan head!”

“Huh?” Shocked by what he had just heard, Zhang Xuan’s eyeballs nearly popped out.

This isn’t the script we agreed on!

Remember the script, the script! This isn’t the time for you to be improvising!

“However, he wishes to devote his time to cultivating, so he won’t have any time to manage the matters in the Luo Clan. Furthermore, his purpose for coming here is to pass down the method to comprehending the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing so that the Luo Clan can recover from the setback of being rejected by the Zhang Clan... As long as Clan Head Luo is

agreeable with this, I don't think it'll be much of an issue for Tianya to be your clan head!" Luo Ruoxin said with a nod.

Seeing a ray of hope, Luo Ganzhen immediately snatched at it. "Of course, of course! I have no problem with that!"

In the first place, they had already promised that they would deal with the miscellaneous affairs so that the middle-aged man would not be bogged down by administrative matters. In fact, it would be much better this way! If someone inexperienced in managing the Luo Clan forcefully attempted to interfere in its matters, it could cause a huge mess instead!

Furthermore, considering that the middle-aged man would be passing down the method to comprehending the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to them, what did they have to complain about?

No matter how they looked at it, this deal was beneficial to the Luo Clan!

They would have to be dimwits to turn it down!

Luo Ruoxin shot a glance at the dumbstruck Zhang Xuan and chuckled softly. She explained through zhenqi telepathic, "Considering the current circumstances of the Luo Clan, there's no way they'll let you go easily. Since that's the case, you might as well just accede to their request for the time being. Our identities are fake anyway, so if you wish to back out at any moment, you can revert back to your original identity. After being unable to find you for some time, they'll get to electing a new clan head..."

"Is that so? I guess it should be fine then!" Zhang Xuan nodded helplessly.

Luo Ruoxin was right. Given the current turn of events, he had no choice but to go along with Luo Ganzhen and the others.

But still... he had only gone there to compensate them for his earlier actions, but in a bizarre turn of events, he had ended up becoming their clan head as well.

This really was a huge problem.

The head of the Zhang Clan, the Luo Clan, and the Sanctum of Sages... And not to forget, there was also the Master Teacher Pavilion...

At this rate, he really might end up uniting all of the top powers on the Master Teacher Continent, becoming its supreme dictator!

Speaking of which, of the Three Premier Clans, there was still the Jiang Clan... Given the current rate at which things were developing, if he took a walk around the Jiang Clan, he might just end up becoming their clan head as well!

“The Luo Clan pays respect to Clan Head Luo Tianya!”

With Zhang Xuan agreeing to the matter, everything else swiftly flew into place.

It happened that all of the clan members were still around, and in order to host the engagement ceremony, most of the items that were required for an inauguration ceremony were in place, too. Thus, it did not take them long to complete the inauguration of their new clan head.

Meanwhile...

After leaving the Luo Clan, Nangong Yuanfeng and the others were heading in a certain direction with a gloomy air surrounding them.

“Teacher, we didn’t accomplish the mission required of us. What should we do?” one of the young men asked.

“What else can we do? We’ll just have to accept the punishment for our failure!” Nangong Yuanfeng shook his head. “For the time being, let’s find a place to recuperate. Once we have recovered from our depletion, we’ll head to the Zhang Clan. I don’t believe that the Zhang Clan will also have a monster as powerful as that Luo Tianya!”

“I guess that’s all we can do for now...” The young man nodded.

All of a sudden, the space around the group of five froze in place, rendering them unable to advance any further.

Narrowing their eyes in alarm, they quickly scanned their surroundings. Soon, they noticed a ravishing figure standing not too far away with them. A round sphere spun leisurely in front of her, emanating astounding prowess.

“Don’t you think it’s impolite for you to leave just like that after the fuss you have caused at our Luo Clan?” the young lady asked coldly.

# 1616 Luo Qiqi's Strength

Sensing an immense pressure coming from the rotating sphere in front of them, Nangong Yuanfeng asked warily, "Who are you?"

The young lady in front of them did not seem to possess too high a cultivation level, but the sphere rotating in front of her induced a blood-curdling sensation within him. He could feel that the sphere wielded absolute jurisdiction over space.

Typically speaking, the young lady should not have been able to control the sphere given the limitations of her cultivation, but for some reason, the sphere seemed to harmonize perfectly with the young lady, almost as if they formed one complete entity.

He instinctively knew better than to underestimate the young lady standing before him.

A thought came to mind, and Nangong Mo quickly exclaimed, "Teacher, she's likely the little princess of the Luo Clan!"

"Little princess? You are Luo Yuxin?" Nangong Yuanfeng clenched his fists tightly together.

He had heard that the Luo Clan had a highly talented little princess, but as he had not met her earlier, he had decided to simply shrug it off as a rumor. Who could have thought that the other party would actually come all the way out here to stop them? Could it be that the other party thought that she would be able to stop them with her individual prowess?

"Luo Yuxin? You would have been right, but from this day forth, my name is... Luo Qiqi!" the young lady replied.

All along, her real name had been Luo Yuxin. Luo Qiqi was simply another alias that she had gone by after she lost her memories while sealing her cultivation.

"No matter what your name is, the matter with the Luo Clan has already been resolved. We have already admitted defeat and compensated the Luo Clan with a Great Sage artifact. May

I know what you mean by halting us here?” Nangong Yuanfeng asked with a displeased frown.

“What do I mean?” Luo Qiqi’s eyebrows shot up. “Let’s stop wasting time and get it over and done with!”

“Get it over and done with?” Nangong Yuanfeng was taken aback.

“If you aren’t going to make a move, I’ll be going first!” Luo Qiqi harrumphed coldly.

The sphere in front of her hummed lightly, and all of a sudden, her body appeared before one of the young men.

Peng!

Fresh blood spurted out from the mouth of the assaulted young man, and he was struck into the ground. Before anyone could react, a person was already severely wounded, and from the looks of it, he would be bed bound for at least three to four months.

“Insolence!”

Not expecting the young lady to abruptly attack them, the faces of the other three young men turned utterly livid. They immediately rushed forward to subdue the young lady.

Immense might burst forth from their bodies as their powerful auras surged right into the high heavens. In an instant, their attacks had already locked onto the young lady.

Despite seeing his students executing their strongest moves simultaneously, Nangong Yuanfeng did not feel relieved at all. Instead, his eyes narrowed in horror as he bellowed anxiously, “Don’t do it!”

However, it was already too late.

Peng! Peng! Peng!

Three consecutive thuds, and the three young men were already struck down before they could even figure out what was going on. Just like the first young man, they plummeted heavily onto the ground, unconscious and heavily wounded. Judging from the extent of damage they had sustained, it



would be several months of treatment before they were able-bodied once more.

“You...” Nangong Yuanfeng was on the verge of exploding. With wintry killing intent in his eyes, he glared at the young lady and growled, “Just what in the world do you want?”

“Like I said, let’s not waste each other’s time. Make your move!” The young lady could not be bothered to explain herself to Nangong Yuanfeng.

With a cold look on her face, she raised her foot and began walking toward him.

Her movements were not too quick, reminiscent of a leisurely stroll in the park, but every step that she took mysteriously covered several hundred meters. Before Nangong Yuanfeng knew it, she was already standing right before him.

Realizing that the other party’s comprehension of spatial laws was actually far above his, Nangong Yuanfeng felt his hair standing on end. Knowing that he was in a very dangerous position, he quickly drove his strength to the limits, causing an overwhelming aura reminiscent to that of an indomitable dragon to pour forth.

As expected of an expert of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, the descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Rong! When fighting with Zhang Xuan, he had needed to lower his cultivation, so he had been unable to pull off most of his battle techniques. However, as he invoked his true strength at this very moment, it felt as if the entire dimension was trembling under his dominance. The light of the world was stolen away, plunging the surroundings into disquieting darkness.

Not only so, the air around them also seemed to have been sapped dry, creating a vacuum around him and the young lady.

“Seal!”

Without the slightest disturbance in her expression, Luo Qiqi raised her finger calmly and tapped the area ahead of her.

Huala!

Nangong Yuanfeng's raging might abruptly halted in place, and the palm strike that he was executing was also frozen in midair, unable to advance any further at all.

Following which, Luo Qiqi casually flicked her finger.

Peng!

Nangong Yuanfeng was immediately sent flying into the distance. Crimson blood spewed ceaselessly from his mouth, and the profuse loss of blood caused his face to turn frighteningly pale. It was apparent at a glance that he had already sustained severe injuries. They might not have been as severe as his students', but nevertheless, it would already take him several days to make a full recovery.

With fear reflected in his eyes, Nangong Yuanfeng watched the young lady slowly walking away into the distance with bated breath. Her ravishing looks and fluttering robe would have made her seem like a deity descending from the heavens, but after witnessing her frightening strength, Nangong Yuanfeng was unable to think of her as anything more than a demoness.

At some point in time, the young lady suddenly halted.

Without turning her head around, she said, "The Luo Clan might not be a match for the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, but it isn't a power to be trifled with either! If you ever wish to challenge the Luo Clan again, know that you will be making an enemy out of me as well!"

After saying her piece, she ripped a hole in space and stepped into the dimension rift, vanishing from the spot.

"What horrifying strength she wields! How can there be someone as powerful as that on the Master Teacher Continent?" It was only after seeing the young lady's silhouette vanish from sight that Nangong Yuanfeng dared to catch his breath fearfully.

He quickly rushed to the ground to feed his students a pill each.

It was true that the Master Teacher Pavilion of the Master Teacher Continent had been left behind by Kong shi, but

ultimately, the heritage that they had inherited from Kong shi was still inferior to that of the Hundred Schools of Philosopher, which consisted of Kong shi's direct disciples.

In a sense, this was similar to the relationship between Zhang Xuan and his direct disciples in contrast to the Xuanxuan Faction.

With the opening of the Temple of Confucius due, their Hundred Schools of Philosophers had decided to make a return to the Master Teacher Continent in a bid to claim the treasures within. They thought that they should have been able to tower over the major powers of the Master Teacher Continent and force them to submit to them easily with their superior prowess, but who could have thought that even a single Luo Clan would wield such frightening prowess!

More importantly... the young lady did not seem to be in her twenties yet!

To possess such strength despite not having reached her twenties... Her talents could be said to be on par with those monsters of the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism!

"Luo Tianya and Luo Qiqi... The Master Teacher Continent really isn't as weak as I thought..." Nangong Yuanfeng remarked grimly.

...

"Teacher, what do we do from now on?"

Roughly half a day later, one of Nangong Yuanfeng's students finally recovered enough energy to be able to speak. "Are we still heading to the Zhang Clan?"

"We have to make a trip there eventually! However, given our current state, we won't be able to do it on our own!" Nangong Yuanfeng frowned.

It would take quite some time for them to recover to their peak, and even so, there was no guarantee that they would be able to get the Celestial Amulet of Legacy from the Zhang Clan. After all, they could not simply ignore the rumors that they had heard about the young prodigy of the Zhang Clan

anymore, especially after experiencing the prowess of the little princess of the Luo Clan personally.

Rumors might just be rumors, but if the rumors concerning the incredible strength wielded by the little princess were true, the young prodigy was also unlikely to be a weakling!

“Then, Teacher, what do you intend to do?” the young man asked in confusion.

“Send a message to Zhenqing laoshi[1]. Hasn’t he been wanting to compete with me? Let him make a move first, and we’ll spectate by the side. If we can uncover the trump cards that the Zhang Clan wields, our chances of success will be higher! We have already failed to acquire the Luo Clan’s Celestial Amulet of Legacy, so we cannot afford to fail with the Zhang Clan as well!” Nangong Yuanfeng harrumphed coldly.

Hearing those words, the young man quickly nodded and took out his Communication Jade Token. “Very well, I’ll send a message over to Zhenqing laoshi right now...”

The ‘Zhenqing laoshi’ whom his teacher was referring to went by the full name of Tantai Zhenqing, a descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yu[2].

“Un. You should quickly heal and condition your body before Zhenqing and the others get here. Otherwise, they will just mock us once more,” Nangong Yuanfeng said before closing his eyes to focus on assimilating the medicinal energy to heal his injuries.

His student also quickly turned his attention to recuperating.

They had thought that they would be able to easily force the Luo Clan to do their bidding, but their expectations had fallen flat.

The Master Teacher Continent had really changed a lot.

Powerful dragons and ferocious tigers were hidden all around, and they could possibly be destroyed if they let their guard down!

[1] Laoshi means teacher.

[2] Ancient Sage Zi Yu, also known as Tantai Mieming, is one of the major disciples of Confucius, credited for spreading Confucian thoughts within several states. He was known to be an exceedingly ugly but principled and honorable man, respected and honored by many rulers in his era and beyond.

# 1617 Guiding Luo Xuanqing

Traveling through the spatial rift, Luo Qiqi returned to her room in the Luo Clan.

She had thought that the heavens had answered her prayers, and she had waited in anticipation for the blissful life that the world had promised her to arrive. No one could have expected such an outcome.

Yet, by some bizarre working of fate, the deep fluctuations in her emotions ended up becoming the catalyst that further assimilated the Dimension Silencer together with her, granting her greater control over it.

It was at that moment that the crowd from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers arrived. She had been in the midst of comprehending the powers of the Dimension Silencer, so she could not afford to head to the square as well. However, by the time she was done, the problem was already settled. Thus, she tore a spatial rift open to catch up with those aggressors so as to teach them a lesson.

No matter what, she was still a member of the Luo Clan. She could not do nothing when it had been oppressed by some other power.

Watching the inauguration ceremony outside through her Spiritual Perception, a slight relieved smile emerged on her face as she thought, That Luo Tianya is indeed a genius. Despite not possessing the Dimension Silencer, he still managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing... With him around, the Luo Clan will be in safe hands. Whether I am around or not won't make much of a difference anymore...

Despite being a victim in the earlier incident as well, she knew that she had to take some responsibility for the huge setback that the Luo Clan had suffered. She would have to shoulder the burden of propping up the Luo Clan, at least until it was

back on track... But at a time like this, Luo Tianya suddenly appeared, and there was no longer anything to worry about.

“Since that’s the case, I want to pursue the happiness that belongs to me!” Luo Qiqi muttered with resolve as she stood up.

All along, she had lived her life passively. She had simply walked down the pathway that those around her guided her onto, and even when it came to a matter as important as her marriage, she had never tried to fight back or protest at all.

But right now, she was already exhausted from living such a life. She did not want to continue living her life so passively, trudging down a road that others had paved out for her. She wanted to pursue what she wanted!

So what if Luo laoshi was around?

She, Luo Qiqi, would not lose out to anyone. Since Luo laoshi was able to win Zhang shi’s heart, she was confident that she would be able to do the same!

As soon as she made this decision, the pressure that had squeezed her heart so tightly that it suffocated her suddenly vanished. An unprecedented feeling of relaxation coursed through her body.

Recalling the words that her teacher had said to her when he left, a slight smile appeared on the young lady’s face. She walked out of the room and dashed into the air, swiftly vanishing from sight.

...

“This is the method to comprehending the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. You should quickly go through it right now. If there’s any portion you don’t understand, feel free to ask me. I’ll help you decipher it!”

In a spacious room, Zhang Xuan tapped his finger and imprinted the cultivation technique manual of the simplified Heaven’s Path Spatial Sealing Art into Luo Xuanqing’s mind.

Since the reason he had gone to the Luo Clan was to compensate them, he would help them wherever possible.

However, it was unfortunate that no one except for him was able to cultivate the true Heaven's Path Spatial Sealing Art, so he could only alter it a little before passing it on to the Luo Clan. As for how much of it Luo Xuanqing would be able to make sense of, that would depend on his own aptitude and capability.

Going through the new knowledge that had just been transferred over to his mind, Luo Xuanqing could not help but tremble in agitation, and he quickly kneeled onto the floor and exclaimed, "Thank you, Teacher!"

As one of the core members of the Luo Clan, he had accessed the full heritage of the Luo Clan's spatial arts, but with just a quick scan through Luo Tianya's heritage, it became apparent to him that the Luo Clan's spatial art heritage was incredibly shallow.

It was like a small pond before a hulking ocean.

To pass down such a formidable cultivation technique without any reservation... This was a debt that Luo Xuanqing might never be able to repay in his entire life!

"Like I have said, I'm not your teacher..." Zhang Xuan quickly rushed forward to help Luo Xuanqing up.

Somehow, it just felt wrong to him to have Luo Xuanqing kneeling before him.

"The cultivation technique that you have just imparted to me is of unimaginable value. Teacher, I ask of you to accept me as your student! Otherwise, I fear to practice such a formidable technique!" Luo Xuanqing exclaimed.

"This... Alright then!" Seeing that Luo Xuanqing was insistent on the matter, Zhang Xuan could only nod in agreement.

Lineage was extremely important in the Master Teacher Continent. There were some formalities that could not be disregarded, especially when a heritage was at stake.

Seeing that he had received the middle-aged man's agreement, Luo Xuanqing hurriedly kneeled down once more, and just as



he was about to kowtow, he suddenly heard a feminine voice by the doorway.

“After acknowledging Tianya as your teacher, you mustn’t use the knowledge you have learned against him. Otherwise, you’ll suffer a rebound in your cultivation. You should be aware of that, right?”

“Of course!” Luo Xuanqing nodded firmly.

While lineages were highly regarded on the Master Teacher Continent, there was still no lack of incidents where students betrayed their teachers. In order to ensure that such an incident would not happen among the master teachers, the Master Teacher Pavilion implemented the rule that if a master teacher used the knowledge that they had learned from their teacher against their teacher, they would suffer a rebound in their cultivation.

In order to enforce this rule, those who became master teachers would have to make such a vow under the supervision of the Master Teacher Pavilion.

“It’s good that you understand that!” Luo Ruoxin nodded.

“Rest assured. I, Luo Xuanqing, will never make a move against my teacher! If I ever do, before the rebound in my cultivation even happens, I’ll first cripple myself in repentance of my deed!” Luo Xuanqing declared majestically.

Luo Tianya was not only his elder, he was also someone who had unreservedly imparted the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to him. He would really have to be a beast to attempt to harm someone who had helped him so much!

After saying those words, Luo Xuanqing stood up once more.

He still could not be considered Luo Tianya’s direct disciple yet, but connected by a common heritage, he could already be considered half a student.

Weng!

The moment that Luo Xuanqing stood up, the Library of Heaven’s Path in Zhang Xuan’s mind jolted. A golden page had materialized in the Book of Heaven’s Path.

Perhaps it might have just been his imagination, but it seemed like it was getting harder and harder to trigger the formation of a golden page. It had not appeared for such a long time that he had nearly forgotten about it.

Luo Xuanqing spent the next few hours trying to comprehend the simplified Heaven's Path Spatial Sealing Art. For portions that he was unable to comprehend, he wasted no time clarifying them with Luo Tianya. It was only when the sky lit up once more that he finally internalized everything.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Zhang Xuan said, "It's good that you have managed to understand everything. Don't rush things and cultivate carefully. You should be able to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing within a single month!"

The simplified Heaven's Path techniques were indeed not as easy and fast to cultivate as compared to the perfect versions. Nevertheless, with Zhang Xuan's personal guidance, Luo Xuanqing should be able to avoid going on meaningless detours as a result of the few remaining flaws, so achieving a breakthrough within a month should still be possible.

"Thank you, Teacher!" Luo Xuanqing clasped his fist.

He began cultivating according to the method that his teacher had just imparted to him, and to his delight, his mastery of spatial arts advanced at a rate that he would have never thought possible before.

A thought came to his mind then, and he could not resist asking, "Teacher, may I know how long it took you to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing?"

It was one thing for his teacher to be able to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, but his teacher had actually managed to create such a formidable cultivation technique as well.

Countless highly talented predecessors of the Luo Clan had devoted their lives to searching for a way to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, and Luo Xuanqing knew that even his talent could only be considered average compared to them. Yet, his teacher's cultivation technique actually allowed

him to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing within just a single month.

Given so, just how masterful was his teacher's command over space?

And how long did it take his teacher to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing?

"Me?" Zhang Xuan was caught off guard by that abrupt question. "Let me think... I guess it should be roughly..."

At this point, Zhang Xuan paused for several seconds. "... this long. Yeah, about this long."

Luo Xuanqing was visibly confused for a moment before he understood what his teacher was getting at. In that instant, he could almost see his internal world collapsing. "Teacher, you mean to say that... you only took a few seconds?"

"I think so. I can't remember exactly how long I took; it might have been a few seconds longer too. I couldn't really feel the flow of time while I was cultivating..." Zhang Xuan stroked his lower jaw contemplatively.

Back then, the Dimensional Sand had impeded their way forward, so his attention had been fully channeled into comprehending the 4-dan Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel in order to freeze the Dimensional Sand in place.

Looking back, it did not seem like he had taken too long. Likely a few seconds at most.

"I..." Luo Xuanqing could not help but feel deep despair at the huge gap between him and his teacher.

He had thought that it was already a considerable feat for him to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing within a month's hard work, but his teacher's inhuman feat had crushed all feeling of glee and satisfaction within him. To comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing within a few seconds...

The heck, are you still a human?

Seeing the look on Luo Xuanqing's face, Zhang Xuan shook his head helplessly. "Hurry up and cultivate! You should try to achieve a breakthrough as soon as possible!"

I'm just stating the truth! Surely you need not be so traumatized by the truth, right?

“Yes, Teacher!” Knowing that his teacher was a figure whom he could not hope to match, Luo Xuanqing quietly reassured himself that he was still a sufficiently talented genius and took his leave.

Shortly after Luo Xuanqing left, Zhang Xuan went over to the main hall. With a bright gleam in his eyes, he asked Luo Ganzhen, “Are there any books in the clan detailing insights and methods to achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage? May I know where they are?”

It had been nearly a day since he had made a breakthrough to Saint 9-dan pinnacle, so it was about time for him to make another breakthrough!

# 1618 The Luo Clan's Treasure Vault

Due to the differing cultivation techniques that one cultivated, there was no specific method to achieving a breakthrough from Saint 9-dan to Great Sage. As such, Zhang Xuan could only refer to the insights of the predecessors to find a path that was suited for him.

“Insights and methods to achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage? We’ve had countless Great Sage predecessors in our Luo Clan, so we do have a substantial number of such books. However, these books can only serve as a reference. You mustn’t attempt to practice them directly...” Luo Ganzhen warned.

The insights of the predecessors could serve as a source of inspiration, but as everyone had different constitutions and encounters, what they needed to achieve a breakthrough would be significantly different as well. If one were to attempt to blindly follow the path of another, chances were that not only would one be able to achieve a breakthrough, one’s cultivation might even go berserk.

“Thank you for your warning, I’ll take note of it,” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

Hearing the middle-aged man’s response, Luo Ganzhen quickly replied with a smile. “You are the most talented cultivator in the many millenniums of our Luo Clan’s history, so it goes without saying that you’ll be aware of something like this even without me pointing it out. Please follow me!”

Considering how the other party had managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, his talent was indubitably great. Luo Ganzhen would only be viewed in annoyance if he kept repeating the same thing again and again.

Knowing that Zhang Xuan was going to read books, Luo Ruoxin nodded. “Go on. I’ll wait here for you.”

“Un, I’ll be right back!” Zhang Xuan said before leaving with Luo Ganzhen. The both of them soon arrived in a library.

“The bottom three levels of the library are open to the inner members of our clan, and everything beyond that are only accessible to the elders... The insights to achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage are all contained at the higher levels!” Luo Ganzhen explained as he brought Zhang Xuan up to the fourth level.

Zhang Xuan swiftly looked through the massive collection books around him and noted that they were mostly notebooks. Most of the notebooks contained messy scribbles, and a couple of them had a lot of blurred words or missing pages, an inevitable result from having been stored for too long.

“These books don’t have particular systems or an order to them, and they are only intended for reference purposes. Please feel free to look through them, and if there’s anything you require, feel free to call me!” Luo Ganzhen said.

“Thank you for your help! I’ll just casually take a look around. I’ll call you if I encounter any problems!” After saying those words, Zhang Xuan quickly began browsing through the shelves of books.

Seeing this, Luo Ganzhen quietly took his leave.

Shortly after Luo Ganzhen left, Zhang Xuan began swiftly strolling through the shelves of books while echoing ‘Flaws’ in his head. It took him roughly ten minutes to collect everything on the level into the Library of Heaven’s Path.

Compile! Zhang Xuan willed, and a new book materialized in his head.

He quickly flipped the materialized book open and browsed through it.

While these insights didn’t form a complete Heaven’s Path Divine Art, they did give me a deeper understanding as to what a breakthrough to Great Sage signifies!

Introspective Convalescence is basically the ability to immerse one’s Spiritual Perception into every cell and meridian within one’s body. This allows a cultivator to resolve their internal

flaws and induce a physical metamorphosis to surpass the limits of Saint 9-dan. At the same time, the correction of one's physical constitution would also enhance one's longevity, allowing one to live for a longer period of time.

Upon reaching Saint 2-dan Spiritual Perception realm, a cultivator would unlock their Incipient Eye, thus allowing them to inspect their own physical state through their Spiritual Perception. To achieve a breakthrough to the Introspective Convalescence realm, a cultivator would have to further refine their Spiritual Perception so as to make it fine enough to seep even within cells.

As simple as it sounded, the effects it brought about were tremendous. If a cultivator's cells were to be damaged or breached by some kind of bacteria or virus, they would inspect the root of the problem through their Spiritual Perception and channel their zhenqi to resolve the affliction. Through this, they would be able to ensure that their physical body was always at its peak state, thus allowing them to exert their full prowess at any moment.

While ordinary Saint cultivators would be able to live up to roughly a thousand years, their physical functions would start deteriorating beyond their eight hundreds, thus causing their fighting prowess to decline. At the same time, the deteriorating physical functions would also make it more and more difficult to achieve a breakthrough.

'Push yourself to the limits while you are still young' was a phrase that was commonly said among master teachers.

Once the physical functions started to deteriorate, it would be nigh impossible to achieve a breakthrough anymore no matter how hard one tried. This was also why there was such a thing as the 'golden age for cultivation'.

However, such a limitation was removed for those who had reached the Introspective Convalescence realm.

The ability to immerse one's Spiritual Perception into cells allowed one to repair and replace wear and tear in the cells, ensuring that one's body remained in its peak condition at all

times... In other words, one would always be able to exert the fighting prowess one wielded in one's prime!

Furthermore, even when one's lifespan was reaching the end, if the impetus for a breakthrough came, one would still be able to advance one's cultivation.

For this reason, the older a Great Sage cultivator was, the more formidable they were likely to be. This was in contrast to Saint cultivators, where older cultivators were much weaker and more prone to injuries than younger cultivators.

Having cultivated the flawless Heaven's Path Divine Art, my zhenqi is much purer than that of other cultivators. This makes it much more difficult for me to make a breakthrough to Great Sage...

Going through the insights that he had collected, Zhang Xuan shook his head helplessly.

It was indeed not easy to make a breakthrough to Great Sage. Even after reading so many books, he was still unable to find the most suitable way for him to do so.

Forget it, I'll just collect all of the books in here first. If it still doesn't work out, I'll just have to collect the books in the Zhang Clan too. The Zhang Clan should have a compilation of the insights of predecessors too...

Knowing that it was impossible to rush this matter, Zhang Xuan calmed his anxiety and headed to the upper floors.

Given that the books on this level detailed the insights on making a breakthrough to Great Sage, it stood to reason that the books on the higher levels corresponded to that of the other realms of Great Sage.

It did not take long for Zhang Xuan to collect all of the books in his path and reach the top level of the library.

When he finally walked out of the library, he noted that Luo Ganzhen was still waiting around the vicinity. Thus, he walked up to Luo Ganzhen and smiled. "I think I'll need some pinnacle spirit stones and items containing spiritual energy in order to make a breakthrough. May I know if there's anywhere in the clan that I can take such resources from? Also, is there a



limit to how much of such resources I could take as the clan head?”

After reading through the books, Zhang Xuan realized that he needed quite a number of spirit stones in order to make a breakthrough.

Sword Saint Xing had given him a clear glimpse into just how loaded the Premier Sage Clans were. Considering that the Luo Clan was a Premier Sage Clan as well, a couple of pinnacle spirit stones and items containing spiritual energy would definitely not be much to them at all.

Thus, there was no need for him to stand on ceremony for this matter either.

“There’s a quota to how much resources the clan head is entitled to. However, you have just done the clan a great service, so the elders have unanimously decided to give you free access to the resources of the Luo Clan!” Luo Ganzhen said as he led the way forward.

Soon, they arrived at a treasure vault.

“This is the vault where we store the resources and treasures of the Luo Clan. The rewards that we offer to meritorious clan members also come from here. Clan head, feel free to look around the vault. If there’s anything that interests you, you can just take it away with you. There’s no need to hold back at all!”

“Thank you!” Not expecting such a privilege to come from being the head of the Luo Clan, Zhang Xuan’s eyes glowed in excitement.

If he could take anything in the vault away with him... would he not be loaded if he stored everything in here into his storage ring?

If so, he would not have to worry about acquiring resources for his cultivation anymore!

But of course, those were just casual thoughts flashing across his mind. He had no intention of realizing them at all. His principles would not allow him to do something like that.

He was a master teacher, not a burglar! Even if he had not been there to compensate them, it would be despicable for him to take everything in there. In the first place, he did not have a grudge with the Luo Clan, and such an action would be a huge blow to even the wealthy Luo Clan!

There were many shelves placed around the treasure vault, and all kinds of weapons, gemstones, and spirit stones were placed on them.

After gaining possession of the Dragonbone Divine Spear, not even Saint pinnacle artifacts could catch his eye at all. Similarly, pinnacle spirit stones were not of much use to him given his current cultivation realm, so he did not dawdle too much around them.

“Hmm? What’s this?”

Walking in between the shelves, Zhang Xuan suddenly halted in his tracks, and his eyebrows shot up in surprise.

On a shelf not too far away, there was a sealed jade box that emanated spiritual energy so concentrated that it actually moved his heart.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was looking at the sealed jade box, Luo Ganzhen explained, “It’s an extraterrestrial meteorite. Our predecessors obtained it by some chance. I’m not too sure what it is, but over the years, no one has been able to find any way to refine it or extract the spiritual energy within it, so it ended up being stored in our treasure vault...”

“Extraterrestrial meteorite?” Zhang Xuan repeated in surprise.

He walked up to the sealed jade box and slowly pried it open.

Before Zhang Xuan could even see what was within the box, something within his body was already trembling in agitation, and a voice sounded in his mind.

“Give it to me! I want that hard thing over there...”

“Who is it?” Zhang Xuan exclaimed telepathically in alarm.

# 1619 The Speaking Pig Trotter

There were a few things within his body that could communicate with him telepathically.

That fool of a clone of his, who always loved to fight for the limelight, was kept in the Myriad Anthive Nest. Vicious had not spoken much ever since the previous time they found his upper body in the Sanctum of Sages. Besides, the latter would not even dare to release his Spiritual Perception without his permission, so there was no way he could have been aware of what was happening outside here.

As for Little Amulet, he had kept it in his storage ring, so the latter would not be able to communicate telepathically with him at all. The voice clearly did not belong to that of the Dragonbone Divine Spear either.

However, he had heard that voice loud and clear. It was reminiscent of that of a young child, crisp and sharp. It did not seem to be a product of his imagination...

Just what could have slipped into his body without his noticing?

Zhang Xuan quickly scanned his body, but to his shock, he could not find anything at all. Unable to take it any longer, he harrumphed inwardly. "Who in the world is it? Stop fooling around!"

"What do you mean by fooling around? I'm Little Gourd!" the voice replied anxiously.

"Little Gourd?" Zhang Xuan frowned in confusion.

"Uh huh! Who else can it be other than me?"

As those words sounded, a certain gourd lying lazily in Zhang Xuan's dantian shook its bottom slightly.

"The Dongxu Gourd?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He was aware that the Dongxu Gourd was within the body, and of course, he knew that it was a sentient being. How else could it possibly have been so annoying? But... the Dongxu Gourd was actually able to speak?

Not to mention, to call itself Little Gourd...

Don't you find it cringy to address yourself in such a cutesy manner?

"That's right! After absorbing a lot of lightning energy, I have finally fully awakened! Quick, give me that extraterrestrial meteorite in front of you! I want to eat it!" The Dongxu Gourd continued shaking its bottom gleefully.

"You want to eat it?" Zhang Xuan frowned. "Do you know what this meteorite is?"

He had guessed that the Dongxu Gourd was not as simple as it looked, but he did not think that it would actually be capable of speech. Furthermore, given how anxiously it wanted the meteorite... could it possibly have guessed what it was?

"I don't know what it is, but I know that it's edible!" the Dongxu Gourd replied.

"Edible?" Zhang Xuan turned his gaze onto the extraterrestrial rock.

He placed his finger on it, and the Library of Heaven's Path jolted. A new book was compiled. He flipped it open and browsed through it, "Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal, an object that has slipped through the cracks of space-time. It can be used to forge artifacts. Uncertain value."

Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal? Uncertain value? What does that mean? Zhang Xuan frowned.

This was the first time that the Library of Heaven's Path had given such a vague appraisal of an artifact.

In the past, as long as the item was touched, he would be able to uncover the full history of the object. Yet, for this extraterrestrial meteorite, the description in the compiled book was strangely vague.

Uncertain value... Was this extraterrestrial meteorite something valuable or not?

It seems like the Library of Heaven's Path isn't reliable anymore... Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed.

Ever since he reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle and came into contact with the top experts of the Master Teacher Continent, the Library of Heaven's Path had not been as trusty a companion as before.

To be unable to discern the history of a single rock... It seemed like he could not blindly rely on it anymore.

I really should find some time to pay a visit to the Seer Guilds... Zhang Xuan sighed deeply as he reaffirmed his decision once more.

He considered whether he should pass the Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal over to the Dongxu Gourd, but he eventually decided against it.

"You said that you are a Dongxu Gourd, but I don't believe that Dongxu Gourds are capable of ingesting something like this. Who in the world are you?" Zhang Xuan demanded an answer.

If the other party was just an ordinary Dongxu Gourd, he could have turned a blind eye to it staying in his dantian. However, with the realization that it was gaining greater sentience with time, to the point that it was even capable of speech, he could not help but be concerned about having it stay in his dantian.

Should the other party intend to harm him, he would really be in deep trouble.

"What else can I be other than a Dongxu Gourd? Rest assured, I acknowledged you as my master before entering your dantian, so there's no way I can hurt you. I still have a bright future ahead of me! There are countless damsel gourds out there for me to court, so I would really have to be a fool to seek my death!" the Dongxu Gourd replied haughtily.

Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before shaking his head. "That won't do. I still don't feel safe with you being in my

body. Why don't we make a trade? I'll give you the Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal, but in exchange, you'll have to leave my dantian and enter my storage ring!"

"I'll fall into a deep sleep once more after ingesting the Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal, so you don't have to worry about me bothering you..." the Dongxu Gourd replied lazily.

It seemed to be content with the accommodation that it had at the moment, and it was reluctant to leave.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan frowned.

He hated to admit it, but he was completely helpless before the Dongxu Gourd. The Dongxu Gourd had entered his dantian without his permission, and he had tried time and time again to drive it out. He had tried once more not too long ago, after his cultivation reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle, but it was to no avail.

As long as the Dongxu Gourd remained in his dantian, it would be equivalent to having a ticking time bomb in his body. While the other party claimed that it would not wreak havoc, who could be certain that it would hold its end of the promise?

Ultimately, it would still be best to get it out first!

"This matter is not open to discussion. You can either hibernate in my storage ring or never mention the matter concerning the Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal again!" Zhang Xuan said as he shut the lid on the jade box.

"Tsk! Fine then..." In the face of food, the Dongxu Gourd had no choice but to cave in.

It shuddered a little, and before Zhang Xuan knew it, it had already vanished from his dantian and appeared in his storage ring.

"This..." Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in shock.

His dantian was within his body, a space that should have been under his control. On the other hand, his storage ring was a separate folded space, which should have been impossible for another being to access without his permission as its master.

Yet, the Dongxu Gourd was actually able to travel over without any impediment.

This effectively meant that the Dongxu Gourd was above him in terms of spatial manipulation!

Just what in the world was the Dongxu Gourd?

Humph, it doesn't matter what it is! As long as it dares wreak havoc, I'll throw the Book of Heaven's Path on it! Zhang Xuan harrumphed coldly.

Fortunately, after Luo Xuanqing learned the simplified Heaven's Path Spatial Sealing Art from him, his gratitude had triggered the formation of a new golden page. Considering how the tool could subdue even Vicious easily, it should not be too difficult for it to curb a mere gourd.

As long as he slammed the Book of Heaven's Path down on the Dongxu Gourd, that darned fellow would be smashed into bits!

With a trump card to rely on, Zhang Xuan suddenly felt more secure. In any case, he had managed to get the Dongxu Gourd out of his dantian for the time being, so there should be nothing to worry about at the moment.

Thus, he turned his gaze to Luo Ganzhen and smiled. "May I take this extraterrestrial meteorite away?"

"Our predecessors have studied the meteorite many times but were still unable to figure out what it is. Feel free to take it if you want it!" Luo Ganzhen nodded.

"Thank you." Hearing that he could take it, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

With a thought, he sent the jade box into his storage ring.

Upon seeing the jade box in the storage ring, the Dongxu Gourd immediately rushed toward it excitedly. Its body distorted a little, and the Extraterrestrial Fallen Crystal in the box abruptly vanished without a trace. It was almost as if some mysterious force had swallowed it whole.

Following which, just like what it had said, the Dongxu Gourd fell into a deep slumber, not moving at all.

Seeing that the fellow had toned down for the time being, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. A moment later, he could not help but clutch his head in distress. “A speaking gourd...”

Thinking about it, he sure had a lot of weird things with him... A talking amulet, a talking gourd, a talking spear... It was fortunate that those pig trotters that he had in his storage ring could not speak—if he had speaking pig trotters too, he might just die of shock.

Ignoring the issue with the Dongxu Gourd, Zhang Xuan continued looking through the treasure vault. Very soon, he spotted some decent resources.

There were concentrated spiritual essences, precious pills, and unique herbs.

He really had to say that the Luo Clan was crazy rich. The number of treasures that they had in their treasure vault would leave any cultivator’s mouth agape.

After taking a couple of items that would help in his breakthrough, Zhang Xuan finally left the treasure vault.

No matter what, these items had slowly been accumulated through the hard work of the predecessors of the Luo Clan. It would simply be too despicable of him to steal all of them.

That being said, he did loot quite a few good things.

To make an analogy, if the item that he had taken from Sword Saint Xing back then was referred to as a single unit, the items that he had taken were worth at least ten units. If not for the fact that he was currently the head of the Luo Clan, Luo Ganzhen would have surely thrown him out of the Ethereal Shrouding City by now.

Stowing the items away carefully, Zhang Xuan told Luo Ganzhen, “I am intending to head out to find an impetus to make a breakthrough. If anything happens to the Luo Clan, send me a message and I’ll rush right back!”



# 1620 Kick Zhang Xuan's Ass!

“You are going to head out? Cough cough!” Luo Ganzhen nearly choked on his saliva.

It was in view of the fact that Luo Tianya was from the side family and didn't feel a sense of belonging toward the Luo Clan that he allowed the other party to take so many resources at once. His motive was simple—he wanted to bring Luo Tianya onboard the massive ship known as the Luo Clan and convince him to willingly serve as its captain.

Yet, before that fellow even stepped out of the doors of the treasure vault, he was already thinking of slipping away...

You callous man! Can you be any more heartless than that?

I know that you don't have much regard for the clan head position, but you can't just dump it aside like that as if it's dirt!

“Clan head, please hold on for a moment. The elders of the Luo Clan has just pushed a motion forward, and they are waiting for your call on the matter... Once this matter is resolved, you can head anywhere you want to!” Sighing helplessly, Luo Ganzhen said.

“What matter is it?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Clan head, I believe that you should have heard about how the Zhang Clan has publicly rejected us during the engagement ceremony!” Luo Ganzhen said.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

As the primary culprit of the incident, how could he possibly have not heard of it?

“The Luo Clan is the second largest Sage Clan on the Master Teacher Continent, and it has always been held in high esteem. Yet, it was humiliated before all of the powerhouses on the Master Teacher Continent, causing its reputation to be pulled

through the gutter! Given that we are weaker than the Zhang Clan, we have resigned ourselves to the fact already... But clan head, you are someone who can defeat even the experts of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers..." At this point, Luo Ganzhen's eyes lit up.

The middle-aged man before him had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, granting him invincible prowess within his power class. Without a doubt, the latter's talents had reached a height far beyond his imagination.

"So... our elders have proposed to have you return the humiliation we have suffered back to the Zhang Clan! We hope to re-establish the dignity of our Luo Clan and let the world know that we aren't to be humiliated!"

"You want to exact vengeance against the Zhang Clan?" Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up in horror.

"Indeed! The head of the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan, is at Saint 9-dan primary stage, and he has only made a breakthrough three days ago. No matter how talented he may be, three days will only be enough for him to reinforce his cultivation. There's no way he could come close to matching you! Clan head, given how you were able to subdue even Nangong Yuanfeng, surely teaching that Zhang Xuan a lesson should be a walk in the park to you!"

The more Luo Ganzhen spoke, the more agitated he became.

"The intention of the elders is to have you challenge the head of the Zhang Clan and teach him a lesson he will never forget. Make him crawl around the ground searching for his fallen teeth! Through cleansing the humiliation that we have suffered, we'll rebuild the reputation of the Luo Clan and rise up once more!"

In the end, the reason why the Zhang Clan dared to be so arrogant was because Zhang Xuan was the head of the Sanctum of Sages, Yang Shi's senior, and the teacher of leaders of many powers.

But in a fair duel, all those titles he had wouldn't do him any good! As long as Clan Head Luo Tianya displayed his

dominance over Zhang Xuan, no one would dare to laugh at their Luo Clan anymore!

Since the Zhang Clan dared to trample on their dignity to establish their authority, then they couldn't blame them for doing the same as well!

"I..." Zhang Xuan clutched his hair maniacally.

What the hell is with this turn of events?

Indeed, it is understandable that the Luo Clan would want to cleanse their reputation, especially after they have found themselves a powerful clan head... but the problem is that the darned Zhang Xuan you have been cursing all this while is me!

Are you seriously asking me to beat myself up?

Just what did I do that gave you the impression that I have an interest in self-harm? Do I look like a masochist to you?

"Once this matter is settled, we'll be able to restore the lost confidence in the Luo Clan and even bring our reputation up to a whole new level... Clan head, I ask of you not to turn this matter down. Once this matter is done, you can go wherever you want to, and we won't question your decision..." Luo Ganzhen quickly added.

The reason why the Luo Clan wielded so much influence on the Master Teacher Continent was partly because there were many other powers subordinated to it. However, if those powers were to lose confidence in the Luo Clan, they could very well tear away from the Luo Clan and follow other powers such as the Zhang Clan instead.

As such, it was of utmost importance for them to restore their reputation as soon as possible, or else there could be disastrous consequences.

And just establishing a new clan head wouldn't be enough to restore confidence in the Luo Clan. In the end, the most effective way to convince the other powers that the Luo Clan hadn't grown weak was to return the humiliation to the Zhang Clan and give that damned Zhang Xuan a hell of a pummeling!

Of course, the earlier conflict with Nangong Yuanfeng did showcase the prowess of the Luo Clan, but the problem was that it might not necessarily be a good decision to besmirch the reputation of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers.

While they might have driven away Nangong Yuanfeng, Luo Ganzhen wasn't so arrogant as to think that the Luo Clan would actually be able to withstand the wrath of the entire Hundred Schools of Philosophers. At least for the time being, it wouldn't be a good decision to fall out with them.

"I need some time to think over the matter..." Zhang Xuan replied with a stifled expression on his face.

Why does everyone want to step down on me so much... Does my face look like a good stepping stone?

It's not as if I had intentionally rejected the engagement to humiliate the Luo Clan...

"There's no need to think about this matter. Clan head, we have absolute trust in your strength!" Luo Ganzhen continued heaping pressure on Zhang Xuan as he led the latter out of the treasure vault. "The elders are already waiting in the main hall. Once you are done preparing, we can set off right away!"

"Set off right away?" Zhang Xuan nearly fainted on the spot upon hearing those words.

"Indeed, vengeance is a dish best served piping hot! In the tens of thousands of years since the founding of our Luo Clan, when have we suffered such humiliation before? Of course, we can't and won't go around spreading the battle between the clan head and the Hundred Schools of Philosophers due to the severe implications of the matter, but given the Zhang Clan's intelligence network, it's only a matter of time before they find out about it. If Zhang Xuan were to flee in fear after hearing about it, we would no longer be able to exact our vengeance anymore!" Luo Ganzhen exclaimed in agitation before clashing his fist toward Zhang Xuan.

"Clan head, we implore you to accede to our request this once. This is for the members of our Luo Clan and its tens of thousands of years of heritage!"

“ ... ”

Zhang Xuan had never wanted to cry as much as he did in this very moment.

All of you are so preoccupied with thinking about the interests of the Luo Clan, but have you considered my feelings?

I am not just the head of your Luo Clan but the head of the Zhang Clan as well... Are you all really going to be so cruel as to force me to challenge, slap, and humiliate myself?

Zhang Xuan's instincts were to flatly reject Luo Ganzhen, but looking into the burning desire in the older man's eyes, he found that he had no idea how to go about doing so. Thus, after a moment of hesitation, he could only try to put off the decision as long as he could, "Allow me to listen to the opinions of the elders first..."

On the other hand, hearing that the clan head didn't reject his request straight, Luo Ganzhen heaved a sigh of relief inwardly as he gestured Zhang Xuan forward, "Clan head, this way please!"

As much as he hated Zhang Xuan, he had to admit that the fellow possessed extraordinary capabilities. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that he was the greatest pride of the Zhang Clan. If they could just give him a good pummeling, the disgrace suffered by the Luo Clan would be cleansed. Perhaps, they might even be able to bring its prestige to a whole new height!

Very soon, the two of them arrived in the main hall.

The elders of the Luo Clan were already seated within the main hall, and as soon as they saw Luo Ganzhen and Zhang Xuan, they quickly rose to their feet with agitated looks on their faces.

"Clan head, shall we set off right now?"

"Let's rip that bastard Zhang Xuan a new one!"

"We'll make that bastard know that snubbing our Luo Clan is the greatest mistake he has ever made!"

...

Impassioned voices could be heard all over the room. It felt as if someone had poured gasoline all around the area, and raging flames would break out as soon as someone snapped his fingers.

“...”

Two words flashed across Zhang Xuan’s mind in this very moment—I’m doomed.

It really felt as if he had dug a pit for himself this time around.

He had come with good intention in mind, wanting to compensate the Luo Clan for what he had done... But in a weird turn of events, he ended up becoming its clan head instead!

And if that wasn’t enough... before he knew it, he was being pressured to pummel himself!

If he were to toss away his disguise and reveal his true identity as Zhang Xuan right now... not only would his ‘compensation’ not be appreciated, the Luo Clan might even think that he was toying with them, thus removing any possibility of reconciliation between the two clans!

In the worst case scenario, it could even provoke a war!

It took Zhang Xuan a very long while to calm down all of the elders enough for him to speak, “I understand your emotions, but I don’t think it’s a good timing to challenge the Zhang Clan right now...”

“I don’t deny that Zhang Xuan is very powerful, such that there’s nearly no one in his cultivation realm who would be a match for him... but clan head, you are someone who managed to defeat even Nangong Yuanfeng! We believe that you’ll be able to thrash Zhang Xuan easily too! We’ll send an official challenge letter to the Zhang Clan and invite the Master Teacher Pavilion to officiate the duel... As long as we follow the proper procedures, the Zhang Clan would be forced to accept our challenge! Why do you say that it’s not a good timing to challenge the Zhang Clan?”

“Clan head, I don’t mean to refute your words, but I feel that this is the ideal opportunity for us to challenge the Zhang Clan

too. You are from the side family, and hardly anyone in the Luo Clan has heard of you. If not for your pure bloodline, we would have even doubted if you are a member of our Luo Clan... Since this is the case for us, it would be even more so for the others. This means that we'll be able to catch the Zhang Clan off guard and teach that bratty Zhang Xuan a lesson. On top of that, we'll also be able to build your reputation and let the entire Master Teacher Continent know of your prowess..."

...

It didn't even take a minute for the impassioned elders to tear down all of Zhang Xuan's arguments.

"..." Zhang Xuan.

Wow, all of you make so much sense... I don't even know what I can say anymore.

# 1621 What Is Your Relationship With Kong shi?

Zhang Xuan could see Luo Ganzhen and the other elders' point, and that was precisely why he found it difficult to turn them down.

Putting aside the vengeance against Zhang Xuan, this was also an ideal opportunity to build up Luo Tianya's reputation. Luo Tianya might have become the head of the Luo Clan, but the world was still ignorant of who he was and what he was capable of.

Who else would serve as a better stepping stone to build Luo Tianya's reputation than the celebrated young prodigy of the Zhang Clan, whose name had been hanging on the tip of everyone's tongue in recent days?

In this moment of frustration, Zhang Xuan caught sight of Luo Ruoxin in his peripheral vision. There was a dazzling smile on her face—he had no recollection of seeing such a bright smile on her placid face before.

In an instant, Zhang Xuan felt even more frustrated.

Aren't you my girlfriend? Aren't you supposed to support me in my time of distress? How can you remain silent after seeing all this?

Just as Zhang Xuan had no idea how he should respond to the expectant faces around him, he suddenly heard a telepathic message from Luo Ruoxin. "Actually, I think it would be better for you to agree to their request."

"Agree to their request?" Zhang Xuan's face twitched. "You want me to beat myself up?"

"That's not it. You should lead them first to the Zhang Clan, find a suitable moment to reveal your identity, and force the two clans to sit down and resolve the situation peacefully. Otherwise, given the hostility the Luo Clan bears toward the



Zhang Clan, the more you compensate them, the more weapons they will have at their disposal to use against the Zhang Clan. In the worst-case scenario, the Luo Clan might even feel prompted to start a war with their newfound power. It won't be easy to reconcile the two clans, but you can't keep putting it off either," Luo Ruoxin explained.

"This..." Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

Ruoxin's words made sense.

The Luo Clan had a deep grudge against the Zhang Clan. While it was out of goodwill that he wanted to compensate the Luo Clan for their loss, such an action was actually no different from stoking their desire for vengeance. Not only would it not resolve the conflict, it would only worsen it!

Since our Luo Clan is already strong enough by ourselves, why should we reconcile with the Zhang Clan? Such poisonous thoughts could very well take root within the Luo Clan.

If Zhang Xuan left things as they were, it would only be a matter of time before a fight broke out between the two clans. Instead of allowing this volatile situation to continue, he might as well resolve it once and for all!

After all, he could not possibly keep alternating between Luo Tianya and Zhang Xuan! He would die of exhaustion that way!

"I guess there's no other way..." Having thought the matter through, as frustrated as Zhang Xuan was, he eventually gave his nod of approval. "Very well, I'll agree to your request. Let's head to the Zhang Clan right now!"

"Woohoo! Off to the Zhang Clan we go!"

"Kick Zhang Xuan's ass!"

"Kill that pathetic excuse of a man!"

...

The elders cheered in delight.

"..." Zhang Xuan.

The crowd from the Luo Clan were already all prepared and ready to set off. Upon receiving Zhang Xuan's approval, without any hesitation, they quickly rose to their feet and beckoned their aerial saint beasts over.

Dozens of saint beasts immediately appeared in the sky above, forming a truly majestic sight.

The purpose of the Luo Clan was to rebuild their reputation. As such, even though Zhang Xuan could easily teleport them over, especially since he had already grasped the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, they chose to fly over on aerial saint beasts instead to draw attention.

Standing atop the aerial saint beast, Zhang Xuan glanced at Luo Ruoxin, who was having trouble suppressing her laughter, and he pouted unhappily.

Do you think that I wanted to be in this plight?

Just what did I do wrong in my previous life for the heavens to punish me like that?

Forget it, I won't think about it anymore! I'll focus my attention on trying to achieve a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan instead!

As frustrated as Zhang Xuan was, he knew that it was meaningless for him to think too much into it. Thus, he closed his eyes and focused on sorting out the insights that he had collected, hoping to find an impetus for him to make a breakthrough to Great Sage.

Two days passed in a flash, and just as Zhang Xuan felt that he had found a feasible direction and was about to push for a breakthrough, a voice suddenly echoed in his head.

“Are you intending to push for a breakthrough to Great Sage right now?”

He turned his gaze over and saw Luo Ruoxin looking down at him.

“That's my intention!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

There was no reason for him to hide this from the young lady before him.

If it had been anyone else, he might have felt compelled to explain how he managed to advance his cultivation so quickly or at least conceal it. However, he did not think that there was a need for him to do so before this young lady at all.

For some reason, Luo Ruoxin was not surprised by the swift advancement of his cultivation, and she had never questioned it. On the contrary, it was almost as if she expected it to happen.

“Don’t rush into it yet. There are different classifications for a breakthrough to Sainthood, such as Celestial Saint, and there’s also something similar to that for Great Sage. It would be unwise for you to rush into an inferior breakthrough,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

“There’s different classifications for a breakthrough to Great Sage?” Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

Back then, he had found the real Saint Ascension Platform and used the energy there in order to push for a breakthrough as a Celestial Saint. It was precisely due to his extraordinary breakthrough that the capacity and concentration of his zhenqi far exceeded that of his peers.

Was there something like that for a breakthrough to Great Sage too?

“There’s no such thing as a Celestial Great Sage,” Luo Ruoxin replied, seeing through Zhang Xuan’s doubts, “but depending on how one makes a breakthrough to Great Sage, there could be a vast difference in one’s fighting prowess.”

“This...”

Zhang Xuan had no idea what his girlfriend’s true identity was, but if there was one thing that he was certain about, it was that his girlfriend was far more knowledgeable than him in the field of cultivation. If not for her, he might never have successfully become a Celestial Saint.

Since she had said such words, he should indeed take note of the matter.

“The first realm of Great Sage is known as Introspective Convalescence. It allows a cultivator to immerse their Spiritual

Perception into their cells and influence their body from a fundamental level, such as metabolism,” Luo Ruoxin explained. “An ordinary breakthrough to Introspective Convalescence requires a cultivator to temper their Spiritual Perception into a more refined and powerful form. Such a breakthrough isn’t too difficult, but it’s an inferior method. It’s known as the low-tier breakthrough method.”

Since there was a low-tier, there was bound to be a high-tier.

“That being said, this is the only method that all cultivators know of that will allow them to advance to Great Sage. There’s only one person on the Master Teacher Continent who has managed to design a superior method to achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage and succeeded to doing so,” Luo Ruoxin continued.

“Are you referring to... Kong shi?” Zhang Xuan asked.

In the history of the Master Teacher Continent, the most notable figure was indubitably Kong shi. If anyone could design a superior method to achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage, it would have been him.

“Indeed, it’s Kong shi.” Luo Ruoxin nodded. “When he was still at Saint 9-dan pinnacle, he drew the heavenly flames into his body to temper his Spiritual Perception through its searing heat, making it far more resilient and stronger than before. Due to that, he was far stronger than an ordinary cultivator after making a breakthrough. The capacity of his zhenqi and the strength that he wielded were unmatched by any normal Great Sage, and that formed the foundation for him to become the strongest person in history.”

“Heavenly flames?” Zhang Xuan’s body stiffened upon hearing those words.

Previously, Kong shi’s will had told him that the key to resolving the Innate Fetal Poison was to become a 9-star master teacher and draw the heavenly flames into his body to sear it...

A 7-star master teacher would have cultivation realms ranging from Saint 2-dan to Saint 4-dan, a half 8-star master teacher at

Saint 5-dan, and an 8-star master teacher ranging from Saint 6-dan to Saint 8-dan.

Saint 9-dan would conventionally correspond to half 9-star master teacher.

There were some unique cases where Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivators were bestowed with the 9-star master teacher emblem in advance, but conventionally, the prerequisite to becoming a 9-star master teacher was to be a Great Sage.

Could it be that... when Kong shi mentioned becoming a 9-star master teacher, it referred not to the emblem from the Master Teacher Pavilion but his cultivation realm? He had to push for a breakthrough to Great Sage, and he had to use the high-tier breakthrough method on top of that?

“Similar to the lightning tribulation, the heavenly flames are a kind of retribution the heavens inflict upon the cultivators. When you survived the Saint Ascension Ordeal and became a Celestial Saint, did you feel your soul and physical body becoming far stronger than before, allowing you to defeat enemies stronger than you with ease?” Luo Ruoxin asked.

Zhang Xuan nodded slightly.

Typically speaking, it was only at Saint 5-dan Leaving Aperture realm that a cultivator would be able to use the lightning tribulation to temper their Primordial Spirit. However, having undergone the Saint Ascension Ordeal, his soul and physical body were able to advance to a level far beyond his current cultivation realm, putting him far ahead of ordinary cultivators.

Given so, it was understandable that the heavenly flames would make his Spiritual Perception stronger and grant him greater fighting prowess compared to other cultivators.

“I have browsed through many books regarding breakthroughs to Great Sage, but none of them mention the distinction between a low-tier breakthrough method and a high-tier breakthrough method... If Kong shi is the only one in history who has managed to pull it off, then Ruoxin, how did you learn of it?”

Unable to hold back his curiosity anymore, Zhang Xuan turned his gaze over and asked, “What is... your relationship with Kong shi?”

# 1622 The Sanctum of Sages Under Attack

Back when they were still at the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy, Luo Ruoxin had taken him to the Saint Ascension Platform, and they had managed to get into the folded space embedded in the area. They had found Kong shi's personal writing, but Luo Ruoxin had given it to him without any hesitation, even claiming that she could easily obtain as much of it as she wanted.

Later on, when they entered the Qiu Wu Palace, she had said that she was searching for an object and displayed no interest toward Ancient Sage Qiu Wu's heritage at all...

And right now, she had even spoken of a high-tier breakthrough method that only Kong shi had managed to successfully pull off... Could she possibly have some kind of intimate relation to Kong shi?

Otherwise, how could she possibly know so much about him?

"I..." Facing the abrupt question, Luo Ruoxin was taken aback for a moment before lowering her head silently. When she raised her head once more, there was a slight pleading look in her eyes as she said, "Please don't ask or guess anymore. I really can't tell you anything."

"But..." Seeing that Luo Ruoxin was unwilling to share anything about herself, Zhang Xuan could not help but feel a little frustrated. Knowing that there was no way around it, he sighed deeply and said, "Alright, I promise not to probe any further on that. But in exchange, will you at least tell me if your current name is real?"

After saying those words, he looked at Luo Ruoxin with a nervous look on his face.

Previously, it was precisely because Luo Qiqi hid her real name from him that he had ended up in such a huge

misunderstanding. He was determined not to make the same mistake again.

It was fine if Luo Ruoxin was unwilling to share her real identity. As long as he had her name, he was confident that he would eventually be able to find her.

Luo Ruoxin was initially unwilling to answer, but looking at Zhang Xuan's expression, her heart softened. Shaking her head helplessly, she replied, "It isn't."

It was as he had guessed!

Staring intently at Luo Ruoxin, Zhang Xuan asked on, "If Luo Ruoxin isn't your real name, then..."

He had thought that it was weird how there was not a 'Luo Clan' among the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, and the fact that Luo Ruoxin did not really go by the surname of 'Luo' explained a lot about this!

"Please don't ask me any more than this," Luo Ruoxin pleaded. "It's not that I don't want to reveal my real identity to you, but I can't! If I speak, it won't just be me that suffers—even you will face a great calamity!"

"... I understand. I won't ask anymore."

This was not the first time that Luo Ruoxin had said such words. While Zhang Xuan was not sure what kind of trouble they would face, considering how she was so frightened despite the power that she wielded, it was likely to be far more complicated than he had thought.

"As far as I know, a normal breakthrough to Great Sage shouldn't draw in the heavenly flames. How did Kong shi manage to do it? Did he use some kind of unique secret art?" Zhang Xuan quickly changed the topic back.

Usually, it was only during a breakthrough to Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm that the heavenly flames would be summoned. The heavenly flames would then sear the impurities within one's body in order to form a truly undefilable physique!



In other words, Kong shi would have used some kind of secret art in order to draw the heavenly flames while pushing for a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was not probing any deeper into her identity, Luo Ruoxin heaved a sigh of relief before answering. "I'm not too sure how he managed to do it either, but I do know where to find the method to do so."

"Where?"

If he could find the secret art required to bring the heavenly flames upon him to temper his body and Spiritual Perception, not only would he be able to enhance his fighting prowess, he would also be able to resolve the threat of the Innate Fetal Poison. In a sense, this was killing two birds with one stone.

"The Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters," Luo Ruoxin replied. "Back then, when Kong shi was pushing for a breakthrough to Great Sage, he had already founded the Master Teacher Pavilion. It was in the headquarters that he found the inspiration to create the secret art and successfully advanced his cultivation to Great Sage.

"So, as long as you head to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, you should be able to find the secret art..."

Halfway through Luo Ruoxin's words, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows suddenly shot up. He flicked his wrist, and a Communication Jade Token materialized in his grasp.

"Hmm?"

Seeing Zhang Xuan's actions, the young lady swiftly realized that something had happened. "Did something happen?"

"Something has happened to the Sanctum of Sages!" Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up.

The message on the Communication Jade Token that he had just received had come from Zhan shi of the Sanctum of Sages.

"The Sanctum of Sages?" Luo Ruoxin frowned.

"Un." Zhang Xuan nodded. He quickly went through the contents of it and said, "Someone has barged into the Inner

Sanctum... I need to head over to take a look!”

As he said those words, he got to his feet.

“I’ll follow you,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“Alright!” Knowing that his girlfriend’s prowess could easily match any Sempiternal realm cultivator, Zhang Xuan nodded without much hesitation.

They quickly left the room on the back of the aerial saint beast and leaped away.

“Clan head!” Noticing Zhang Xuan’s abrupt departure, Luo Ganzhen and the others hurriedly rushed over with astonished looks on their faces.

“I have some urgent matters that I need to attend to!” Zhang Xuan said.

He could not possibly reveal the fact that he was the head of the Sanctum of Sages, or else that would be equivalent to giving his identity as Zhang Xuan away.

“But the Zhang Clan...” Luo Ganzhen exclaimed anxiously.

“I’ll head to the Zhang Clan after I’m done dealing with the matters there. You don’t have to worry!” Zhang Xuan said with a wave of his hand.

The ones who had snuck into the Sanctum of Sages could very well be from the group that kidnapped Zhao Ya and his other students. They had managed to get away from him last time, and he was determined not to allow it to happen again.

“But...” Luo Ganzhen frowned.

“Enough! This matter isn’t open to discussion. I’ll come back in time to deal with the Zhang Clan!” Zhang Xuan waved his hand impatiently.

With a flick of his wrist, he took out a spear and pierced the space in front of him.

Tss la!

A dimension rift was ripped in the space in front of him. He quickly slipped right in, and Luo Ruoxin followed closely

behind him.

In the blink of an eye, they had already disappeared from sight.

“This is... traversing through dimension rifts?”

The faces of Luo Ganzhen and the other elders paled in fright.

They had known all along that their clan head was an incredible prodigy; someone of mediocre talent could not possibly have managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. However, the fact remained that he was only at Saint 9-dan pinnacle, so it was inevitable for them to feel that his powers had yet to fully mature.

However, the feat that the clan head had just pulled off made them realize that they might have been underestimating him all that time.

“Just what happened for our clan head to head off in such a rush?” Luo Qingchen asked.

“I don’t know. However, since our clan head has already given us his word, let’s continue our journey to the Zhang Clan! Until we get that Zhang Xuan on his knees, begging for mercy, the rage in my heart won’t be quelled!” Luo Ganzhen spat with a cold glint in his eyes.

The other elders roared in agreement.

This was not the first time that they had headed to the Zhang Clan, but never had they felt so exhilarated as they did that day.

Finally, the Luo Clan would be ushering in its next spring!

...

Hu!

A dimension rift opened, and Zhang Xuan and Luo Ruoxin jolted out. Taking a look at their surroundings, they had already arrived at the entrance of the Sanctum of Sages.

Driving the zhenqi in his body, Zhang Xuan swiftly reverted to his original appearance. Glancing at the young lady beside him, he noted that Luo Ruoxin had also taken off her disguise.

Thus, they quickly entered the Sanctum of Sages.

“What happened?”

Barely after entering the Sanctum of Sages, the first thing that Zhang Xuan noticed was that the ground was covered with the rubble of collapsed buildings, and countless holes could be seen here and there. It felt as if the Sanctum of Sages had just been through an extreme battle.

“It’s the aura of the Otherworldly Demons...” Activating his Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan scanned the area and saw the killing intent of the Otherworldly Demons and the auras of master teachers lingering around the area.

Clearly, the Otherworldly Demons had invaded the Sanctum of Sages, and an intense battle had broken out.

“Sanctum head, you are back!”

While Zhang Xuan was still scanning the vicinity, Zhan shi, Ge shi, and several more elders of the Sanctum of Sages flew over.

“What happened here?” Zhang Xuan asked grimly.

“Reporting to the sanctum head, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe invaded the Sanctum of Sages and barged right into the Inner Sanctum...” Zhan shi clasped his fist with a doubtful look in his eyes. “However, they only left with Sage Kui’s sculpture in hand. They didn’t take anything else, and they didn’t start a massacre either... All they did was destroy a couple of buildings and cause pandemonium before escaping the premises!”

“They stole Sage Kui’s sculpture? Otherworldly Demons?” Zhang Xuan was stunned for a moment before his eyes narrowed in realization.

He clenched his fists tightly as he mumbled, “Could they be here for... Vicious’ upper body?”

# 1623 Stalking

Zhan shi and the others might not have been aware of the secret hidden within Sage Kui's sculpture, but Zhang Xuan was well aware of it.

The upper body of Vicious, the formidable Otherworldly Demon who had fought on equal grounds with Kong shi back in his prime, was sealed within the sculpture!

Back then, after he found that Vicious' upper body was stored in the sculpture with the Library of Heaven's Path, he had intended to smash that sculpture into bits to retrieve the upper body. But in the end, he had forced himself to calm down and decided against it.

No matter what, he was still a master teacher and the head of the Sanctum of Sages. Even if it was to achieve his goals, he had to take note of how he went around doing it.

In any case, for the Otherworldly Demons to barge into the Inner Sanctum and take only Sage Kui's sculpture, there was no doubt that it had something to do with Vicious' upper body!

No matter what, Vicious was still one of the strongest Otherworldly Demon Emperors, so there were bound to be many uses for his upper body. In fact... one could even seek to revive Vicious through awakening and gathering his missing parts!

"Vicious?" Hearing Zhang Xuan's mumblings, Zhan shi was taken aback.

"Ah, it's nothing!" Zhang Xuan quickly replied. "How many people were there? What cultivation realm were they at?"

"There are four of them. I couldn't see through their cultivation realm, but they were able to breach the Guardian Formation of the Sanctum of Sages easily... We weren't able to stop them at all!" Zhan shi said in embarrassment.

The Sanctum of Sages was the number one academy of the Master Teacher Continent, but its defenses had actually been

breached twice within the short span of half a month. It had been their sanctum head the first time around, so it still was not too embarrassing, but to think that even the Otherworldly Demons would successfully take their possessions...

To be honest, they were even hesitant about reporting this to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

It was simply too humiliating!

“There were four of them?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

“Where did they escape to?”

“That direction... We ended up losing them after chasing them for a while, so we could only send a message to ask for your help,” Zhan shi replied as he pointed in a certain direction.

“It’s fine, I understand. For the time being, focus on repairing the collapsed buildings and restoring the formation,” Zhang Xuan instructed as he gazed deeply in the direction that Zhan shi had pointed out. “Meanwhile, I’ll see if I can get Sage Kui’s sculpture back!”

The theft of Sage Kui’s sculpture didn’t just concern the dignity of the Sanctum of Sages. More importantly, Vicious’ upper body was at stake! If he could not get it back, even though he had not officially been inaugurated yet, he would still be shamed for his incompetence.

Through his deep comprehension of space, Zhang Xuan was able to flit extremely quickly. In just ten breaths or so, he had already covered a distance of over ten thousand li.

He glanced backward and saw that Luo Ruoxin was still following closely behind him. With a grim look on his face, he activated the Eye of Insight and began scanning his surroundings carefully in order to find the trail of the assailants.

“That won’t work!” Luo Ruoxin shook her head. “There’s a good chance that the four assailants are the four young men that we met earlier at the White Creek Mountain. They are all Sempiternal realm experts, and they possess special means to erase their trail. You won’t be able to track them unless your Eye of Insight reaches the fourth realm!”

“You’re right...” Zhang Xuan had noticed that as well.

At the crime scenes where Zhao Ya and the others had been kidnapped, the culprits did not leave any marks behind either. Even with the keen Eye of Insight, he had not been able to find anything at all.

“However, they won’t be getting away that easy this time around...” Zhang Xuan sneered coldly.

With a flick of his wrist, a book emanating an air of inviolability materialized in his hand.

It was the Book of Heaven’s Path.

It might have been difficult for him to locate Zhao Ya and the others, but Sage Kui’s sculpture was a different matter!

As long as Vicious could sense the general direction that his upper body had been taken to, he would be able to determine a general location and eventually find them!

Unless... they were to use some kind of unique spatial secret art to conceal the whereabouts of the upper body!

However, considering that it had not been too long since they snatched the sculpture, it was unlikely that they would have the time to do it yet.

Luo Ruoxin glanced at the book that Zhang Xuan had taken out, but she did not say a word.

“Little Vicious, time to wake up. I need you to sense where your upper body is!” Zhang Xuan patted the book.

“Un!” Vicious twitched a little upon hearing his new nickname, but he still swiftly got to action. After sensing for a moment, he pointed the Book of Heaven’s Path in a certain direction and said, “That way!”

“Alright!” Heaving a sigh of relief, Zhang Xuan quickly flitted in the direction pointed out by Vicious.

Luo Ruoxin also followed close behind him.

They traveled for roughly five minutes before Vicious spoke up once more. “They are in the city ahead of us... Sh\*t! I can’t sense my upper body anymore!”

Zhang Xuan quickly looked in front of him and saw a city just ahead.

The city was massive. In terms of scale, it was comparable to the massive Alliance Empire City.

“You can’t sense your upper body anymore? What do you mean?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

“It feels like my body has been taken into some kind of barrier. I could still sense it a moment ago, but all of a sudden, the connection vanished without a trace,” Vicious replied.

“Brought into some kind of barrier?” Zhang Xuan’s complexion did not look too good.

He had chased the enemy as quickly as he could, but he was still a step too late. If only he had successfully tracked them down before they hid themselves, he might have just been able to take down all of them at once. Unfortunately, the enemy moved quicker than he had expected.

It would be truly difficult for him to find the enemy in the midst of the massive city before him without any clues to lead him along.

“Do you still remember the location where the connection with your upper body vanished?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Vicious pondered for a moment before replying, “I can only deduce the rough location...”

“Lead the way!” Zhang Xuan instructed, knowing that there was no time to be lost.

To be honest, he could not have cared less about the loss in reputation for him and the Sanctum of Sages. The crucial thing was really Vicious’ upper body.

Firstly, it would be dangerous if such a powerful weapon fell into the hands of the enemy. Secondly, if he could acquire the upper body, he would be able to enhance Vicious’ strength.

Vicious’ fighting prowess had been rather lackluster recently, but there was no denying that Vicious had been a reliable ally for a very long time.



Just the heart, a finger, and the head together had already granted Vicious strength comparable to a Saint 8-dan cultivator. If he fused together with his upper body too, would his fighting prowess not immediately surpass the level of a Great Sage?

In fact, he might even reach the level of Ancient Sage. After all, that was his entire upper body!

Of course, there was no way that Zhang Xuan would pass on the opportunity to gain an Ancient Sage subordinate! That would be the strongest trump card that he could ever wish for!

Under Vicious' lead, it did not take long for them to reach the center of the city.

“I think it was around here that I lost connection with my upper body. My estimate could be off though...” Vicious said awkwardly.

As an expert who had once dominated the Master Teacher Continent, it was truly shameful that he was unable to find even his own body parts right now.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan frowned. “What is the degree of error for your estimate?”

The center of this massive city was filled with countless resplendent residences and manors. If they had to comb every nook and cranny of the area, the enemy would have probably slipped away again by the time they found any useful clue. If Vicious could come up with a more precise area for them to comb through, it would make their work much easier.

“This... Roughly around... two hundred li...” Vicious replied awkwardly.

“Two hundred li?” Zhang Xuan suddenly felt an urge to tear Vicious into shreds.

There had to be at least be a million people within a radius of two hundred li from where they were standing! To find a sculpture that was carefully hidden from the detection of Spiritual Perception and other tracking means within this large area... Unless a miracle occurred, that was practically asking for the impossible!

Knowing the impossibility of the matter as well, Vicious muttered meekly, “It suddenly vanished without a trace. If we move quickly, I might just be able to pick up its whereabouts once more...”

“Alright, I understand,” Zhang Xuan replied with an exasperated sigh.

Knowing that there was no better alternative at this point in time, he could only resign himself to it. Vicious’ upper body was of the utmost importance to him, so he could not possibly allow it to get away without at least trying to search for it.

There was a huge flowing crowd traveling in and out of the city center, be it on the streets or in the air. Zhang Xuan and Luo Ruoxin did not release their zhenqi, so the others were not able to see through their cultivation either. As such, their presence did not draw too much attention from the passersby.

Otherwise, their astounding strength surely would have induced a huge commotion among the local populace. 200 li = 100km

# 1624 The Harvest Valley City Seer Guild

“This should be Harvest Valley City. Located near a mountain, it enjoys the weather of eternal spring. It’s the city that boasts the greatest agricultural produce within a radius of several hundred thousand li. Most of the food supply in the Sanctum of Sages originates from here!”

It did not take Zhang Xuan long to verify their current location.

Back when he was still in the Sanctum of Sages, he had browsed through quite a couple of books regarding geography. By roughly gauging the direction and distance that he had traveled from the Sanctum of Sages, he could easily deduce his current location.

With a swift scan of his surroundings, Zhang Xuan shook his head. It won’t do to search around aimlessly like this. Let me try using the Library of Heaven’s Path to verify the location...

With such a thought in mind, he flicked his wrist and took out an empty book. He drew out the streets around him and wrote ‘Sage Kui’s sculpture is in this direction’.

He touched the book lightly, and the Library of Heaven’s Path jolted.

However, a book was not compiled.

“It didn’t work again? What’s going on?” Zhang Xuan’s complexion turned awful.

Just what in the world was happening to the Library of Heaven’s Path?

It had never failed him in the past, but nowadays, it was malfunctioning more frequently than ever, as if an old machine sputtering to its death. Was it really in an urgent need of an upgrade?

Well, he had indeed been using it for more than a year now. Perhaps, it was starting to lag behind his current power level, especially with how fast he had been growing stronger.

No, that's not right. The Library of Heaven's Path shouldn't have failed under normal circumstances. A thought suddenly arose in Zhang Xuan's mind. Unless... the sculpture is placed in a location concealed from even the view of the heavens...

The previous few times that the Library of Heaven's Path had malfunctioned was probably because the individuals that he had sought to check possessed the Discarnate Constitution of Divination, just like him and Luo Ruoxin.

However, there were other means to bypass the Library of Heaven's Path as well. For example, the culprits at White Creek Mountain had resorted to some unique means that would not only conceal their trail from the Eye of Insight but also the prying gazes of seers...

The situation that Zhang Xuan was facing at the moment was rather similar to the latter. Was it possible that some kind of unique means had been cast upon Sage Kui's sculpture in order to prevent anyone from divining its whereabouts?

"If that's the case, there's only one possibility..."

A sharp glint flashed across Zhang Xuan's eyes as he quickly scanned his surroundings. He walked up to a nearby cultivator and clasped his fist "This friend over here, may I ask where the Seer Guild of the Harvest Valley City is located?"

"Seer Guild? It's over in that direction, roughly a four li building. It's shaped like a tortoise, so you don't have to worry about missing it!"

The cultivator was a middle-aged man who appeared to be in his mid-forties. He responded to Zhang Xuan's question amicably.

"Many thanks!" Zhang Xuan clasped his fist once more.

He beckoned Luo Ruoxin with a wave of his hand before flying in the direction that the middle-aged man had pointed out.

“Are you suspecting that a seer from the Harvest Valley City is colluding with the culprits in order to prevent other seers from divining the location of Sage Kui’s sculpture?” Luo Ruoxin swiftly grasped Zhang Xuan’s train of thought.

“A normal isolation barrier might be able to prevent ordinary cultivators from tracking it, but it wouldn’t be able to stop the divination of the seers. To be absolutely safe, the culprits would have to engage the help of a seer to conceal it from the view of the heavens too!” Zhang Xuan said with a nod.

“Indeed. I think you are on the right track.” Luo Ruoxin nodded in agreement.

While the current Sanctum of Sages did not have too many experts, it still had a 9-star seer working in its service—Master Feng. If he divined the location of the sculpture, there was a good chance that he could fathom its rough location after a couple of tries.

So, if the culprits wanted to make a perfect getaway, they would have to use some kind of anti-divination technique on the sculpture.

In all of Harvest Valley City, there was only one group of people who were able to achieve that feat so quickly... the seers from the Seer Guild!

Traveling ahead, it did not take long for the two of them to arrive before a tortoise-shaped building. There were some mysterious patterns inscribed on the surface of the building, and they seemed to wield some kind of inconceivable power that prevented even one’s Spiritual Perception from seeping in.

We’ll know whether we have gotten the right place or not once we get in! Zhang Xuan thought as he walked up to the entrance of the tortoise-shaped building.

At this moment, however, a young man walked out and blocked his path. “Please halt your footsteps. Our Harvest Valley City Seer Guild doesn’t welcome any visitors!”

“I am Zhang Xuan, the head of the Sanctum of Sages. We have just lost a precious artifact, and I have specially made a trip here in the hope of engaging the help of your guild leader to

help us divine its whereabouts!” Zhang Xuan said as he flicked his wrist and revealed his substitute Sanctum Head Token.

“You are the head of the Sanctum of Sages?” Startled by the high standing of the guest before him, the young man quickly clasped his fist politely and said, “Elder, please hold on for a moment. I’ll report your arrival to our guild leader right away!”

After saying those words, the young man hurriedly rushed back into the tortoise-shaped building.

Roughly three minutes later, a black-haired elder walked out along with the young man.

“Pardon me for my lacking welcome, I was unaware of your arrival, Sanctum Head Zhang. Please, come in!”

The elder appeared to be in his sixties, and his cultivation was at Saint 8-dan pinnacle. Wearing the long robe of the Seer Guild, his appearance gave the impression of an enlightened expert.

“I’ll be imposing on you then. To be honest, I have come with a request that I will need to trouble you with!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist politely.

“Sanctum Head Zhang, you are too courteous. You must be unaware of how resounding your reputation is these days. I never thought that our guild would have the honor of hosting you. Please, this way!” the elder said as he led the way forward.

Soon, they arrived in a room.

As soon as they walked in, a slight frown appeared between Luo Ruoxin’s brows. She quickly sent a telepathic message over. “Zhang Xuan, be careful.”

“What’s wrong?” Zhang Xuan replied discreetly. “Did you notice something?”

This was the first time that Luo Ruoxin had sent him a telepathic message asking him to be careful. It seemed like there was really something wrong with this Seer Guild.

Luo Ruoxin appeared to want to say something, but she seemed to change her mind at the last moment. “It’s nothing. I just think that it would be best to proceed warily.”

“Un, I understand!” Zhang Xuan replied telepathically.

It would be foolish to turn a blind eye to Luo Ruoxin’s warning. Thus, Zhang Xuan casually placed his hand on his waist, ready to make a move as soon as anything happened.

However, it seemed like his worries might have been unfounded. Even when he walked to the middle of the room, he still did not notice any anomalies.

After everyone had taken a seat, the elder raised his gaze and asked, “May I know the reason behind your visit, Sanctum Head Zhang?”

“Not too long ago, a couple of burglars snuck into our Sanctum of Sages and stole our Sage Kui’s sculpture. Following the trail of the burglars, we found that the trail abruptly ends here. Considering that we are both affiliated with the Master Teacher Pavilion, I would like to trouble you to divine the identity and whereabouts of the culprit!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist.

Zhang Xuan’s words were roundabout, but the implied meaning was very clear to those hearing his message. He was effectively saying, My item disappeared in your territory. If you can’t divine the identity and the whereabouts of the culprits, I’m afraid that I’ll have to doubt you!

“The trail of the burglars ends here?” A displeased frown appeared on the elder’s face. “Sanctum Head Zhang, are you suspecting our Seer Guild of hiding the burglars and the stolen possession of the Sanctum of Sages?”

“The burglars who have stolen Sage Kui’s sculpture are all Otherworldly Demons. However, they were able to conceal themselves perfectly, such that even my Eye of Insight is rendered helpless before their means. On top of that, our seers are unable to divine the whereabouts of the burglars or our missing possession. I’d hate to accuse you, but I’m afraid that

I can't turn a blind eye to the evidence lying before me!"  
Zhang Xuan replied calmly.

"The loss of our possession is a small matter, but the involvement of the Otherworldly Demons in the burglary is a cause for concern. Things could turn ugly if I report this matter to the Master Teacher Pavilion, so I ask of you to give us your full support. This is the best way to cleanse your Seer Guild of suspicion!"

"Sanctum Head Zhang, I respect you as the head of the Sanctum of Sages and the Zhang Clan, and it's out of goodwill that I welcomed you into our Seer Guild. Yet, you are maligning my Seer Guild of conspiring with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe..." The elder abruptly rose to his feet and uttered coldly, "Just what do you stand to gain from besmirching the reputation of our Seer Guild?"

"Calm down, there's no need to lose your temper here." Zhang Xuan glanced at the agitated elder. "I don't mean anything by those words. All I want is to retrieve the treasure that was stolen from our Sanctum of Sages. If you are truly as innocent as you claim, you won't mind me searching through your Seer Guild, right? If I fail to find anything, you can rest assured that I'll provide due compensation to your Seer Guild for my mistake!"

"You wish to ransack our Seer Guild? Preposterous! Our Seer Guild shoulders the heavy responsibility of divining the future to protect mankind. Even the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters have to show us some respect! Yet, a mere sanctum head like you seeks to ransack our premises?" the elder bellowed furiously.



# 1625 Falling Out With the Seer Guild

Seer was one of the many unique occupations in the world, but due to its unique capabilities, it was held in high regard in the Master Teacher Continent. Not even the Master Teacher Pavilion would dare to exert pressure on them easily.

It was one thing for the young man to accuse their Seer Guild of colluding with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe without ample evidence on hand, but to think that he would make a brazen request to ransack their premises too...

This was intolerable!

“I don’t deny that I am unqualified to request a search on your Seer Guild, but this matter concerns not only a treasure of the Sanctum of Sages but the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe as well. It might just be an unfortunate coincidence, but the trail of the burglars happens to end in the vicinity of your Seer Guild. With the safety of mankind at stake, I’m afraid that I have no choice but to do this. I hope that you can understand my position,” Zhang Xuan said.

“Seers usually avoid getting involved in worldly affairs, so I believe you would be reluctant to get into an unnecessary conflict. Regardless of whether I report this matter to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters or the Seer Guild headquarters, you will have a great deal of explaining to do. That wouldn’t be desirable to you, right?”

“Are you threatening me?” the elder growled coldly as he clenched his fists tightly.

“Threaten? I am the head of the Sanctum of Sages; I would never stoop to something as low as that! However... if there is evidence to suggest that Otherworldly Demons who have stolen Sage Kui’s sculpture have slipped into the Seer Guild, for the safety of mankind, I believe that no one will question

my judgement for demanding a search on your Seer Guild!”  
Zhang Xuan replied coolly.

“Hah! What amazing pomposity this is from the head of the Sanctum of Sages!”

Before the elder could even respond, a cold harrumph sounded from the distance. Following which, two old men walked in from the side doors.

Upon seeing the two old men, Zhang Xuan’s eyes narrowed warily.

To his astonishment, he was unable to see through the cultivation of those two old men!

Considering how he was currently at Saint 9-dan pinnacle, the fact that he was unable to see through their cultivation meant that they were at Great Sage at the very minimum.

Saint 8-dan pinnacle should have been the limit for a city at the level of Harvest Valley City, so for two Great Sage cultivators to appear here simultaneously...

If it was just a guess from Zhang Xuan’s part before, the appearance of the two old men had him convinced that something was indeed amiss in this Seer Guild.

“I beg your pardon if I have made you feel that way. May I know who the two of you are? I am currently addressing the leader of the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild, so I must ask the two of you to not insolently interject into our conversation and learn to hold your tongues!” Zhang Xuan replied imposingly.

If they were Great Sage cultivators from other guilds, he might still hesitate a little before going up against them. But since they were seers...

All it would take was a mere thought for him to teach them a lesson. They could not even be considered a threat at all!

“I am the vice head of the Seer Guild headquarters, Qi Zhen! The person beside me is Elder Mo Qin!” The old man who had spoken earlier flung his sleeves and harrumphed coldly.

“There’s no way there could be any Otherworldly Demons

here, and the so-called treasure of your Sanctum of Sages isn't here either. Are you satisfied now?"

"Unfortunately, no," Zhang Xuan replied coldly as he stood up and placed his hands behind his back. With an unwavering tone, he continued. "Unless you allow me to search through the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild, I won't be leaving here today!"

"You..."

Not expecting the young man to say such words despite having revealed his identity as the vice head of the Seer Guild headquarters, Qi Zhen narrowed his eyes furiously. He lifted his hand, seemingly preparing to make a move, but his movements suddenly paused for a moment.

It appeared as if someone was talking telepathically to him. The next moment, he suppressed his rage and flung his sleeves back furiously once more. "Very well, you can search the premises. However, I'll only give you three minutes to do so. At the end of the three minutes, regardless of whether you have found what you are searching for or not, I'll have to ask you to leave. We still have an important ritual that we have to carry out. If we miss the right moment to make the divination, not even your Sanctum of Sages will be able to bear the consequences!"

"Three minutes? Very well!" Zhang Xuan nodded calmly.

With a thought, he took out the Book of Heaven's Path and instructed, "Vicious, scan the area and see if you are able to sense the presence of your upper body!"

"Yes!" Vicious replied. Barely a moment after he had begun searching the area, the Book of Heaven's Path abruptly shuddered a little as an anxious exclamation sounded, "Master, there's something amiss here. The auras are chaotic, almost as if there's something extremely dangerous in here!"

"Extremely dangerous?" Zhang Xuan frowned.

For Vicious to deem the surroundings with the term 'extremely dangerous', just what could be hidden within this Seer Guild?

“Hmm? The feeling vanished... Did I sense wrongly? My instincts seem to have lost their sensitivity after suffering a sharp decline in my cultivation,” Vicious remarked doubtfully.

He was certain that he had sensed something earlier, but the feeling had vanished without a trace in an instant. While he still harbored some doubts, he could not discount the possibility that he might have made a mistake. His body still was not incomplete yet, so it was inevitable that his senses would be a little jumbled up from time to time.

“I see. Don’t bother about the chaotic auras for the time being and check if your upper body is around here!” Zhang Xuan instructed sternly.

It was just earlier that Luo Ruoxin had given him a warning, and now, Vicious was saying something similar.

This was making him feel a little unnerved on the inside.

Nevertheless, he could not back down at this point. The culprits could very well be the same as the ones who had kidnapped Zhao Ya and his other students, so he could not afford to lose this lead. Not to mention, Vicious’ upper body was also of the utmost importance to him too.

“I understand!” Vicious replied. He quickly cast aside the miscellaneous thoughts in his mind and did a rough sensing of the area. A moment later, he exclaimed, “Master, I can sense it! My upper body is indeed here! However...”

“However what?” Zhang Xuan was delighted to hear that they had managed to find the correct place, but this fact only introduced more doubts.

For the Seer Guild to collude together with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to steal Sage Kui’s sculpture, just what were they intending to achieve?

“There’s a peculiar aura shrouding my upper body. Previously, Sage Kui’s sculpture was suppressing my upper body, so I couldn’t sense it clearly. However, I can sense the presence of my upper body very distinctly now... It feels like they have destroyed the sculpture!” Vicious replied.

“Destroyed the sculpture? It seems like they have indeed stolen Sage Kui’s sculpture for Vicious’ upper body...” Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

If it had just been a guess before, it was apparent to him right now that the main goal of the culprits was indeed Vicious’ upper body.

Furthermore, it seemed too much of a coincidence for the vice head and an elder of the Seer Guild headquarters to visit a relatively remote branch together, especially at this point in time... From the looks of it, there was a good chance that a huge number of the higher-ranking seers were colluding with the Otherworldly Demons!

Of course, that would still require further verification, but it would be best for him to assume the worst-case scenario until then.

“Where is your upper body at the moment?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“It’s currently at the back of this room,” Vicious replied.

“Got it.” Zhang Xuan nodded as he turned his gaze over.

At the back of the room was a massive door, pitch-black in color. He tried to extend his Spiritual Perception to sense what was beyond the door, but it seemed like some kind of isolation barrier had been cast over it to prevent any nosey individuals from snooping around.

Thus, he made his way over with the intention of taking a closer examination.

However, it was at this moment that Qi Zhen’s voice sounded once more. “Alright, three minutes are up. Sanctum Head Zhang, I’ll have to ask you to leave right now!”

“Leave?” Zhang Xuan scoffed contemptuously. “I have just confirmed that the missing treasure of our Sanctum of Sages is located behind this door, but you seem to be in a rush to chase me away. I really can’t help but wonder what your intentions are!”

Qi Zhen's pupils dilated a little upon hearing those words, but he quickly concealed it with a cold harrumph. "You said that you can just confirmed that your missing treasure is behind this door? How can you be certain of that?"

"Just like how your Seer Guild has the ability to uncover vital information through divination, our Sanctum of Sages has our own ways to tracking down our possessions. If I can't even locate the whereabouts of our stolen treasures, wouldn't I be a failure of a sanctum head?" Zhang Xuan replied coldly.

"Sanctum Head Zhang, I understand that you are anxious to find the treasures of your Sanctum of Sages, but making false accusations like that won't get you anywhere. Our Seer Guild has an important ritual that we have to conduct right now, and we don't have any time to waste arguing with you. I'll have to ask you to leave right now, or else don't blame us for getting nasty!" Qi Zhen said with a majestic wave of his hands.

"Getting nasty? Are you still intending to make a move on me?" Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes threateningly.

Who would have thought that the Seer Guild would actually be so brazen? It was one thing for them to collude with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to steal Sage Kui's sculpture, but to think that they would even dare to threaten him, the head of the Sanctum of Sages!

"We don't wish for it to come to that. However, if you continue making a scene, I'm afraid that we'll have no choice but to forcefully evict you!" Qi Zhen replied coldly as a belligerent aura burst forth from his body, rising straight into the heavens.

He was a Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm expert!

While he might have been lacking in comparison to Sword Saint Xing, the prowess that he wielded was more than enough to deal with a Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivator like him.

Huala!

Seeing that Qi Zhen was intending to make a move, Zhang Xuan's hands moved for the Dragonbone Divine Spear wrapped around his waist, prepared to retaliate should the

other party make any move of aggression. However, an explosion suddenly erupted at that moment, and the tortoiseshell-shaped roof burst open.

A figure charged in from the opened roof.

“Wu Chen?”

The figure was none other than the adolescent boy following behind Luo Ruoxin, Wu Chen!

The other party had claimed that he had some matters to deal with after they left Ancient Sage Ran Qiu’s ancient domain back at the White Creek Mountain. Why would he suddenly appear here?

# 1626 A Book to Crush an Ancient Sage!

“Attack!”

In Zhang Xuan’s brief daze, Qi Zhen released a deafening bellow.

Together with the elder of the Seer Guild headquarters, Mo Qin, he charged right for Wu Chen in the air.

“Humph!” Wu Chen harrumphed disdainfully as he thrust his palm downward in retaliation.

Kacha!

The surrounding space froze. Before Qi Zhen and Mo Qin could even react, they were already struck squarely on their chest, causing them to fall heavily onto the ground as blood spurted forth from their mouths wildly.

Despite being Great Sage 2-dan experts, they were still far too lacking in comparison to Wu Chen.

Tss la!

Wu Chen did not seem to have noticed Zhang Xuan and Luo Ruoxin’s presence. After knocking down the two old men, he thrust his palm once more toward the room at the back, where Vicious’ upper body was supposedly located. The space around the room at the back immediately collapsed, causing the ceiling to be destroyed.

Wuuuu!

At that moment, a brush flew forth from the sinking ceiling and struck the collapsed space above. Following which, a sharp sound echoed in the air and spatial ripples diffused into the surroundings.

“It’s those four Otherworldly Demons!” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in astonishment.



That brush that had just flown forth was extremely familiar to him. It was one of the artifacts of the four Otherworldly Demons that he had met in Ancient Sage Ran Qiu's ancient domain!

He had not thought that he would meet them here once more.

It seemed like after separating from them, Wu Chen had somehow managed to track them down here.

I should make a move, too! Zhang Xuan thought.

He grabbed the belt wrapped around his waist and whipped out the Dragonbone Divine Spear. After which, he darted toward the sky.

Ding ding ding ding!

After a few metallic clangs, Zhang Xuan was forced to retreat with a pale face.

Without igniting Kong shi's blood droplet, he was simply no match for those four young men.

Huala!

While Zhang Xuan was being forced back, a ferocious bellow reverberated from beneath. The scholarly young man charged forth from his hiding place, and with a flick of his wrist, a long sword materialized in his hand. With the support of the demonic tune and the brush, he launched a decisive assault toward Wu Chen.

A furious barrage of sword qi filled the sky above the Seer Guild. One could not help but feel blinded by the dense congregation of sword qi, almost as if the sword was the only existence in the world.

As the surrounding air moaned under the intense pressure from the barrage of sword qi, black dimension rifts were forcefully ripped open all around.

The scholarly young man had used his full strength right from the start. Even compared to the time when Zhang Xuan had clashed with him in Ancient Sage Ran Qiu's ancient domain, he seemed to be significantly stronger than before.

But as powerful as the scholarly young man was, Wu Chen was even stronger!

“Humph!” Wu Chen harrumphed coldly.

Without the slightest hint of panic, he thrust his palm downward once more.

The black dimension rifts scattered around began repairing at a visible pace, and the seemingly indomitable scholarly young man suddenly froze in the air with his sword. Shockingly, he was actually unable to press forward at all!

“What formidable prowess!” Zhang Xuan complimented with widened eyes.

He truly did not expect Wu Chen to be so powerful.

Even if he had ignited Kong shi’s blood droplet, it was unlikely that he would have been able to cope with the offense of the scholarly young man any better than Wu Chen.

Hula!

Another explosion sounded within the Seer Guild beneath, and several more figures charged toward Wu Chen. Along with the appearance of those figures, blood-curdling killing intent settled into the surrounding air, leaving one feeling as if one had plunged into the midst of a harsh battlefield.

“They are all Otherworldly Demons!” Zhang Xuan’s body stiffened in astonishment.

He did not expect so many Otherworldly Demons to appear all at once. Furthermore, they did not even make any attempt to conceal themselves.

“No, it’s because this is the Seer Guild. Not only will it conceal their auras, it will also conceal them from the peering eyes of the heavens. Naturally, there’s no need for them to conceal their identities at all...” Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

Back when they were still at Ancient Sage Ran Qiu’s ancient domain, they still had to disguise themselves a little. Otherwise, if the Prime Amulet had figured out their true

identity and attempted to suppress them, they could have faced serious problems.

On the other hand, as long as they ensured that no survivors walked out of the Seer Guild alive, no one would be any wiser about their true identity.

“Activate!”

Knowing that any hesitation at this moment could very well cost their lives, Zhang Xuan immediately ignited the final droplet of Kong shi’s blood.

It was his greatest trump card, which was why he was a little reluctant to use it. However, he knew that if he did not make a move right now and Wu Chen fell victim to them, he and Luo Ruoxin could very well be next!

Hong long long!

As soon as Kong shi’s blood droplet was ignited, Zhang Xuan immediately felt overwhelming strength wrapping around his body, bringing his fighting prowess to a whole new level. Wielding the Dragonbone Divine Spear in hand, he charged toward the closest Otherworldly Demon to him.

“Die!”

Without any hesitation, he pushed his spear right for the Otherworldly Demon’s vitals.

It was due to his hesitation that those four young men had escaped the previous time. This time, he would not allow history to repeat itself!

“Roar!”

Caught off guard by the sudden emergence of such a powerful foe, the Otherworldly Demon had no choice but to forcefully twist his body and divert his attack on Wu Chen to defending against Zhang Xuan.

An air of malicious intent rushed toward Zhang Xuan, and the Otherworldly Demon swiftly swept its claw toward him.

Whoosh!

But given Zhang Xuan's current prowess, how could he possibly allow the Otherworldly Demon to do as he pleased?

He swiftly adjusted the trajectory of his spear to pierce right through the Otherworldly Demon's claw before thrusting right into the depths of the latter's heart.

While his spear was still lodged into the Otherworldly Demon's body, he forcefully jolted it around.

Psh!

The next instant, the Otherworldly Demon's body exploded, collapsing into a lump of meat.

Just like that, a Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm expert met his end.

“Roar! Roar! Roar!”

Seeing their companions losing his life in the blink of an eye, the remaining Otherworldly Demons were visibly stunned for an instant. Perhaps out of realization that Zhang Xuan posed the greatest threat to them, a handful of them immediately changed their target and focused their assault on him.

“Humph!”

With narrowed eyes, Zhang Xuan flicked his spear with a single hand. It warped into a majestic dragon and charged for the closest Otherworldly Demon to it.

At the same time, he snapped his finger lightly with his other free hand.

“Freeze!”

Huala!

As if the surrounding space had been frozen solid, everything around the Seer Guild suddenly halted.

The assailing Otherworldly Demons did not expect Zhang Xuan to possess such a technique. As soon as they realized that they were outmatched, they immediately tried to turn around and flee, but it was already too late. The space around them was sealed, and they could not move an inch anymore.

Kacha!

The spear pierced right through the head of the closest Otherworldly Demon. It was instantaneous death. However, due to the frozen space, its body continued floating quietly in the air eerily.

With two Otherworldly Demons slain, the burden on Wu Chen lessened considerably. He launched two consecutive palm strikes, sending the scholarly young man flying with the first and destroying the zither of the fragile young man with the second.

Weng!

At this moment, a skeletal structure of an upper body rose into the air.

It was hard to determine what kind of material the upper body was made of, but the ribcage had a crystal-clear transparency to it, reminiscent of top-quality jade. Instead of overpowering killing intent, it had an academic air to it.

“Master, it’s my upper body!” Vicious exclaimed anxiously.

“It’s finally out!”

Seeing that Vicious’ upper body was indeed here, Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up. Without any hesitation, he flicked his wrist, and the Book of Heaven’s Path flew right toward the upper body.

Hula!

It took barely an instant for the Book of Heaven’s Path to seal the upper body within it.

It had been much more troublesome with Vicious’ head and finger because they already possessed independent thought. On the other hand, the many years of suppression under Sage Kui within the Sanctum of Sages had completely purified Vicious’ upper body, removing any hint of consciousness from it.

As such, it did not take much effort for the Book of Heaven’s Path to seal it.

Witnessing this scene, Wu Chen's eyebrows shot up in astonishment.

“Hahaha, I am going to make a breakthrough. Master, I'm going into hibernation... You must take care of yourself...” Vicious roared with laughter, and slowly, his voice faded away.

Hula!

Zhang Xuan could feel Vicious' consciousness falling into a deep slumber.

It was probably the same as many times before. Assimilating his upper body was probably a highly exhausting activity that required him to go into hibernation.

He should be able to make a breakthrough to Great Sage once it awakes once more... Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh inwardly.

While all this was being done, his body had not been slacking around. He decisively drove his spear into the body of another Otherworldly Demon, intending to kill him as well.

However, at that moment, a devastating aura suddenly gushed forth from the Seer Guild, and it rose right into the clouds.

This aura was so ridiculously powerful that it felt almost as if it could even flip the heavens upside down!

“Could this be... an Ancient Sage?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in shock.

The ignition of Kong shi's blood droplet would have granted him strength invincible to those beneath Ancient Sage, but in the face of the ridiculously overpowered aura rising from the Seer Guild, he felt like an ant standing before an elephant.

He could not even fathom just how powerful the individual commanding such an aura would be.

Probably, this was the level of strength that only the Ancient Sages that he had heard so much about commanded.

Alarmed, he quickly turned his sights in the direction of the aura, only to see a hulking Otherworldly Demon charging toward Luo Ruoxin at an absurd speed.

Dread and panic exploded in Zhang Xuan's mind as he roared in agitation, "Ruoxin, careful!"

If the Ancient Sage Otherworldly Demon really got to Luo Ruoxin, she would die without the slightest hint of doubt!

Who could have known that an Ancient Sage would actually be hiding in the Seer Guild? And he was an Otherworldly Demon at that! Just what in the world could the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe be planning?

Damn it! Damn it!

"NO!"

Zhang Xuan could not tell if it was a scream in his mind or one that he had actually voiced out, but his entire existence was telling him that he could not allow whatever was going to happen.

Hu!

A book flew forth from his glabella.

Padah!

It descended right upon on the Ancient Sage Otherworldly Demon charging toward Luo Ruoxin.

"What?"

Paji!

With a horrified look on his face, the Ancient Sage Otherworldly Demon was smashed right into the ground, breathing his last breath.

Even at the moment of his death, he probably could not have imagined that someone as powerful as him would actually meet his end under the weight of a book.

# 1627 Has the Master Teacher Pavilion Betrayed Mankind?

Silence rippled across the entire battlefield.

Even Wu Chen and the scholarly young man were startled, resulting in a temporary halt of their battle. All eyes were gathered on the Otherworldly Demon smashed into the ground, and not a mouth could find any words to say.

Every single one of them had sensed the surging aura earlier, and for the first time in many years, an Ancient Sage existence had made his appearance. Yet, he had only managed to say a single word—“What?”—before meeting his end...

This was too shocking!

Ancient Sages were the pinnacle existences of the Master Teacher Continent. While it would be an exaggeration to say that they were indestructible, their life force was so resilient that most of them managed to live till the end of their time. Yet, right before their eyes, an Ancient Sage just had his physical body and Primordial Spirit completely smashed into bits, destroying any chance of survival through and through.

What in the world was going on?

When in the world did Ancient Sage become so fragile, shattering at a simple touch?

Or rather, what in the world was that book? Where in the world did that fellow obtain that book from?

And... could that book still be used?

With a pale face and a trembling body, the scholarly young man bellowed anxiously, “Retreat!”

An attack that even an Ancient Sage was unable to withstand, there was no way that they would stand a chance against that! With horrified expressions, the Otherworldly Demons each



tore apart an amulet, and dimension rifts appeared around them.

“Where do you think you’re going?” Zhang Xuan sneered coldly as he raised his hand, intending to seal the space around them to prevent their retreat.

But before he could do anything, a voice sounded in his head. “Let them go.”

He quickly turned his gaze over to Luo Ruoxin, only to see the latter shaking her head with a deep frown between her brows.

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment, but he still decided to heed Luo Ruoxin’s instructions.

Weng! Weng! Weng!

Spatial disturbances rippled across the area as the scholarly young man and the others who had ripped an amulet apart vanished into dimension rifts, leaving only Qi Zhen and the others from the Seer Guild behind.

Knowing that it would be nigh impossible to catch them once they had gotten away, Zhang Xuan took a deep breath and asked the young lady beside him, “Why?”

He knew that his girlfriend was not a person to do things without reason, so she was bound to have her motive for asking him to let them go. It was also in view of this that he had chosen to heed her instruction.

“You wouldn’t have been able to stop them if they really wanted to get away,” Luo Ruoxin replied calmly.

“Even if I can’t stop them from getting away, I would at least be able to kill another one of them!” Zhang Xuan replied with clenched fists.

Considering how his enemies were all Sempiternal realm cultivators, while it might have taken some time, they would still have been able to undo his spatial seal eventually. From such a perspective, their escape was inevitable. Nevertheless, using the time that they spent on breaking his spatial seal, he was confident that he would have been able to slay at least one more Otherworldly Demon!

“Killing another Otherworldly Demon wouldn’t have made much of a difference,” Luo Ruoxin said grimly. “More importantly, there wasn’t just a single Ancient Sage here earlier!”

“There wasn’t just a single Ancient Sage here earlier?”

Those words caused Zhang Xuan’s pupils to dilate in horror as he suddenly realized how close he had come to death earlier.

“You are saying that... there were more Ancient Sages hiding in this Seer Guild other than the one I killed?”

“There were at least three more of them. However, it seems like that decisive blow shocked them. Knowing that they don’t have the strength to withstand the might of your book, they chose to flee... However, if you tried to stop them, they could have launched a counterattack out of desperation. Even if it’s you, I don’t think that you have the means to deal with three Ancient Sages simultaneously yet,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“I...” Zhang Xuan fell silent.

He had used his only golden page earlier, which had been triggered from Luo Xuanqing’s gratitude from the impartation of the simplified Heaven’s Path Spatial Sealing Art.

He had already used it on one of the Ancient Sages, and if another Ancient Sage had really appeared then, there would have been nothing that he could have done.

That could have really spelled the end of all of them.

While it was true that the crushed Ancient Sage had met his end even before he could display his true prowess, Zhang Xuan could tell from the aura that the other party had emanated that he would not have stood a chance at all in a proper duel. In fact, just the overwhelming aura emanated by the Ancient Sages would have been enough to subdue him.

It was not without reason that Ancient Sages were so revered in the world. Without absolute strength, there was no way they could possess so much influence.

After calming down from the shock of just how close he had come to death, a doubt arose in Zhang Xuan’s mind. How did so many Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages manage to sneak

into the Master Teacher Continent without alarming the Master Teacher Pavilion?

It was true that most human Ancient Sages were in hibernation. However, based on what he knew, the human Ancient Sages seemed to have some way of sensing hostile Ancient Sages. It was through such a system that they had been able to protect mankind from the threat of the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages over the past millenniums!

So, it should have been impossible for the Master Teacher Pavilion to remain oblivious to the arrival of so many Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages on the Master Teacher Continent!

Unless... the entire Master Teacher Pavilion had betrayed mankind!

As if seeing through the doubts Zhang Xuan harbored, Wu Chen explained, "It's likely the doing of the Seer Guild headquarters. They used some kind of secret art to conceal the presence of these Ancient Sages, thus allowing them to slip past the detection of the Master Teacher Pavilion and the human Ancient Sages!

"Furthermore, they ingeniously chose Harvest Valley City as their base of operations. It's an inconspicuous city, located at a safe distance away from the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters and most major powers. More importantly, there is no Master Teacher Pavilion in the vicinity to curb the local Seer Guild, thus making it an ideal location for a hideout without incurring any suspicion!"

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

Harvest Valley City was located against a mountain, making it a natural fortress. On top of that, it was located against a stream, which provided it with the water required to irrigate the fertile land around it. With such advantageous conditions, it was able to swiftly develop into an independent power, reminiscent to that of the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan.

Perhaps it was to prevent external powers from interfering excessively in its local affairs, but for many generations, the general populace had vehemently objected to any external powers taking root within the city, and this included the Master Teacher Pavilion. As a result, it had become one of the very few places without a Master Teacher Pavilion branch.

For this reason, it was the ideal location for the Otherworldly Demons to hide in.

“But even if the Seer Guild is helping to conceal the presence of these Otherworldly Demons, the Otherworldly Demons would still have to slip past Ancient Sage Qiu Wu’s seal in the Subterranean Gallery in order to get to the Master Teacher Continent. Every Subterranean Gallery is tightly guarded by master teachers, so isn’t it ridiculous for so many Otherworldly Demons to be able to slip through?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“I found that rather weird, too. I have been investigating this matter since parting with you and Milady, but I’m still unable to figure out the reason behind that...”

“Isn’t the answer to that obvious?” Luo Ruoxin suddenly interjected. “There’s someone within the Master Teacher Pavilion helping them.”

Zhang Xuan’s body jolted upon hearing those words.

In truth, he had also arrived at the answer himself, but he simply dared not believe it.

In order to pull something like that off, the person or group colluding with the Otherworldly Demons had to be of considerably high standing within the Master Teacher Pavilion.

Who could they be? Why would they choose to betray mankind?

It’s very likely that the Otherworldly Demons were aiming for Vicious’ upper body this time around... Considering how anxious they were to find the upper body, willingly taking the risk of travelling over to the Master Teacher Continent, there’s

a good chance that they have already amassed Vicious' other body parts! Zhang Xuan thought grimly.

It was one thing for the Otherworldly Demons to be amassing Vicious' body parts, but Zhang Xuan did not feel that their motives were that simple.

Even if Vicious was one of the strongest Otherworldly Demon Emperor in history, surely they would not need so many Ancient Sages to personally supervise the operation of stealing back his upper body.

Most likely, those Ancient Sages were there for a different purpose... but that purpose was not something that he could figure out at the moment.

In any case, it seems like I'll have to tread warily around the Master Teacher Pavilion in the future... Zhang Xuan had been intending to report this matter to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, but given the current circumstances, it would be better to put it off for the time being.

He had never been to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters personally, so he could not be sure whom he could trust. If the information fell into the wrong hands, it could possibly lead to a disastrous outcome. For one, those traitors could twist the facts against him if they deemed him a threat.

The situation was currently rather volatile, so it would be best for him to lie low for the time being.

It seems like even the Master Teacher Pavilion isn't trustworthy anymore! I have to swiftly unite all of the powers that I have at the moment—the Zhang Clan, the Luo Clan, the Sanctum of Sages, the Combat Master Hall... Zhang Xuan thought with an awful complexion. We are simply too vulnerable to the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe at the moment!

No one would have expected the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to have spies within the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters as well. Without knowing whom to trust, Zhang Xuan could only rely on himself.

For the time being, he could only try to unite all of the powers that he had at his disposal and pray that the invasion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would not come too soon.

“Zhang Xuan, the corpse of an Ancient Sage is filled with treasures. This fellow might have barely stepped into the level of an Ancient Sage, but his corpse still has many useful materials that you can use,” Luo Ruoxin suddenly said.

# 1628 Sun Qiang's Inflated Ego

“Treasure?”

It was then that Zhang Xuan suddenly remembered that on top of claiming Vicious' upper body, he had also managed to kill an Ancient Sage.

The body of an Ancient Sage was deeply coveted even as a corpse.

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in excitement as he pondered about what he could do with the dead Ancient Sage's body, “If I could forge his corpse into a Soulless Metal Humanoid, I would have another trump card at my disposal!”

Having inherited the heritage of the soul oracles, he knew the method to forging Soulless Metal Humanoids. If he were to use the corpse of this Ancient Sage as the foundation and successfully forged a Soulless Metal Humanoid out of it, wouldn't he be able to command the fighting prowess of an Ancient Sage just by slipping his soul into it?

If that were to happen, he wouldn't have to fear anyone anymore!

This had really come at a timely moment. It just happened that he had expended his final droplet of Kong shi's blood essence and his newly acquired golden page, and he was lacking a suitable trump card to use in times of distress. If he could forge the corpse into a Soulless Metal Humanoid, this problem would be resolved!

“It's truly a treasure. I'll be taking it then!” Seeing that Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen had no intention of laying claim to the Ancient Sage's body, Zhang Xuan waved his hand to keep the corpse into his storage ring.

But to his shock, he found that it was as if he was attempting to move a mountain. Even as he was on the verge of

expending all of his soul energy, the Ancient Sage corpse still refused to budge at all.

“What’s going on?” Zhang Xuan frowned in confusion.

No matter what, his soul cultivation was at Saint 9-dan pinnacle. Along with his comprehension of space... it simply didn’t make sense how he was unable to move a mere corpse over to his storage ring!

“Let me try moving it physically!” Zhang Xuan thought as he wrapped the corpse with his zhenqi and tugged at it. “T-this...”

Despite using his full strength, the corpse still didn’t move an inch at all!

One must know that his power enhancement from Kong shi’s blood droplet hadn’t ended yet, which meant to say that the strength he wielded was still invincible beneath Ancient Sage!

“Upon reaching Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm, a cultivator’s body would gain significant weight, allowing him to stand his ground firmly regardless of the opponent he was standing against. Beyond that, if a cultivator were to make a breakthrough to Ancient Sage too, his body would be further tempered to become even denser and more resilient. It would be impossible for those beneath Ancient Sage to leave a mark on an Ancient Sage corpse, let alone kill a living Ancient Sage. It’s also due to this reason that Ancient Sages are known to be particularly troublesome to deal with.” Seeing the look on Zhang Xuan’s face, Luo Ruoxin couldn’t help but chuckle softly.

“Doesn’t that mean that it’s impossible for me to keep this Ancient Sage corpse into my storage ring?” Zhang Xuan asked with a stifled look on his face.

He was still intending to forge the corpse into a Soulless Metal Humanoid to serve as one of his trump cards. However, if he couldn’t even lift its body, how could he hope to control it?

“It would have been impossible for you to lift its body under normal circumstances, but your Dragonbone Divine Spear happens to be an Ancient Sage artifact. While its strength has



been sealed, it should still be able to move the corpse over to your storage ring,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“You’re right!” Zhang Xuan slapped his forehead in realization.

How did he forget about this matter?

His strength might be lacking at the moment, but the Dragonbone Divine Spear used to be the weapon of the strongest Ancient Sage Ran Qiu!

Even the water droplets it flung out wielded the strength to kill Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivators. In terms of sheer physical might, its prowess was even greater than the current him!

Thus, Zhang Xuan tapped the spear in his grasp, and its body immediately morphed into that of a massive dragon.

Hu!

It easily picked up the Ancient Sage corpse on the ground and moved it over into Zhang Xuan’s storage ring.

“It works!” Seeing that the Dragonbone Divine Spear was indeed able to do it, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

With this matter out of the way, he finally turned his gaze back to Qi Zhen and the others.

To think that the seers would actually collude with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Unforgivable!

Boom!

With just a thought, countless streaks of lightning descended from the heavens, trapping Qi Zhen and the others in place. Miserable wails escaped from their mouths as the violent lightning devastated their bodies.

With a light wave of his hand, the tortoiseshell ceiling was ripped apart by the onslaught of the lightning above, thus leaving the seers in the guild completely exposed to the heavenly retribution.

Seers sought to steal the secrets of the heavens, so their very existence wasn’t permitted by the world. Despite so, they still dared to collude together with the Otherworldly Demonic

Tribe to bring harm to their own brethren... They were truly seeking death!

As the lightning ravaged the Seer Guild, Zhang Xuan could feel greater clarity in his thoughts. It was hard to put a finger on the feeling, but he could feel the Library of Heaven's Path growing stronger bit by bit.

With a satisfied nod of his head, he took out his Communication Jade Token and instructed Zhan shi to bring the elders of the Sanctum of Sages over.

It didn't take long for Zhan shi to arrive together with Ge shi and the others.

"I'll give these seers to you. They are guilty of colluding with the Otherworldly Demons who stole Sage Kui's sculpture. I want you to interrogate them and make them spit out their true intention!" Zhang Xuan commanded authoritatively.

"Yes, sanctum head!"

While Zhan shi and the others were still a little confused by the turn of events, they hurriedly nodded their heads in acknowledgement of Zhang Xuan's command.

"Let's go!" Zhang Xuan turned to Luo Ruoxin and said.

While he had failed to apprehend the culprits who had stolen Sage Kui's sculpture, at the very least, they did manage to learn of the Seer Guild's treachery. Through uncovering the goals of these seers, they should be able to fathom a guess at what the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was up to. In any case, the Sanctum of Sages should be competent enough to deal with this matter, so it would suffice to entrust this matter to them.

The urgent matter at hand was for him to return to the Zhang Clan and resolve the conflict between the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan. Otherwise, the rift in their relations would hinder the two clans from cooperating with one another to deal with the impending crisis.

Considering how even the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages had begun to move, he wasn't so naive to think that the

Zhang Clan would be able to survive the impending crisis alone.

Hu!

After leaving the Seer Guild, the three of them traveled through the spatial passageway Wu Chen had opened up, and it didn't take them long to arrive at the Zhang Clan.

“Xuan-er, you are back!”

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, Sword Saint Xing and the others quickly rushed forward to welcome him.

“You must be Ruoxin! I am Zhang Xuan's mother. Do you remember me? We met one another back at the Luo Clan, but I didn't really get to talk much with you then. Shall we have a walk together?” Seeing the young lady that her son had brought with him, Sword Saint Meng's eyes glowed so brightly in excitement that it seemed as if sparks would fly from them.

Luo Ruoxin was unaccustomed to being so warmly welcomed that her face swiftly flushed in a fluster. Unsure of how she should respond, she turned to Zhang Xuan for help.

In response to her distress signal, Zhang Xuan averted his gaze, feigning ignorance to her plight.

“He is...” Sword Saint Xing gestured to Wu Chen and asked.

He had seen with his own eyes just how powerful the adolescent boy was back at the Luo Clan. If it was possible, he would more than delighted to get acquainted with an expert of such a caliber and trade insights with him.

“His name is Wu Chen, and he's serving Ruoxin,” Zhang Xuan introduced.

Before Sword Saint Xing could say a word, a haughty voice had already sounded by the side, “Serving? He's a servant? I see! After our Young Master marries your Young Mistress, you'll be under my command then! Let's get along well!”

Unknowingly, Sun Qiang had walked over out of nowhere, and he patted Wu Chen's shoulder with a gleeful smile on his face.

After the incident at the Empire Alliance, Sun Qiang was forced to train under Zheng Yang at the Combat Master Hall. However, after Zhao Ya and the others were kidnapped, out of concern of the safety of his other students, he had Zheng Yang, Wang Ying, and the others move over to the Zhang Clan.

Naturally, Sun Qiang had to move over to the Zhang Clan as well.

Upon learning that the Young Master he served was the head of the Zhang Clan and the Sanctum of Sages, his confidence was swiftly restored. From time to time, one would see him strutting haughtily around the Zhang Clan, almost as if he owned the place.

This was the airs that he felt he should put up as the butler of the head of the strongest Sage Clan on the Master Teacher Continent.

“I’ll be under your command?” Wu Chen nearly fainted on the spot hearing those words.

“You don’t seem to be too pleased about it. Are you unwilling to follow my orders? Let me tell you, I am the only butler that our Young Master has! No one would dare to speak a word on your behalf even if I were to teach you a lesson!” Sensing Wu Chen’s reluctance, Sun Qiang slapped the adolescent boy’s head and harrumphed.

You are just a mere servant! How dare you refuse to heed my orders? Just try frowning once more, and I’ll give you a good pummeling so that you know who is boss here!

“This...”

Not expecting their son’s butler to be so unreliable, the Xingmeng Sword Saint nearly keeled over.

That adolescent boy barged into the Luo Clan and stood indomitable in the combined prowess of their elders. Yet, a fellow who had barely reached Saint realm actually dared to slap his head... Are you tired of living?

“...” Zhang Xuan couldn’t help but cover his head in embarrassment.

If there was a hole in the vicinity, he would have definitely leaped right in to hide.

It wasn't too long ago that this fellow suffered the greatest trauma in life, so how in the world did his ego inflate so much after just a couple of days?

# 1629 Nangong Yuanfeng Arrives at the Zhang Clan

Sun Qiang's arrogance didn't last for too long.

All of a sudden, he found himself floating into the air without doing anything... And slowly, he drifted off into the horizon before disappearing altogether.

Seeing that Wu Chen had only made Sun Qiang float away, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

It was a huge headache to him how Sun Qiang tried to boast of his standing at every opportunity he got. To be honest, he had wanted to teach that fellow some humility for a very long time!

It was incomprehensible to him how someone as low profile as him ended up with this braggart of a butler.

Ah... He really should have been more stringent with his choice back then!

If he had a choice to pick another butler in the future, he would really have to find one that was reliable... At the very least, his butler should like Wu Chen, capable of solving most problems on his own. Even if he couldn't find someone of Wu Chen's caliber, at the very least, his butler shouldn't pull him down and land him in trouble every now and then...

If not for the fact that Sun Qiang had followed him since his time at Tianxuan Kingdom, there was no way he would tolerate all of this!

...

“Clan head, the Luo Clan has recently inaugurated a person known as Luo Tianya as their new clan head. Rumor has it that he has comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, and we believe that the reason behind their visit at this point in time is to have him challenge you to a duel and return the favor from the engagement ceremony... In fact, we heard that

they have invited the Master Teacher Pavilion over to officiate the duel so as to ensure fairness...”

As they took their seats in the main hall, an elder stood up and reported with a clasped fist.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan rubbed his glabella in distress as he replied, “I am aware of that. The reason why I have returned is to resolve this issue!”

“The Spatial Quintessence of Sealing is the highest heritage of the Luo Clan. Those who have comprehended it are capable of freezing space, rendering one completely helpless. Even we would have trouble dealing with something like that... Xuan-er, you have to be careful!” Sword Saint Xing advised worriedly.

The Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan had been relatively close to one another the past few years, so they were well aware of the prowess of the Luo Clan. Once a cultivator had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, it was only a matter of time before he reached the top of the continent.

His son might be nigh invincible in his power class, but it would still be difficult for him to triumph over an opponent of such caliber.

“The Luo Clan has already been humiliated once by the annulment of the engagement ceremony. Given how they dared to challenge us publicly at this juncture, it’s likely that they are confident of victory! Our Zhang Clan doesn’t have any records on Luo Tianya, but we have just received news that he has managed to defeat an expert from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers!” the elder who had just spoken earlier added grimly.

“He has defeated an expert from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers? That bunch of people has finally shown themselves?” Sword Saint Meng asked with a frown.

“Un. It seems like Hundred Schools of Philosophers have challenged the Luo Clan to a duel with the Celestial Amulet of Legacy at stake. The Luo Clan was in a disadvantageous position when Luo Tianya suddenly appeared out of nowhere

and defeated them. After which, they tested his bloodline and found that its purity was at the level of '9'. As such, the elders unanimously nominated him to become the head of the Luo Clan, and they swiftly conducted the inauguration ceremony afterward!" the elder replied.

Due to their close relations in the past, they had tabs on one another.

On top of that, the Luo Clan made no attempts to conceal the news either. As such, the elder in charge of acquiring intelligence in the Zhang Clan didn't take too long to learn of the matter.

"Having inherited Kong shi's heritage, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers wields nigh invincible prowess in their power class. Even the combat masters would have trouble subduing them! Considering how Luo Tianya was able to defeat them with ease, his prowess is indeed not something that we can afford to underestimate..." Sword Saint Meng frowned worriedly.

"Regarding that..." Zhang Xuan scratched his head awkwardly. "If I were to say that I'm Luo Tianya, would you believe me?"

"Stop messing around. The other party boasts the purest bloodline in the Luo Clan, so how could you be him?" Sword Saint Meng shook her head.

Her son possessed her bloodline—this was something which they had verified previously. Given so, there was no way he could possess the Luo Clan bloodline. On the other hand, Luo Tianya was someone who had been tested to have a purity level of '9' for the Luo Clan bloodline. Given so, there was no way the two of them could be the same person!

"This..." Zhang Xuan was rendered speechless.

He had already told them the truth, but why didn't anyone believe him?

Sighing helplessly, he was just about to explain the entire matter when a furious gust of wind sounded above them.



Following which, a loud voice echoed throughout the Zhang Clan, “Nangong Yuanfeng and Tantai Zhenqing from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers’ Great Phrontistery of Confucianism has come with a couple of juniors to pay a visit to the head of the Zhang Clan!”

“What are they doing here? Have they already recovered from their wounds?” Zhang Xuan slightly startled by the declaration.

He quickly walked out from the main hall, and the others followed closely behind him.

Floating in the air was Nangong Yuanfeng, and by his side was a stout middle-aged man with a rather disproportionate face. Behind them were a group of eight young men, presumably the students of Nangong Yuanfeng and the stout middle-aged man.

“Tantai Zhenqing? Is he the descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yu?” Zhang Xuan thought with a frown.

Ancient Sage Zi Yu went by the compound surname of Tantai. Due to his disproportionate facial features, Kong shi had once judged him by his appearance and ended up wronging him. That resulted in the famous saying, “Judge a man by his looks, and one shall wrong a Zi Yu”.

With such doubts in mind, Zhang Xuan took a closer look at those men and noted that Nangong Yuanfeng’s complexion was still a little pale. His four disciples, Nangong Mo and the others, also looked a little sickly. It was apparent that they hadn’t fully recovered from their injuries yet.

“Something is not right here. While I did send them flying in a single strike, their injuries shouldn’t have been so severe. How did they end up like that?” Zhang Xuan was perplexed.

While he did use his full might during the duel with Nangong Yuanfeng, he didn’t ignite Kong shi’s blood droplet, so the damage he would have caused should have been limited. It was true that Nangong Yuanfeng was a little more vulnerable during the duel, considering that he had his cultivation suppressed down to Saint 9-dan back then, but he should have

been able to recover swiftly once he released the seal on his cultivation.

So, why did Nangong Yuanfeng appear to be so heavily injured at the moment?

“I am the head of the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan. It’s an honor for us to welcome the envoys from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. Please, let’s talk inside!” Knowing that this wasn’t the moment for him to be dazing off, Zhang Xuan clasped his fist and welcomed them.

“Very well!”

Seeing that Zhang Xuan’s etiquette was impeccable, there was nothing Nangong Yuanfeng and the others could complain about. Thus, they quickly descended from the sky.

“This way!” Zhang Xuan gestured with a smile before leading the way into the main hall.

After taking their respective seats, Nangong Yuanfeng got to the topic at hand, “Time is very tight on our side, so allow me to get straight to the point. The Temple of Confucius will be opening very soon, and our Hundred Schools of Philosophers hopes to enter the premises to pay respects to the predecessors as well. We have heard that the Zhang Clan has managed to obtain one of the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, and we are hoping that you would be so kind as to offer it to us. Rest assured that we won’t take advantage of you; we’ll be offering something of equivalent value in exchange of the amulet!”

“You want the Celestial Amulet of Legacy? That’s out of the question. Our Zhang Clan intends to enter the Temple of Confucius as well, so I’m afraid that we won’t be able to fulfill your request!” Sword Saint Xing replied with a dark look on his face.

It was as he had expected. The Hundred Schools of Philosophers had indeed come for their Celestial Amulet of Legacy.

The Temple of Confucius was where Kong shi had stored his most valuable treasures and heritage in. Missing the opportunity to enter the Temple of Confucius was equivalent

to being ousted from the race for the top... Furthermore, it was not by sheer luck that the Zhang Clan had come to possess the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, so how could they possibly hand it over to someone else so easily?

Even if the other party was from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, this matter was not open for negotiation!

As if he had expected such a response, Nangong Yuanfeng sighed deeply and said, "Since that's the case, I guess we'll have to compete for it then! Kong shi has always encouraged competition amongst his students so that they would strive to improve themselves. Considering that the Celestial Amulet of Legacy was his gift to the later generations, he would hope for it to be in the hands of the most qualified individual. After all, only such a person would be worthy of inheriting his treasures and heritage!

"Since that's the case, we shall make a formal challenge to the Zhang Clan. If there's any Zhang Clan offspring of a hundred years old and below who is able to surpass our students in the comprehension of temporal laws, our Hundred Schools of Philosophers promises to never raise the matter regarding the Celestial Amulet of Legacy with the Zhang Clan ever again, and we'll offer a possession of the Ancient Sages as a formal apology to the Zhang Clan. Conversely, if there's no Zhang Clan offspring who is able to surpass our students in the comprehension of temporal laws, I'd have to ask you to entrust the Celestial Amulet of Legacy to our care!"

"Your students will be challenging our Zhang Clan to the comprehension of temporal laws?" Zhang Xuan looked at Nangong Yuanfeng and frowned.

"That's not it. It's Brother Tantai's students who will be challenging the Zhang Clan offspring!" Nangong Yuanfeng replied with a smile. In Chinese, a compounded surname refers to surnames consisting of two characters. If there are two syllables to the surname, the surname would be a compounded surname. Some of the more well-known examples of compounded surnames would be Ouyang, Huangfu, Shuangguan, Linghu, so on and so forth. Due to Zi Yu's appearance, Kong Zi once judged that he was of mediocre

aptitude and wouldn't achieve great things in the future. However, Zi Yu ended up proving him wrong in how he was able to effectively spread Kong Zi's teachings across many states, thus the saying.

# 1630 Tantai Zhenqing

“I am Tantai Zhenqing, a descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yu. It’s my honor to meet the head of the Zhang Clan!”

The middle-aged man with a disproportionate face seated beside Nangong Yuanfeng stood up and bowed deeply. His manners and etiquette were truly flawless, making it impossible for one to pick a bone with him. Despite their visit being provocative in nature, his refined demeanor made it difficult for one to dislike him.

So, this is a true philosopher... Zhang Xuan remarked internally.

He had met plenty of master teachers and experts on his journey, and there was a handful who had conducted themselves with grace and propriety. However, none of them could match the middle-aged man before him.

With just a look, one could tell that he was a true Confucian.

“Elder Tantai, you are too courteous...” Zhang Xuan stood up and returned the greeting.

“I believe Brother Yuanfeng has already clarified the reason behind our visit. Kong shi’s heritage is something that we hold dear, so I’m afraid that we can’t give up on it easily. The young men behind me are my direct disciples, and they have studied under me for quite some time. So as to not sully the relations between us, I propose a duel of temporal laws with your esteemed clan between our juniors... Regardless of the outcome of the duel, we are willing to gift this inkstone once used by my ancestor to the Zhang Clan as a token of apology.”

As he said those words, Tantai Zhenqing flicked his wrist, and a pitch-black inkstone materialized in the air.

“This is a possession of Ancient Sage Zi Yu?”

Sword Saint Xing and the others were astounded by the gift.

The inkstone wasn't too big, but it emanated a heavy aura that felt as if it could even weigh down the world. It was as though even disturbances in spacetime would be calmed by its presence.

This is... a true Ancient Sage artifact! Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up in astonishment.

The sword that Nangong Yuanfeng had offered back at the Luo Clan was only an artifact once used by Ancient Sage Zi Rong; it could not be considered a true Ancient Sage artifact. It was not to say that it did not have any value, but it was not something that would truly drive others frenzied over it. On the other hand, the inkstone before them was an artifact that Ancient Sage Zi Rong had used in his peak!

However, it's still far from matching my Dragonbone Divine Spear...

Putting aside the fact that Ancient Sage Ran Qiu had been far stronger than Ancient Sage Zi Yu, just the fact that the Dragonbone Divine Spear was an artifact intended for battle whereas an inkstone was a literary device, the primary purposes of their existences already varied vastly from one another.

Nevertheless, if they could just acquire the inkstone, its presence could help to contain good fortune within the Zhang Clan!

Zhang Xuan turned his gaze back to Tantai Zhenqing and remarked, "With the sincerity you have shown, I suppose it would be rude for me to turn down the duel then."

"I ask for your understanding for this matter," Tantai Zhenqing replied with a gentle smile.

"The Temple of Confucius a place that all master teachers of our generation hope to visit. Beneath the courtesy and politeness, competition over it is inevitable. Since that's the case, may the most qualified individual obtain the rights!"

Zhang Xuan waved his hand with a smile as he stood up.

"May I know what format you intend for the duel?"

The purpose behind the other party's visit was the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, and it was apparent that they had no intention of backing down. Since that was the case, there was no purpose in engaging in a verbal tug-of-war. It would be much better to get it over and done with.

“Since Clan Head Zhang has entrusted the decision to me, I shall propose a format for the duel then!” Tantai Zhenqing nodded. “Our Hundred Schools of Philosophers distinguishes duels into two main categories, namely academic and martial. An academic duel preserves the amity between two parties whereas a martial duel puts one's capabilities to the test.”

“What would the academic duel and martial duel for this matter be then?”

“I have a Temporal Mirror here. Through reflecting one's Primordial Spirit on it, it allows one's consciousness to seep into the mirror. There are many Temporal Formations and time traps embedded within the mirror that the challenger would have to overcome. This is the academic duel,” Tantai Zhenqing said as a golden mirror materialized before him.

Unlike normal mirrors, the surface of the Temporal Mirror was not flat. It had many different vertices that reflected off one another, forming a dizzying image reminiscent of a kaleidoscope.

“As for martial duel, we'll suppress our cultivation to the same level and duel with one another. All is fair game, and the one who boasts superior strength shall emerge victorious!”

After explaining the two duels, Tantai Zhenqing sat back and gazed at the crowd around him with a patient smile, waiting for the Zhang Clan to make their decision.

“The disciples of our Zhang Clan have never encountered the Temporal Mirror before, so they are unaware of the mechanisms and formations hidden within it. It'd be disadvantageous for us to face them in an academic duel. As for the martial duel, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers are known to wield superior battle techniques, so it won't be easy for our disciples to best them!” an elder remarked grimly.

“Aren’t they simply proposing whatever is advantageous to them?”

“It can’t be helped. Our Zhang Clan isn’t weak, but the foundations of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers are simply too strong. Furthermore, they have already made their stand very clear. Whether we wanted it or not, we’ve stepped into the ring with them!”

“What should we do?”

The complexions of the elders in the room did not look too good.

While the proposed academic duel might have sounded fair, the asymmetry of information made the circumstances highly disadvantageous to the Zhang Clan. None of the disciples of the Zhang Clan had a clue about what they would face in the Temporal Mirror whereas the disciples of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers were likely familiar with it.

Even if their comprehension of temporal laws was at the same level as one another, the one who was more familiar with the Temporal Mirror was likely to be able to clear more obstacles than the one who was unfamiliar with it.

This was similar to running a marathon in another person’s home turf. Even if the two runners were equally skilled, the runner who was familiar with the local terrain was bound to be in an advantageous position.

The same applied for the martial duel. The Hundred Schools of Philosophers had inherited their heritage directly from Kong shi and his direct disciples, so their collection of battle techniques and secret arts was bound to be far superior to that of the Zhang Clan.

It was true that the Zhang Clan had been blessed with plenty of incredible geniuses over the past tens of thousands of years, but it would be expecting too much of them to outdo Kong shi and his direct disciples.

In other words, be it the academic duel or the martial duel, things were not in their favor.



Paying no heed to the worried crowd around him, Zhang Xuan replied calmly, “The academic duel sounds interesting to me, but it feels like it’ll be rather time-consuming. Let’s just go with the martial duel and end it quickly!”

“Martial duel? Very well!” Tantai Zhenqing nodded with an amiable smile. He raised his hand, and a young man walked out from behind him. “This young man over here is Tantai Jiankui. He’s my direct disciple and is thirty this year. His comprehension of temporal laws is still rather superficial, so I beg your pardon if his skills appear to be unpolished!”

Hula!

Right after those words were spoken, the young man walked to the center of the main hall and halted. A forbidding aura burst forth from his body, exerting heavy pressure on those around him.

“Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm!”  
Sword Saint Xing narrowed his eyes.

To reach Great Sage 1-dan despite having only being thirty this year... Other than his son, there was no one in the Zhang Clan who could match Tantai Jiankui in terms of talent!

In fact, even Sword Saint Xing himself had been far beyond that age when he first stepped into Great Sage 1-dan.

“Tantai Jiankui. Please!” The young man clasped his fist and bowed.

“Xuan-er, even though your cultivation has already reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle, you have never systematically inherited our Zhang Clan’s heritage of temporal laws... If you find yourself forced to a corner, do not hesitate to use your secret art. I’m referring to the secret art that you used to raise your prowess to the Sempiternal realm when you fought with me...” Sword Saint Xing sent a telepathic message to his son.

The most talented offspring below a hundred years of age within the Zhang Clan was indubitably Zhang Xuan.

If he used the secret art that he had utilized before, he would surely be able to defeat the other party with absolute ease.

“I’m afraid that I won’t be able to use that secret art anymore...” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

He needed Kong shi’s blood droplet in order to activate that ability, but he had already expended all three droplets. In other words, this trump card had already been rendered obsolete.

“You aren’t able to use that secret art anymore?” Sword Saint Xing’s eyebrows shot up in astonishment. “Then...”

Even though the opponent would be suppressing his cultivation, the difference in their real cultivation realms would still result in a significant gap in their fighting prowess... Even for his incredibly talented son, it would surely be a tough battle.

“Don’t worry, I won’t be the one fighting the duel anyway!” Zhang Xuan remarked with a light chuckle.

“You won’t be the one fighting the duel?” Hearing those words, Sword Saint Xing was visibly startled.

The others also quickly turned astounded gazes over as well. If you aren’t going to fight, who will?

“Of course, it won’t be me! Don’t you think that we’ll be taking advantage of our guests here if I fight them?” Zhang Xuan scoffed matter-of-factly, and a smile crept onto his lips.

“I think that we should pass this opportunity onto the younger generation... Let my student, Zhang Jiuxiao, do the fighting instead!”

# 1631 Memorization Through Spiritual Perception, Recital of a Thousand Books

“Younger generation?”

The lips of the crowd twitched upon hearing those words.

Isn't Zhang Jiuxiao older than you?

For a twenty-year-old young man to address someone older than him as the 'younger generation'... Well, in terms of seniority, Zhang Jiuxiao was his student, so there was not anything wrong with that address, just that...

There was just an inexplicable feeling of incongruity.

Furthermore...

“Zhang Jiuxiao is only at Saint 8-dan pinnacle at the moment. Even though his bloodline is pure, he has never learned the core battle techniques and cultivation techniques of our Zhang Clan, so I fear...” Sword Saint Xing said with a deep frown.

It was during the clan tournament that Zhang Jiuxiao had achieved a breakthrough to Saint 8-dan primary stage. During that period of time, the clan had devoted many resources to grooming him, so it did not take long for his cultivation to advance to Saint 8-dan pinnacle.

With such cultivation, he could indeed be considered as one of the most outstanding cultivators among the younger generation... However, the opponent that he was facing was a genius from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, Tantai Jankui!

To make matters worse, he had come from the side family. As a result, he had never had the opportunity to access the core heritage of the Zhang Clan.

No matter how they looked at it, it did not seem like Zhang Jiuxiao stood much of a chance.

The Celestial Amulet of Legacy was at stake! Was it really fine to take this matter so lightly?

Paying no heed to the words of advice around him, Zhang Xuan waved his hand casually and instructed, "It's fine. Invite him over!"

"Yes!" An elder bowed deeply in response before walking out of the main hall. It did not take long for him to return with a young man in tow.

"Teacher!" Walking into the room, Zhang Jiuxiao quickly walked up to Zhang Xuan and bowed deeply.

"Un. I believe that the Ninth Elder should have filled you in on the situation by now. I want you to represent our Zhang Clan in a duel against the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, and I want you to know that I won't tolerate a loss!" Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back.

"I can't lose the duel?" A distressed frown surfaced between Zhang Jiuxiao's brows. "Teacher, I barely made a breakthrough yesterday, so I haven't fully reinforced my cultivation yet..."

He had already heard the story from the Ninth Elder on the way there, and he knew just how important the duel with the Hundred Schools of Philosophers was. If he lost, he would really become the sinner of the Zhang Clan!

"You haven't fully reinforced your cultivation yet? That's no problem at all." Zhang Xuan stood up and walked toward Zhang Jiuxiao. "Sit down!"

"Yes, Teacher!"

Zhang Jiuxiao had no idea what his teacher was going to do, but he knew his teacher would not instruct him to do something for no reason. Thus, he crossed his leg and sat down on the floor without any hesitation.

Walking behind Zhang Jiuxiao, Zhang Xuan stretched his hand forward and placed it on top of the other party's head.

Slightly surprised by Zhang Xuan's sudden action, Zhang Jiuxiao was just about to say something when he suddenly felt a warm surge of energy flowing in from the other party's palm.

This warm surge of energy swiftly diffused throughout his entire body, clearing up all of the energy blockages and repairing all of the wear and tear that his body had sustained as a result of his recent breakthrough.

In the blink of an eye, his cultivation had already harmonized perfectly with his mind, spirit, and psyche. The lapses in his control over his cultivation vanished completely, allowing his zhenqi to flow smoothly at will. It was almost as if he was a veteran who had been in this cultivation realm for many years.

“This...”

Nangong Yuanfeng and Tantai Zhenqing traded shocked gazes. Disbelief could be seen reflected in their eyes.

This was not Cultivation Impartation, so it could not be considered a breach of any rules.

What the young man did was harmonize his student's cultivation together with his body and soul through a secret art. This was a feat easier said than done.

On top of possessing incredibly pure zhenqi and the utmost control over his energy, more importantly, he needed to have a complete understanding of his student's physical condition.

The Great Phrontistery of Confucianism was filled with experts, but there was hardly anyone who could achieve this feat. In fact, not even the Ancient Sages would confidently claim that they would be able to pull it off!

Yet, a Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivator had actually managed to do it so easily...

Was the head of the Zhang Clan not a little too formidable?

“Alright, you should have already fully reinforced your Saint 8-dan pinnacle cultivation. As for the Zhang Clan's heritage...” At this point, a slight frown emerged on Zhang Xuan's forehead, and he fell into a brief moment of thought.

A moment later, he raised his head to look at Tantai Zhenqing. With an apologetic look on his face, he clasped his fist and bowed. “Elder Tantai, it hasn’t been long since my student returned to the Zhang Clan, so he’s only adept in the battle techniques of the side family. If you would just give me some time, I’d like to impart some moves to him right now. This way, he will be more prepared for the battle with your student later on!”

“You are intending to impart some moves to your student right now?”

Even someone with Tantai Zhenqing’s demeanor could not help but be taken aback by Zhang Xuan’s request.

Temporal laws were known to be incredibly abstract and difficult to grasp. This was even more so for temporal arts, which were derived from the temporal laws. Even his students took several years under his guidance before they were finally able to grasp the bare basics, yet the young man actually intended to start teaching his student right now.

Are you for real?

Thinking that Tantai Zhenqing was worrying that he would take too long, Zhang Xuan added with a smile, “Indeed. Please do not worry, I won’t take up too much time. An hour will be sufficient!”

“An hour...” Tantai Zhenqing was even more dazed after hearing those words.

What could the other party possibly learn within an hour?

Furthermore, the opponent that the other party would be facing was his student, an Introspective Convalescence expert!

Tantai Zhenqing was not the only one who was stunned by this seemingly ridiculous request. Nangong Yuanfeng and his students also glanced at one another in confusion as well.

The crowd could not help but lean closer a little, hoping to see how Zhang Xuan intended to impart temporal arts to his student within an hour. However, at this moment, they heard Sword Saint Xing’s frenzied voice.

“Xuan-er, it has only been two days since you returned to the Zhang Clan! You haven’t even inherited the heritage of the clan yet, so how in the world do you plan to impart it to Jiuxiao?”

“...” Nangong Yuanfeng and Tantai Zhenqing staggered.

In the end, the young man was not even adept in temporal arts himself... and he still dared to claim that he would impart it to his student within an hour.

Really, can you tell us just what is going through your mind?

Is the head of the Zhang Clan actually an idiot?

“It’s fine, I can just learn them right now... Eighth Elder, you hold the key to the library of our Zhang Clan. I want you to bring the battle techniques and cultivation techniques of our clans over right now!” Zhang Xuan instructed.

“Yes, clan head!”

The Eighth Elder quickly rushed out of the main hall. A few moments later, he returned to the room. With a flick of his hand, a huge pile of books stacked on bookshelves materialized before the crowd. It was a tremendous collection consisting of several hundred thousand books.

The reason the Zhang Clan was able to continuously groom generation after generation of experts and retain its position as the number one Sage Clan could mostly be credited to its rich heritage. The collection of cultivation techniques and battle techniques that it had amassed over the years was truly a sight to behold.

In fact, the Eighth Elder had only brought over some of the more commonly practiced cultivation techniques and battle techniques.

Considering the limited time that they had, he did not have time to take out all of the books.

“I’ve troubled you!” Zhang Xuan first thanked the Eighth Elder before turning his gaze to the books before him.

He swiftly enveloped the bookshelves before him with his Spiritual Perception, and the next moment, the several hundred

thousand books floated into the air and began flipping automatically.

“This is... Memorization Through Spiritual Perception, Recital of a Thousand Books? How is this possible?”

Tantai Zhenqing widened his eyes in disbelief.

“Memorization Through Spiritual Perception requires a cultivator to divide his Spiritual Perception into countless fragments in order to browse through and memorize the content in the books simultaneously.

“Even Kong Shiyao, who is known to possess the greatest talent in the Great Phrontistery of Confucianism, is only capable of browsing through three thousand books simultaneously, and that is already a feat that has broken records that have stood for tens of thousands of years...

“Yet, that young man is actually flipping through several hundred thousand books simultaneously... Just how powerful is his Spiritual Perception?”

Nangong Yuanfeng’s jaw had practically dropped to the ground.

Any Saint 2-dan expert could easily use their Spiritual Perception to memorize a book swiftly, but it was a different story when it came to multiple books. Reading two books simultaneously would require a cultivator divide their attention between the two books, and this was not too easy for Primordial Spirit realm cultivators to pull off.

The Great Phrontistery of Confucianism was filled with experts, but even the most talented prodigy was only capable of memorizing three thousand books simultaneously. Yet, this fellow was actually trying to browse through several hundred thousand books at once...

Was he not afraid of overloading his mind with information and turning into a retard?



# 1632 Time Quintessence

“It’s also possible that he’s just browsing through the contents with his Spiritual Perception and not memorizing anything at all...” Nangong Yuanfeng remarked a short moment later.

Browsing through the content and memorizing them were two entirely different concepts.

The former only required one to scan through the book with one’s Spiritual Perception; there was no need to attempt to understand or absorb the contents at all. On the other hand, the latter required one to commit everything that one had seen to memory. Naturally, the level of difficulty for both feats was vastly different.

If it was just browsing through several hundred thousand books at once, he was able to do it as well.

“Let’s keep watching. We’ll know very soon whether he’s faking it or not!” Tantai Zhenqing replied.

Right after he finished those words, the hundreds of thousands of books in the air were flipped over to the very last page before falling heavily back onto the bookshelves.

“Eighth Elder, I’ll have to trouble you to take back all of the books!” Zhang Xuan instructed before taking a deep breath and closing his eyes, seemingly trying to assimilate the knowledge that he had just taken in.

“Yes!” the Eighth Elder replied as he stowed the shelves back into his storage ring before rushing off.

Roughly ten breaths later, Zhang Xuan finally opened his eyes and said, “Jiuxiao, you have practiced a simplified version of the Zhang Clan’s cultivation technique previously. In the interest of time, I’ll just correct a few simple flaws. The main issue lies in your battle technique and comprehension of temporal laws. I have compiled two manuals based on the books that I have just read, and I’ll impart them to you right now!”

After saying those words, he flicked his finger and directed a sliver of his will into Zhang Jiuxiao's consciousness.

"This..." Taking in the knowledge that his teacher had imparted to him, Zhang Jiuxiao's body suddenly froze on the spot.

Temporal laws were known to be even more abstract and profound than spatial laws, thus making them extremely difficult to grasp and comprehend. There were many cultivators who had spent their entire lives trying to fathom them, only to fail miserably.

It was for this reason that even Zhang Clan offspring were only able to tap into the prowess of time through their bloodline ability or the Zhang Clan swordsmanship.

Zhang Jiuxiao had thought that even if he really possessed decent aptitude toward temporal arts, it would still take him quite some time before he could really grasp them. However, the manual that his teacher had just imparted to him was structured in a really comprehensible manner, gradually establishing one's fundamental interpretation of temporal laws before delving in deep. With this, the difficulty in grasping and comprehending temporal laws was lowered tremendously.

At the rate that he was improving at, he was confident that he would be able to achieve a decent mastery of temporal laws within less than half a month.

Unfortunately, that was still too long.

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Jiuxiao raised his head and said, "Teacher, I don't think that there's enough time for me to master those two manuals..."

It was not that he did not want to bring honor to the Zhang Clan, but even with the two manuals that his teacher had imparted to him, he would still require some time before he was able to truly wield temporal arts in battle.

This was not a matter that could really be rushed.

One hour was simply too little time!

“Calm down, there’s no need to panic. Ignite this droplet of blood in your body!” Seemingly expecting such a situation, Zhang Xuan flicked his finger lightly, and a droplet of blood essence seeped into Zhang Jiuxiao’s glabella.

This was a droplet of the most concentrated blood essence of the Zhang Clan.

Weng!

As soon as the droplet seeped into Zhang Jiuxiao’s body, it was immediately ignited. Following which, the latter was placed in a unique state of mind.

“This is... Time Acceleration?” Tantai Zhenqing narrowed his eyes.

As the droplet of blood seeped into Zhang Jiuxiao’s body, he could clearly sense the other party’s consciousness entering some kind of temporal whirlpool. The flow of time within this whirlpool was accelerated from the external world.

In other words, an hour in the external world could very well mean a day or even more to Zhang Jiuxiao’s consciousness.

One of the elders of the Zhang Clan saw through what Zhang Xuan had done, and he remarked in awe, “Accelerating the time of one’s consciousness—this is rather similar to our Blood Reservoir.”

The Zhang Clan’s Blood Reservoir allowed the offspring of the Zhang Clan to accelerate the time of their consciousness, thus enhancing the speed at which they cultivated. It played a crucial role in ensuring that the geniuses of the Zhang Clan remained ahead of their rivals.

“The Blood Reservoir only accelerates time by roughly ten times whereas the ability used by the clan head accelerates time more than a hundredfold...” another elder of the Zhang Clan added as he gulped.

“He used the most concentrated blood essence of our Zhang Clan to set up a Time Acceleration Temporal Formation within Zhang Jiuxiao’s head. By limiting the time acceleration effect to just the consciousness, he was able to lower the cost to the bare minimum!” Sword Saint Xing remarked with a nod.

Others might not have been able to see through what Zhang Xuan was doing, but as an ex-head of the Zhang Clan, as well as one of its top experts, he was able to easily see through his son's motives.

Under normal circumstances, the activation of one's bloodline was extremely demanding on one's blood essence. There were often cases where offspring of Sage Clans completely depleted their blood essence barely after executing one or two battle techniques.

Zhang Xuan used a unique secret art to alter only the flow of time for Zhang Jiuxiao's consciousness. Through this, not only was the consumption of blood essence extremely low, the acceleration of time could also be enhanced manyfold.

“Even if he's able to accelerate time by more than a hundredfold, that would only amount to a couple of days at most. Will Zhang Jiuxiao really be able to gain the strength to defeat Tantai Jiankui within just a few days?” the elder who had spoken earlier asked uncertainly.

While the means of their clan head were indeed astounding, Zhang Jiuxiao's starting point was simply too low. Even with the clan head's time acceleration, would a couple of days really be enough for him to defeat Tantai Jiankui?

Most of the elders of the Zhang Clan had devoted several centuries of their lives to studying temporal arts, but they had barely been able to make any progress in it.

Paying no heed to the skepticism among the crowd, Zhang Xuan returned to his seat and closed his eyes. He seemed to be assimilating the knowledge that he had just taken in from the several hundred thousand books.

The reason he had used his Spiritual Perception to flip through the books was simply to put up a cover before the Hundred Schools of Philosophers and the Zhang Clan. In truth, with just a scan of his eyes, he had already collected all of the books, memorized their content, and successfully formed the Heaven's Path Temporal Art.

The manuals that he had imparted to Zhang Jiuxiao were the simplified version of it, and right now, what he was planning to do was cultivate the complete version.

The predecessors of the Zhang Clan did have a deep understanding of time... Zhang Xuan thought in awe as he went through the Heaven's Path Temporal Art in his mind.

He really had to say that many of the predecessors of the Zhang Clan had achieved great things in the field of time. It was no wonder the Zhang Clan had been able to rise to the position of the number one Sage Clan on the continent, becoming an existence that none could surpass in the past tens of thousands of years.

Through their hard work, they had managed to decipher much of the secrets of time.

...

Some time later...

Boom!

Zhang Xuan suddenly felt as if he had grasped upon something tangible, and everything suddenly cleared up before him. A thought emerged in his mind, and it was slowly growing stronger and stronger.

At the same time, a phenomenon similar to what had happened in the Luo Clan's ancestral hall was happening in the Zhang Clan's ancestral hall. Unfortunately, all of the members of the Zhang Clan were too preoccupied with the duel against the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, so none of them noticed the phenomenon.

Hu!

When Zhang Xuan finally opened his eyes, there was a brilliant light shining from his eyes.

I have finally comprehended the Time Quintessence... It seems like the Zhang Clan's Time Quintessence is centered around the idea of time acceleration for oneself.

After fully comprehending the Zhang Clan's Time Quintessence, Zhang Xuan finally came to understand the crux

of the Zhang Clan's heritage.

Basically, the Zhang Clan's Time Quintessence allowed one to accelerate one's time, thus allowing one to move at a speed faster than anyone could react.

It was incapable of emulating the effects of the Master Teacher Pavilion's Hall of Spring and Autumn, where a year inside was equivalent to a month outside.

Nevertheless, there was no denying that it was a formidable ability.

At the very least, it had brought his fighting prowess up to a whole new level.

Previously, a droplet of the Zhang Clan blood essence would be depleted after activating time acceleration twice. However, with my deepened understanding of temporal laws, I am now able to store it within my body and use it at will without wasting any of its energy! A droplet of blood will now be able to last me dozens of uses easily! Zhang Xuan thought in delight.

Of the three droplets of Zhang Clan blood essence that Sword Saint Xing had given him, he had spent a droplet dealing with the Dragonbone Divine Spear and another droplet to accelerate Zhang Jiuxiao's time. As such, he only had one droplet left.

That being so, with his enhanced understanding of the Time Quintessence of Acceleration, he would be able to use it with far greater efficiency than before.

Thinking back, he had really been too wasteful with the first droplet that he had used against the Dragonbone Divine Spear.

It could be said that ninety-nine percent of its energy had been wasted without achieving anything!

However, with his enhanced control over temporal laws, he would now be able to effectively utilize every sliver of energy within the blood droplet. As such, even though he only had a single droplet left at the moment, it would suffice to last him through dozens of uses!

# 1633 Tantai Admits Defeat

Zhang Xuan's comprehension of Time Quintessence did not induce any pulsations of power, but Tantai Zhenqing still noticed that something was amiss. He could not help but frown.

To him, it was as if the disposition of the head of the Zhang Clan had abruptly changed. The other party's aura felt even heavier and reined in, creating a feeling of unfathomable depth.

"Time is up!"

The hour ticked by very swiftly. With a flick of Zhang Xuan's finger, Zhang Jiuxiao awoke from his state of trance. He took a few deep breaths as he consolidated his newfound knowledge before walking over to Tantai Jiankui.

Clasping his fist and bowing deeply, he gestured politely.  
"Please!"

"Very well!"

With a firm nod, Tantai Jiankui suppressed the energy in his body. In the blink of an eye, his cultivation was lowered to Saint 8-dan pinnacle, the same level as Zhang Jiuxiao.

"Let's begin the duel!" Zhang Xuan said with a wave of his hand by the side.

"Please guide me along!"

Without any hesitation, Zhang Jiuxiao took a step forward before abruptly vanishing. Before anyone realized it, he was already standing before Tantai Jiankui.

With a light thrust of his palm, immense might poured forth from his hand.

"Swift and powerful!"

Initially, Tantai Jiankui did not think very highly of his opponent even after suppressing his cultivation. After all, he

was already an Introspective Convalescence realm expert whereas his opponent was only at Saint 8-dan pinnacle.

However, Zhang Jiuxiao's swift maneuver had caught him off guard, causing him to narrow his eyes in astonishment. He anxiously drove his zhenqi desperately as he swiftly retreated.

Tantai Jiankui could tell that his opponent had not managed to comprehend Time Quintessence yet, but he was not too far from reaching that realm.

To come so close to Time Quintessence within a single hour... was that even humanly possible?

Tantai Jiankui's reaction was not slow, but Zhang Jiuxiao was simply faster. He abruptly opened up his thrusting palm and flicked his fingers lightly.

Sou sou sou!

Sword qi shot forth from his five fingers simultaneously.

These strands of sword qi appeared to move at a terribly slow speed, but in truth, they were not limited by the constraints of time and space. They would arrive right before its target in the blink of an eye, making it nigh impossible to guard against them.

"This is the highest level of the Zhang Clan swordsmanship! H-he..." Sword Saint Xing and Sword Saint Meng traded shocked gazes with one another.

Even for them, they had to collaborate closely with one another before they were able to execute the highest level of the Zhang Clan swordsmanship. Zhang Jiuxiao had clearly never learned the Zhang Clan swordsmanship prior to this, but he actually managed to reach such a level within a single hour...

Furthermore, it was sword qi shot out from his fingertips and not a sword...

Just what kind of mystical manual did their son impart to Zhang Jiuxiao?

Pu pu pu!



Even though Tantai Jiankui's retreat was swift, he was still unable to outrun the sword qi chasing after him. That being said, through his sheer battle instincts, he was still able to pull off an ingenious defensive maneuver at the very last moment. As a result, the sword qi only scraped his clothes.

"It's my turn now..."

Tantai Jiankui had thought that he would be able to defeat his opponent easily and make a huge contribution to the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, but he had nearly sustained severe injuries in just the first encounter. Knowing that it would be foolish to continue underestimating his opponent, his expression turned serious.

Without any warning, he charged forward with astounding speed to launch a counterattack.

Through the augmentation of his temporal art, his movement speed was unimaginably fast. Putting aside one's naked eyes, it would be impossible to trace his movements even through one's Spiritual Perception. Before one could even process what was going on, a fist carrying tremendous might would be right before one's face.

But despite the abrupt counterattack from Tantai Jiankui, Zhang Jiuxiao did not show the slightest hint of fear. Instead, he weaved his fingers before him and created a protective sphere made of sword qi around him, thus successfully defending against Tantai Jiankui's assault.

At this point, Tantai Zhenqing suddenly shook his head grimly and sighed pitifully. "It seems like Jiankui is going to lose..."

"Going to lose? His opponent might be formidable, but isn't Jiankui standing his ground?" Nangong Yuanfeng was taken aback by Tantai Zhenqing's remark.

In his view, the two young men appeared to be equally skilled with one another. In fact, in the face of Tantai Jiankui's relentless punches, Zhang Jiuxiao seemed to have been forced into a disadvantageous position, unable to counterattack at all. So, why would Tantai Zhenqing say that Tantai Jiankui was going to lose?

“Jiankui’s opponent hasn’t made use of the power in his bloodline yet!” Tantai Zhenqing pointed out.

“This...” Hearing those words, Nangong Yuanfeng widened his eyes before falling silent.

It went without saying that they would investigate the unique abilities of the Zhang Clan before coming to challenge them. In their investigation, they had found that the Zhang Clan was able to ignite their bloodline to bring about a temporary surge in their speed and strength.

Considering how Zhang Jiuxiao was already able to stand toe-to-toe with Tantai Jiankui without igniting his bloodline, it was clear who the victor would be once he did so.

“Furthermore, while it might appear that he has been forced into a defensive position, did you notice that he’s gradually improving throughout the course of the battle? Initially, he could barely stand his ground against Jiankui’s punches at all, but he’s already able to return three out of ten punches now... Slowly but surely, he’s familiarizing himself with his newfound strength. In fact, it seems like he might even be intentionally going easy on Jiankui just to make use of this opportunity to refine his control and further his understanding of temporal arts!” Tantai Zhenqing said with a helpless smile.

As much as he hated to acknowledge it, this was the truth.

Previously, when he heard that Nangong Yuanfeng had failed with the Luo Clan, he had thought that it was utterly ridiculous for something like this to happen. But after witnessing the prowess commanded by the young talents of the Zhang Clan, he realized that the Master Teacher Continent had already become a formidable force that they could not afford to underestimate anymore.

The Hundred Schools of Philosophers had guarded the world from an isolated dimension for tens of thousands of years, remaining completely oblivious to the developments of the outside world. Before they even knew it, they had already become like frogs in a well!

Hearing Tantai Zhenqing's lamentation, Nangong Yuanfeng turned his gaze to the duel once more. Indeed, Zhang Jiuxiao's movements were becoming smoother and smoother over the course of the battle. Very soon, he was already able to retaliate against seven out of ten punches.

At this point, it was very clear that the tables were turning on Tantai Jiankui.

Hula!

In a momentary lapse between Tantai Jiankui's attacks, Zhang Jiuxiao took a step forward and pushed a powerful punch through the other party's defenses. If the punch really connected, the other party would sustain severe injuries.

Flustered, Tantai Jiankui hurriedly retreated as he exclaimed, "I admit defeat!"

He had not expected such an outcome at all. However, it was already apparent to him that his opponent had grown to a level beyond his means to deal with. He no longer stood a chance at victory.

On the other hand, hearing Tantai Jiankui's surrender, Zhang Jiuxiao retracted his fist and halted his offense. Placing his hands behind his back, he gazed quietly at the crowd from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, seemingly waiting patiently for his next opponent.

"Teacher, allow me!"

Sensing Zhang Jiuxiao's subtle provocation, another young man from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers stepped forward.

"Your strength is only slightly above Jiankui's. If Jiankui was unable to defeat him, you won't stand much of a chance either," Tantai Zhenqing said with a shake of his head.

In truth, the fighting prowess of his four disciples did not differ too much from one another. While the young man who had just stepped forward commanded a higher understanding of temporal laws, it was still insufficient to defeat the current Zhang Jiuxiao.

Even if they fought, there was little doubt that the duel would end in his disciple's defeat.

Realizing the same as well, Nangong Yuanfeng suggested, "Why don't you try to suppress your cultivation and challenge him?"

Tantai Zhenqing pondered deeply for a moment before glancing at Zhang Xuan. Looking at the young man's impassive face, he released a deep sigh before shaking his head. "Forget it! A loss is a loss. Even if I step forward, I doubt that things will go our way!"

To be honest, he did not think of Zhang Jiuxiao as a threat to him at all. He was confident of defeating the young man with ease... but the problem was that Zhang Jiuxiao's defeat did not translate to the Zhang Clan's defeat!

The head of the Zhang Clan had pulled off the 'Memorization Through Spiritual Perception, Recital of a Thousand Books' and even raise his student's comprehension of temporal laws to a level surpassing that of his disciples within an hour...

A person who wielded such capabilities could not possibly be weak.

If he made a move, the head of the Zhang Clan was bound to make a move as well. In the end, the outcome would still be the same. In the worst-case scenario, he might even be given free transportation through the Master Teacher Continent, just like what had happened to Nangong Yuanfeng back at the Luo Clan.

Since the odds were not in his favor at all, there was no need for him to humiliate himself unnecessarily.

Without much hesitation, Tantai Zhenqing clasped his fist and said, "We'll admit defeat!"

Seeing that the other party had admitted defeat right after a single battle, Zhang Xuan clasped his fist back and smiled. "Elder, I'm grateful for your leniency toward my student!"

He had fully expected Zhang Jiuxiao to be able to defeat Tantai Jiankui eventually... However, he did not think that the other party would make such a dignified admittance of defeat.

Even Nangong Yuanfeng had struggled for quite a bit before being forced to admit defeat.

“A loss is a loss; there’s no leniency here to speak of,” Tantai Zhenqing replied. He flicked his wrist, took out Ancient Sage Zi Yu’s inkstone, and tossed it over. After which, he clasped his fist and said, “Farewell!”

After taking the inkstone, Zhang Xuan grabbed the floating Temporal Mirror and glanced at it before tossing it over to Tantai Zhenqing. “Your mirror!”

“Thank you.”

Tantai Zhenqing took the mirror before leaving together with the others. In the blink of an eye, he had already disappeared from view. “Frog in a well” refers to someone who is limited by their outlook. It comes from a story where a frog staying in a well thought that the world outside the well is a boring place, consisting of only a circular blue sky. Even when others tried to convince him otherwise, he remained firm in his belief because all he could see from within the well was indeed just a circular blue sky.

# 1634 The Luo Clan Arrives

After flying for some time, the departing crowd of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers finally came to a halt.

“Teacher, I feel indignant at admitting our defeat just like that!” one of the young men exclaimed.

“While Zhang Jiuxiao might be improving swiftly,” another young man added through clenched teeth, “as long as we go all out right from the start, we might still be able to defeat him. Also, the head of the Zhang Clan might simply be skilled at imparting knowledge. If Sword Saint Xing’s words were true, that would be the first time that the head of the Zhang Clan had come into contact with the heritage of the Zhang Clan! No matter how talented he is, there’s no way his comprehension of temporal laws could possibly surpass ours within a single hour!”

Given that they had not completed the mission that the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had entrusted to them, they would surely be severely punished upon their return!

Seeing that his students were indignant at their loss, Tantai Zhenqing shook his head in disappointment. “You said that the head of the Zhang Clan’s comprehension of temporal laws is beneath yours?”

“That’s right!” A young man nodded vehemently.

“I might have agreed with you a moment ago. However... just take a look at the Temporal Mirror!”

Without explaining a thing, Tantai Zhenqing flicked his wrist, and a golden mirror materialized on top of his palm.

“What happened to the mirror?”

The crowd quickly gathered around Tantai Zhenqing. With just a single glance, their eyes narrowed in astonishment.

A long crack could be seen on the surface of the mirror, reminiscent of a glaring laceration.

“Teacher, what happened? Who damaged the Temporal Mirror?” Tantai Jiankui asked in shock.

The Temporal Mirror was one of the top treasures of their clan. Even Great Sage experts would have trouble trying to damage it! Why would such a huge crack suddenly appear on its surface?

“It was caused by a single glance of the head of the Zhang Clan!” Tantai Zhenqing said with a deep look in his eyes.

“It was caused by a single glance?”

The crowd frowned in incomprehension.

Given the resilience of the Temporal Mirror, there would not be the slightest dent even if they were to exert their full strength on it. The head of the Zhang Clan was only a Saint 9-dan pinnacle cultivator, but he was able to produce such a long crack on the Temporal Mirror just by glancing at it?

“The Temporal Mirror was left behind by one of our predecessors as a trial to the later generations. It’s embedded with all kinds of formations in order to challenge those whose consciousness has slipped within it... It might seem to be a casual glance from the head of the Zhang Clan, but in truth, his consciousness had already slipped into the Temporal Mirror and destroyed all of the formations within it!” Tantai Zhenqing explained grimly.

“His consciousness slipped into the Temporal Mirror and destroyed all of the formations within it?”

The crowd narrowed their eyes in disbelief.

The deeper one’s comprehension of temporal laws was, the faster one would be able to escape from the Temporal Mirror. However, not only did the head of the Zhang Clan escape from the Temporal Mirror, he even destroyed all of the formations within it... Just how deep was his comprehension of temporal laws in order to pull something like that off?

“Most likely, he has already reached the level of Time Quintessence...” Tantai Zhenqing addressed the doubt that was in everyone’s mind.

In a moment, the crowd fell silent.

Time Quintessence and Spatial Quintessence were at a different order to Sword Quintessence and the like. Even Ancient Sages would face great difficulties trying to comprehend those two Quintessences, but a Saint 9-dan lad actually managed to do it...

“It seems like the head of the Zhang Clan possesses talent on par with the Luo Clan’s Luo Tianya. It won’t be easy for the Hundred Schools of Philosophers to accomplish its goals!”  
Nangong Yuanfeng sighed deeply.

It was no wonder Tantai Zhenqing had left so hurriedly. Given the same cultivation realm, it was nigh impossible to defeat someone who had comprehended Time Quintessence, even if he was a Sempiternal realm cultivator suppressing his cultivation.

Leaving was indeed the wisest decision they could make. Otherwise, all they would face was humiliation.

...

“We have won?”

“We actually defeated the experts of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers?”

In contrast to the gloomy air hanging around Tantai Zhenqing and the group from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers, exhilarated cheers echoed throughout the Zhang Clan.

When they heard that the experts of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had come to challenge them, they had thought that they would have their dignity trampled upon. Who could have thought that their clan head would be able to drive them away so easily?

This was something that they would not dare have imagined in the past.

But what they had deemed impossible had really happened right before their eyes!

“I have won?”



Even Zhang Jiuxiao could hardly believe what had happened.

To actually duel and win against a descendant of the Philosophers... Had it been half a year ago, he never would have thought that he would be able to pull off something like this!

In his mind, he could not help but feel deeply grateful to his teacher once more. It was his teacher who had helped him acquire everything that he possessed at this very moment.

“I want you to properly cultivate the two manuals I have imparted to you over the next few days. Try your best to comprehend Time Quintessence as soon as possible. Also, I want you to cultivate this cultivation technique accordingly. With this, you should be able to make a breakthrough very soon and raise your cultivation significantly!” Zhang Xuan looked at Zhang Jiuxiao sternly.

“You are the weakest of my students at the moment, so you have to work harder to advance your cultivation. I hope that you will be able to become a stout shield for mankind in the future, just like your seniors!”

“Yes, Teacher! I will not let you down!” Zhang Jiuxiao clasped his fist.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction.

Following which, he turned his gaze toward the Xingmeng Sword Saints. Taking a deep breath, he called out, “Father, Mother!”

The truth was that he had already acknowledged the two of them as his parents, but for some reason, he found it incredibly difficult addressing them as ‘father’ and ‘mother’.

However, he felt that it would be inappropriate to allow their relationship to continue this way. It was likely that he would work closely with the Xingmeng Sword Saints in the future to protect mankind from the Otherworldly Demons, especially since the two of them still wielded greater influence in the Zhang Clan than him. It would not do for their relationship to remain awkward.

Thus, he bucked up his courage and did it.

The Xingmeng Sword Saints were taken aback for a moment before irrepressible smiles crept onto their faces. They clenched their fists tightly in agitation as they called out, “Xuan-er!”

They had been looking forward to this day ever since their reunion. However, they knew that they had done their son wrong, so they had not dared to impose their expectations on him. They could only wish that the day would come when their child acknowledged them on his own accord.

They did not think that their wish would come true so quickly!

“Even though the cultivation techniques that you practice are top-notch, the distress you have been under in the past two decades has caused some blockages in your meridians, preventing your zhenqi from flowing smoothly. I’ll impart a method for resolving the blockages to you so that you can achieve a breakthrough as soon as possible!” Zhang Xuan said.

His parents might be the top experts of the Master Teacher Continent, but under the reflection of the Library of Heaven’s Path, there were still many flaws with their cultivation techniques and physical conditions. These flaws became the bottleneck that hindered the advancement of their cultivation.

If they could resolve these problems, it would not take them too long to reach the peak of Great Sage!

“You... are going to give us some pointers?” Hearing their son’s words, the eyebrows of the Xingmeng Sword Saints shot up in astonishment.

Their son was only at Saint 9-dan pinnacle at the moment. Was he really capable of offering pointers to Great Sage 3-dan cultivators like them?

“It’s not really pointers. I’m just pointing out a few flaws I have noticed in your cultivation so as to resolve the traumas you have sustained!” Zhang Xuan explained with a smile.

He had long compiled a book on them in the Library of Heaven’s Path, but he just had not had time to sort out their conditions and offer them some pointers.

Having said that, Zhang Xuan took out two empty books and began writing on them. Soon, he had already jotted down the flaws and problems that they were suffering from, as well as the solutions to resolving them.

“This...”

The Xingmeng Sword Saints took the books and flipped through them, and their bodies jolted in shock.

There was nothing wrong with what their son had pointed out. Those were indeed the problems that they were facing!

Zhang Xuan turned to the other elders and instructed, “I need the rest of you to execute a battle technique so that I can offer you some pointers for your cultivation!”

With a war against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe just around the corner, it was of the utmost importance for him to raise the fighting prowess of the Zhang Clan as much as possible.

However, before the elders could do anything, a guard suddenly rushed in with an anxious look on his face.

“Clan head, bad news! The Luo Clan has arrived at the entrance of Dracotiger City!”

After three days of flight, the crowd from the Luo Clan had finally arrived!

# 1635 Refining the Ancient Sage Corpse

Knowing that he would have to face the Luo Clan eventually, Zhang Xuan instructed, “Let them in!”

“Yes!” The guard nodded before rushing out.

“The Luo Clan sure is impudent! Did they not embarrass themselves enough the last time? Are they so desperate to make a fool out of themselves?”

“It’s hard to say. I heard that they have found themselves a clan head who has comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. Most likely, they are here to cleanse themselves of the humiliation they suffered back at the engagement ceremony!”

“Cleanse themselves of the humiliation? Humph! Just how far can their arrogance go? The name of their clan head is Luo Tianya, right? What right does he have to compete with our clan head?”

“He’s just a member of the side family who managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing by sheer luck. Just how arrogant must he be to dare challenge our clan head! We must make sure to teach him a lesson that he’ll never forget...”

...

Such discussions could be heard around the room.

Hearing how the crowd from the Zhang Clan were putting down Luo Tianya to prop him up, Zhang Xuan suddenly felt incredibly exhausted.

When they learned that the new head of the Luo Clan was actually him... would they faint from shock?

How should he deal with this matter in order to resolve the conflict between the two clans once and for all?

If he told the Luo Clan that he was Luo Tianya, the Luo Clan would surely think that he was trying to humiliate them once more, especially after what had happened at the engagement ceremony...

On the other hand, if he told the Zhang Clan that he was Luo Tianya, the matter about him having a Luo Clan bloodline purity level of '9' would convince them otherwise too. In the worst-case scenario, they might even think that his father had been cuckolded.

What a frustrating situation to be in!

Everyone wants to be outstanding, but they don't understand the woes of being too outstanding!

All that comes with it is endless frustrations!

After pondering for a moment, Zhang Xuan was still unable to find a feasible solution to get him out of his current quandary, so he could only find a reason to excuse himself for the time being. "I'll leave it to all of you to host the Luo Clan for the time being. I suddenly had an epiphany and would like to cultivate right now..."

As long as he and Luo Tianya were not around, surely things would not get too far between the two clans...

His presence would only complicate things.

"Go ahead. Leave the Luo Clan to us," Sword Saint Xing replied with a nod.

The reason behind the conflict between the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan was the rejection of the engagement, and the primary culprit behind that was Zhang Xuan. It would indeed be best for Zhang Xuan to stay out of the Luo Clan's sight so as to avoid triggering them, especially when they were clearly still in the heat of their anger.

After entrusting the problem to his father, Zhang Xuan quickly led Luo Ruoxin to his residence.

He settled her down in the adjacent room before returning to his bedroom. With a thought, he entered the Myriad Anthive Nest.

With his deepened understanding of space, he was able to expand and reinforce the Myriad Anthive Nest, making it far more resilient and larger than before. The entire folded space spanned several hundred li from one end to the other, and it was filled with countless buildings. In terms of size, it was already comparable to a major city.

Zhang Xuan swiftly found an empty clearing in the Myriad Anthive Nest and sat down. With a thought, a massive corpse fell onto the ground, crushing the bluestone tiles underneath. A cloud of dust rose into the air.

It was the corpse of the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage that he had killed back at the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild.

It had been difficult for him to deposit it into the storage ring, but taking it out was much easier. He could do it even without the help of the Dragonbone Divine Spear.

He had expended his three droplets of Kong shi's blood, his golden pages had been used up, and Vicious was currently in hibernation. This meant that he had no life preservation means with him at the moment, and this was extremely dangerous considering the current state of affairs on the Master Teacher Continent. As such, it was of the utmost importance for him to forge the Soulless Metal Humanoid as soon as possible!

Should I see if I can enter the corpse first? Zhang Xuan thought as he drew his Primordial Spirit out from his body.

Even though the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage was already dead, its corpse still emanated a crushing pressure on beings around it. Even from a distance away, it felt as if a squall was blasting his way, putting his Primordial Spirit under such strain that it almost seemed like it would be torn apart.

The might of an Ancient Sage is indeed not to be underestimated! Zhang Xuan thought grimly.

After tempering his Primordial Spirit under the pressure emanated by the Dragonbone Divine Spear, it had already become incredibly resilient. Even Great Sage cultivators would find it difficult to inflict any damage on his Primordial

Spirit. Yet, he was actually having difficulties approaching a mere corpse...

This was truly inconceivable!

Zhang Xuan tried a few more times, but he was forced to retreat before he could come into contact with the corpse time and time again. In the end, he could only shake his head helplessly.

In order to forge a Soulless Metal Humanoid, his Primordial Spirit must first be able to enter the corpse. If he could not even come into contact with the corpse, how could he forge it?

It seems like I'll have to raise my soul cultivation as soon as possible. If I could just make a breakthrough to Great Sage, I might be able to successfully enter the corpse! Zhang Xuan thought as he returned his Primordial Spirit to his body.

He quickly sorted out the urgent matters that he had to complete in his mind.

First, I have to find the cultivation technique that Kong shi left behind to push for a breakthrough to Great Sage. Second, I should try to take in more students, obtain their gratitude, and form more golden pages. Third, I need to push for a breakthrough in my soul cultivation so as to forge this corpse!

While Zhang Xuan knew that the prowess of the golden page was formidable, he had not thought that it would actually be capable of smashing an Ancient Sage as well.

After all, Ancient Sages were symbols of invincibility in the hearts of all cultivators. Cultivators who had not reached an equivalent level could be crushed by a single thought from them, so those who had not reached Ancient Sage yet would never dream of opposing an Ancient Sage...

But he actually managed to kill an Ancient Sage with ease, using the golden page.

There would be no better life preservation method than that, so he would really have to try to obtain as many golden pages as possible.

The first and the second are rather difficult to accomplish at the moment, but for the third... I think I might just be able to do it!

He was not too certain about the circumstances in the Master Teacher Pavilion at the moment, so it would be particularly dangerous for him to head there, especially since he had lost his trump cards. If those who were in collusion with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe sabotaged him, he might just lose his life there. Thus, he was not too keen on heading there at the moment.

As for the second, as powerful as the golden pages were, the issue was that the formation of the golden pages was an extremely spontaneous process.

He had previously deduced that its formation was triggered by the gratitude of his students, but it did not seem to happen for certain every single time. It might be due to the extent of their gratitude or perhaps some other factors, but in any case, it was not safe for him to bank on that.

Thus, after some contemplation, it seemed like only the third was within his control at the moment.

Having clarified such thoughts, Zhang Xuan leaped out of the Myriad Anthive Nest and left his residence. He found one of the elders of the Zhang Clan and instructed, "Bring me to the library!"

As the clan head, it went without saying that he had the authority to enter the Zhang Clan's library freely. He did not have to snoop around like he had done before.

...

Four hours later, Zhang Xuan walked out of the library with his head hanging in disappointment.

Although the Zhang Clan was the number one Sage Clan on the Master Teacher Continent, it did not have too many advanced books relating to soul. While he did manage to gather quite a few new books, he was still unable to perfect the Great Sage 1-dan Heaven's Path Divine Art.

In other words, he was not able to cultivate it yet.



Sighing deeply, he turned to the elder who had brought him over and asked, “How’s it going with the Luo Clan?”

“Reporting to the clan head, the Luo Clan said that they have come to challenge you to a duel, but it happens that their clan head, the newly inaugurated Luo Tianya, had some urgent affairs to attend to, so he wasn’t able to come over with them... So, we have settled them down in the guest accommodations for the time being!” the elder replied.

“Un, that’s good!” Seeing that the situation did not blow up, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. He pondered for a moment before asking once more, “Are there any occupations or powers that specialize in souls in the vicinity of the Zhang Clan?”

“Occupations or powers that specialize in souls?” The elder thought deeply for a moment before replying. “The Terpsichorean Guild headquarters is located in the Terpsichorean City, roughly forty thousand li away from the Zhang Clan. Due to the nature of their occupation, they are quite adept in the topic of soul.

“However, if we are speaking of the power that commands the deepest understanding of souls, it would indubitably be the Jiang Clan of the Three Premier Clans! Their predecessors comprehended Soul Quintessence, and their home base is located half a day’s journey away from our Zhang Clan!”

# 1636 Has the Jiang Clan Betrayed Mankind Too?

“The Jiang Clan?” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before slapping his forehead in realization.

Why didn’t he think of that earlier?

Of the Three Premier Clans, the Zhang Clan was adept in temporal arts, the Luo Clan was well-versed in spatial arts, and the Jiang Clan specialized in soul arts.

When the soul oracles were eradicated from the Master Teacher Continent back then, the heritage of soul cultivation nearly vanished completely. It was the founder of the Jiang Clan who stood up at that moment and resuscitated soul cultivation on the Master Teacher Continent. With his comprehension of the Soul Quintessence, he created countless formidable soul arts and became one of the strongest experts in his era.

Speaking of which, he wasn’t completely unacquainted with the Jiang Clan either. He had met the head of the Jiang Clan, Jiang Fangyou, during the engagement ceremony with the Luo Clan. He had also crossed blows with the top prodigy of the Jiang Clan, Jiang Feifei, during the celestial designer trial while challenging the Tower of Master Teachers back at the Sanctum of Sages too!

Just that, he didn’t think that the Jiang Clan would be located just half a day’s journey away from the Zhang Clan.

“Clan head, do you intend to pick up soul-related techniques?” the elder asked curiously.

“I have advanced my cultivation too swiftly in recent days, and that has resulted in instability in my Primordial Spirit. I was thinking of learning some soul cultivation techniques to reinforce my soul before pushing for higher realms!” Zhang Xuan replied.

Hearing those words, the elder nodded in agreement.

Such problems did occur if one were to advance one's cultivation too quickly.

The first time their clan head came to the Zhang Clan, he was only at Saint 7-dan Phantasmal Space realm. Yet, within such a short span of time, he had already reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle... That was indubitably a breakneck pace. Of course, the problems from advancing his cultivation so quickly might not be very apparent at the moment, but trying to build upon unstable foundations would indubitably cause him a huge amount of trouble in the future.

Learning the clan head's intent, the elder remarked, "Our Zhang Clan doesn't really have a close relationship with the Jiang Clan. However, as fellow Premier Clans, I don't think the Jiang Clan would refuse your request as long as the books you require doesn't violate the privacy of their heritage!"

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in realization.

Indeed, he was no longer the nobody he was!

Soul arts might have been the most tightly guarded secret of the Jiang Clan, but as the head of the Zhang Clan, the head of the Sanctum of Sages, and Yang Shi's senior, if he were to request to browse through the more superficial soul art manuals in their collection, it was unlikely that they would refuse his request!

After bidding the elder farewell, he informed Luo Ruoxin that he would be heading out for a moment before whipping out his Dragonbone Divine Spear to tear open a dimension rift and head off.

He had obtained the precise location of the Jiang Clan from the elder he had chatted with earlier. Flitting at a neck-breaking speed, it didn't take long for him to arrive at the suburbs of a city. Similar to the Zhang Clan, this city spanned over many mu, boasting a scale greater than that of the Empire Alliance.

The Jiang Clan!

One of the Three Premier Clans, a behemoth on the Master Teacher Continent!

Zhang Xuan scanned the city and swiftly noticed the many defensive formations erected around the place. He couldn't help but compliment, "It seems like every single one of the Premier Clans wields power that shouldn't be underestimated!"

He had been to the Luo Clan and the Zhang Clan, and they had all kinds of formations that would put even Great Sage cultivators in a bad position if they were to charge in recklessly. Such was clearly the case for the Jiang Clan as well.

However, it just happened that formations posed no threat to him at all. Through the Library of Heaven's Path, all he could see were hulking flaws after hulking flaws.

After looking around for a moment, he was just about to hand his name scroll to the guards stationed at the entrance of the Jiang Clan to have them report his arrival when he suddenly narrowed his eyes in alarm.

He hurriedly dashed into a nearby shrub to hide.

Through the lush shrubbery, he looked into the sky above and saw a figure appearing in the aerial space above the Jiang Clan.

Following which, the head of the Jiang Clan, Jiang Fangyou, personally rushed over to welcome him, and the two of them descended to the ground together.

"Why is he here? Does this mean that... the Jiang Clan is colluding with the Otherworldly Demons too?" Zhang Xuan thought lividly.

The figure who had just appeared was no other than the scholarly young man whom he had met back at the White Creek Mountain and the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild!

Why would the scholarly young man appear here?

The fact that he was personally welcomed by the head of the Jiang Clan suggested a peculiar relation between the two of

them.

“Let me take a look!” Taking a deep breath, Zhang Xuan scanned his surroundings with the Eye of Insight before heading forward.

He might not have too many trump cards at the moment—if he were to engage the scholarly young man in his current state, it would surely end in his defeat. However, he was still confident in his ability to hide his presence.

Besides, having comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing and Time Quintessence of Acceleration, he was confident that he would be at least able to escape even if he were no match from them!

Hula!

Countless spatial ripples diffused in the space in front of Zhang Xuan as he strutted boldly through the main gates of the Jiang Clan.

There were plenty of guards stationed at the doorstep of the Jiang Clan, and their cultivation ranged from Saint 3-dan to Saint 4-dan. Yet, not a single one of them noticed Zhang Xuan, as if he didn't even exist.

This was another skillful manipulation of the spatial laws.

Through sealing an area around him and preventing any energy from entering or leaving this area, he would be able to prevent even light from revealing his presence. As long as one's cultivation was beneath him, it would be impossible for one to notice his presence.

After walking through several corridors, he finally came to a halt before a majestic hall.

Right ahead was the area where the Jiang Fangyou and the scholarly young man had landed at. As deep as his comprehension of spatial laws was, he dared not to come too close.

Thus, he found a location to conceal his figure before looking into the hall.

On the inside, he saw the two men standing opposite one another, seemingly discussing some important matters.

Taking a deep breath, Zhang Xuan focused his attention into the hall. Soon, he began to hear snippets of their conversation.

“... news that you have? I understand!”

The scholarly young man nodded and said, “I’ll leave the arrangements to you. Nothing must go wrong. If we were to succeed for this, it would bring a new day upon us. The dreams that we have harbored for many years would finally come to be!”

“Yes, I understand!” Jiang Fangyou nodded hurriedly.

“It’s good that you understand. You must take precautions too. The upheaval will be happening very soon, and a huge war will be inevitable. You have to prepare yourselves to make a move at any moment!”

After saying those words, the scholarly young man shook his head grimly. He quickly bade his farewell before leaving the vicinity.

Even as the scholarly young man departed, Zhang Xuan still dared not to move carelessly. He reined in his aura as tightly as possible while folding the space around him firmly, not daring to allow any leeway in whatever that could possibly betray his presence.

As he left, the scholarly young man glanced downward for a moment, but it seemed to just be a sweeping look. It took only a few moments for him to vanish from sight, disappearing in some other direction.

“Hai!” Watching the departure of the scholarly young man, Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply. With a complicated look in his eyes, he walked out of the hall.

Zhang Xuan figured that the other party was probably going to make whatever arrangements he had agreed on with the scholarly young man.

“The Jiang Clan is in collusion with those bunch of scoundrels too. Have they betrayed mankind as well?” Watching as Jiang

Fangyou walked away, the frown on Zhang Xuan's forehead scrunched tighter and tighter together.

The Jiang Clan was one of the Three Premier Clans! While their standing was beneath that of the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan, they were still highly respected in the Master Teacher Continent, and their ranks were filled with many master teachers... Why would they betray mankind and collude with those bunch of scoundrels too?

He had met the scholarly young man twice so far. While he was unable to see through the other party's true appearance, the fact that the other party had close ties with Otherworldly Demons was a direct hint at his true identity.

Even if the other party wasn't an Otherworldly Demon, the fact that he was in cahoots with them meant that he was a traitor of mankind.

And for the head of the Jiang Clan to have a secret discussion with the other party at this juncture... It was truly hard for Zhang Xuan not to suspect anything.

“‘It would bring a new day upon us’, ‘a huge war will be inevitable’... Just what in the world could they be up to? Are they conspiring something against the Master Teacher Pavilion, or perhaps, the entire continent?’” Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly together.

He was still unable to figure out what their plans were, but the fact that they had stolen Vicious' upper body and brought over several Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages to the Master Teacher Continent showed that they had great ambitions in mind! If something were to happen to the Master Teacher Continent, everything that he cared about would be in peril.

Be it the Zhang Clan, the Luo Clan, the Xuanxuan Faction, the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy... Once the nest was destroyed, there would be no egg in the nest that would be able to remain safe!

A conspiracy between the Jiang Clan and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe could deal a huge setback to mankind. Since

he had noticed it in advance, he would have to stop it at all costs!

“I’ll have to discuss the matter with my parents to decide on a suitable course of action to deal with the Jiang Clan...” Zhang Xuan shook his head grimly.

If they couldn’t root the Jiang Clan’s influence in a single move, they would swiftly go into hiding. With the massive influence the Jiang Clan wielded across the Master Teacher Continent, their constant sabotage from the shadows would surely be a huge setback to mankind if a war with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to break out!

“In any case, since the Jiang Clan has betrayed mankind, there’s no need for me to stand on ceremony with them... Let me head to their library to collect their books first!”

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan quickly scanned the area around him before heading off in a certain direction.(1 mu = 666.6m<sup>2</sup>)



# 1637 A Breakthrough in Soul Cultivation

A moment later, he arrived before an imposing building.

There was a plaque at the entrance of the building with three massive words gleaming on it—Jiang Clan Repository!

This should be it, Zhang Xuan thought.

While he had often snuck around to collect books in the past, ever since he became the head of the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy, he had resolved himself to stop doing so.

However, since the Jiang Clan had already chosen to betray mankind, there was no need to uphold principles and values toward them.

Zhang Xuan walked up to the gates and tapped them lightly, opening a small passageway in the formation protecting the building. Without any hesitation, he walked in.

After mastering the 4-dan Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel, most seals and formations had become nothing more than ornaments to him.

“There is indeed quite a large collection of manuals relating to souls here,” Zhang Xuan muttered delightedly beneath his breath as he quickly scanned through the books on the first level.

However, most of the books on the first level were not too profound, so Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to collect them. Thus, he quickly made his way to the next level.

The soul manuals on the second level were of a higher tier. Nevertheless, with a quick look through, he found that they were still too elementary for his current soul cultivation level. As such, he moved up five levels at once, stopping only at the seventh level.

The number of books on the seventh level was considerably smaller. All in all, there were only several dozen bookshelves filled with tens of thousands of books.

With a quick sweep, Zhang Xuan collected all of the books into his Library of Heaven's Path before swiftly browsing through them.

A crease emerged between his brows. Why are there so many books relating to soul oracles?

To his bewilderment, he found that most of the books actually detailed soul cultivation techniques that should have been unique to soul oracles.

There was a fundamental difference between the soul cultivation techniques practiced by soul oracles and modern soul cultivation techniques practiced by cultivators nowadays.

The modern soul cultivation techniques that most cultivators practiced served to temper one's soul. On the other hand, the soul cultivation techniques of the soul oracle formed a full heritage that was intricately linked with the Soulless Metal Humanoids, soul rituals, and the like.

To make an analogy, if modern soul cultivation techniques corresponded to physicians, the techniques of the soul oracles corresponded to poison masters.

While there was no doubt that both sets of cultivation techniques were targeted at the soul, their cultivation methods differed vastly from one another!

As one of the Three Premier Clans, the Jiang Clan had always been held in high regards by the world. Why would they have so many soul oracle cultivation techniques?

Could it be that... the founder of the Jiang Clan was a successor of the soul oracles? Zhang Xuan's eyelids twitched as this notion surfaced in his mind.

The soul oracles had been annihilated, and their heritage had been erased from the world—this was a known fact throughout the entire Master Teacher Continent. Yet, the Jiang Clan had actually retained so many manuals regarding the heritage of

the soul oracles... It was truly hard to believe that there were no ties between the two!

With many doubts in his mind, Zhang Xuan moved on to the next floor.

There were even fewer books on the eighth level, but most of them still stemmed from the heritage of the soul oracles.

If the Jiang Clan has its roots from the soul oracle, that could explain why they would choose to betray mankind... Zhang Xuan thought with narrowed eyes.

The vicious means of the soul oracles formed only a part of the reason that the Master Teacher Pavilion had decided to annihilate them. More importantly, it was because they had chosen to betray mankind to collude with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!

There were also many inhumane aspects in the heritage of the poison masters, but the Master Teacher Pavilion had only chosen to isolate them instead of going all out to massacre their forces.

If there was no mistake in his deduction, it explained why the Jiang Clan had ties with the scholarly young man as well.

After collecting the books, Zhang Xuan proceeded on to the final floor of the Jiang Clan Repository.

There were even fewer books there, just a small handful.

With a quick glance, he collected them into the Library of Heaven's Path.

Compile!

Without much hesitation, he quickly compiled the books that he had collected with the cultivation technique that Lu Chong had passed on to him.

Weng!

Two books materialized before him in the Library of Heaven's Path. Tapping lightly on the two books, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in excitement.

I have managed to perfect the soul cultivation techniques for Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm and Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm! There are still some flaws in the two remaining realms, but at the very least, I have managed to resolve most of the issues with them...

There was a difference in achieving a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan for one's zhenqi cultivation and soul cultivation. For zhenqi cultivation, there was no standard formula that a cultivator could follow to make a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan. As such, one had to slowly figure out a feasible method of doing so.

On the other hand, there were no meridians or the like within one's soul. As such, a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan for soul cultivation only required the cultivator to strengthen their soul and enhance their control over their soul energy.

I'll push for a breakthrough in my soul cultivation! Zhang Xuan thought.

He quickly set up a barrier in the corner of the room before entering the Myriad Anthive Nest.

After swiftly finding an empty clearing, he laid out his cultivation resources around the area. Following which, he took a seat on the ground before studying the newly compiled Great Sage 1-dan Heaven's Path Soul Art in his mind.

Some time later, he drew his Primordial Spirit out from his glabella. With a grasp of his hand, the cultivation resources flew over to him.

Hong long!

The cultivation resources shattered simultaneously, and concentrated spiritual energy gushed into the surroundings. Zhang Xuan quickly absorbed the spiritual energy into his Primordial Spirit.

He had obtained these cultivation resources from the Luo Clan's treasure vault. Putting aside using them to advance his soul cultivation, they would suffice even for a breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation to Great Sage 1-dan.

Gone were the days when he had to rely miserably on lightning tribulations to gather the energy required for his breakthrough!

*TZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ!*

With the nourishment of the rich influx of spiritual energy, his Primordial Spirit grew stronger and stronger. It swiftly overcame its bottleneck and advanced into uncharted territories.

Weng!

As he tempered his Primordial Spirit with the spiritual energy that he had absorbed, it slowly took on a crystalline appearance, becoming much clearer than before. A brilliant luminescence of many colors glimmered around him, creating an image reminiscent of an enlightened immortal.

The soul of a typical soul oracle would still remain turbid and chilling even after making a breakthrough to Great Sage, but the soul cultivation technique that Zhang Xuan practiced was the Heaven's Path Soul Art.

Furthermore, his soul had been tempered by lightning innumerable times, causing a qualitative metamorphosis in his soul. At this moment, his soul was already devoid of the usual chilling yin aura that a soul oracle would possess.

Even if the 9-star master teachers from the Master Teacher Pavilion witnessed this sight, none of them would associate his Primordial Spirit with those of the soul oracles.

Feeling the changes in his Primordial Spirit, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in excitement.

Finally, Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm!

His visit to the Jiang Clan had truly paid off. If not for those books that he had browsed through, who knew how long it would have taken him to make a breakthrough in his soul cultivation?

Continue!

Even after achieving a breakthrough in his soul cultivation to the Introspective Convalescence realm, he could still vaguely

sense that his Primordial Spirit was not strong enough to enter the corpse of the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage yet.

Without much hesitation, he continued absorbing the spiritual energy around him and pushed determinedly for the next realm.

Four hours later...

Zhang Xuan's rate of absorption came to a halt, and he slowly opened his eyes.

I have reached Introspective Convalescence realm consummation...

Unlike for Saint, each realm in Great Sage was divided into six cultivation stages, namely primary, intermediate, advanced, pinnacle, perfection, and consummation.

Reaching consummation meant that he had reached the very peak of this realm.

It's indeed much more difficult to push for a breakthrough in Great Sage as compared to Saint. Back then, two hours would suffice for me to advance a cultivation realm, but it's taking me two times longer now...

He had never thought that the day would come when he would require four hours just to advance his cultivation by an entire realm... and it seemed like it would only become more and more arduous the higher he climbed.

He shuddered to imagine that a day would come where he would require an entire day to advance a cultivation realm... How terrifying!

Cultivation sure isn't easy... If even a prodigy like me requires four hours to advance this far, how much longer would it take other cultivators? Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed. Forget it! No matter how exhausting it'll be, I should get this over and done with. I should at least try to reach Aureate Body realm consummation before the sun sets...

While lamenting how it was getting harder and harder to advance his cultivation, he carried on cultivating.

No matter how long it would take him, in order to raise his fighting prowess, he had no choice but to carry on with this incredibly tedious and monotonous task.

Who asked him to embark on this arduous path? No matter how exhausted he was, he could only grit his teeth and hang on!

# 1638 Jiang Feifei

Ten minutes later, Zhang Xuan halted his cultivation with a helpless look on his face.

I knew that it wouldn't be so easy... he thought as he rubbed his glabella in distress.

He had thought that he would be able to easily push for a breakthrough to Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm consummation with the cultivation resources that he had obtained from the Luo Clan, but who could have known that... the spiritual energy would be insufficiently pure for him to make a breakthrough!

These resources would have been sufficient for anyone else to cultivate up to Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm. However, what Zhang Xuan cultivated was not any ordinary soul cultivation technique but the Heaven's Path Soul Art. Furthermore, his Primordial Spirit had been tempered by lightning, thus making it nearly devoid of any impurities.

As a result, even though the purity of the spiritual energy in the cultivation resources was not too low, it was still insufficient for him.

And having lost his source of energy, there was no way he could gather the momentum required to make a breakthrough.

It had not been easy for him to compile the Heaven's Path Soul Art, but to think that he would be forced to stop his cultivation just because his source of spiritual energy was not sufficiently pure.

Facing such a situation, he could only sigh helplessly.

Well... I was hesitant to take too much from the Luo Clan because Luo Ganzhen was following behind me, but I don't think my conscience would hurt at all stealing from the Jiang Clan... Since they have already betrayed mankind, the more I take from them, the less harm they will be able to inflict on mankind! Zhang Xuan thought as a grin crept onto his face.



Even though he had the authority to use the resources from the Luo Clan, he could not possibly just take all the good items from the treasure vault. But with the Jiang Clan, he had no such considerations at all.

Given that they had already betrayed mankind, any resources that they had would only bolster the enemy. Since that was the case, there was no need for him to stand on ceremony with them!

With such thoughts in mind, Zhang Xuan quickly returned his Primordial Spirit back into his body before leaving the Myriad Anthive Nest.

It was still perfectly quiet on the outside when he returned to the Jiang Clan Repository. It was apparent that no one had thought that an intruder would be able to breach their defensive formation and access their books.

I recall seeing their treasure vault while making my way here. It should be in that direction. I should head over there to take a look!

Through his skillful manipulation of space, he managed to leave the Jiang Clan Repository safely without alerting anyone. After confirming a direction, he quickly made his way over.

It did not take him too long to arrive at his destination.

The seals placed on the treasure vault were clearly much stronger and more secure compared to the library. The seals were layered over one another in a complex manner, making it difficult to decipher.

Zhang Xuan was just about to use the Library of Heaven's Path on the seals to exploit their flaws and slip into the treasure vault when he heard footsteps coming from nearby.

He darted to a remote corner, and with a wave of his hand, he swiftly set up a spatial barrier around him. Right as he was done, he saw two figures walking over.

To his surprise, they were familiar faces.

The figure on the left was the middle-aged man whom he had just seen a few hours ago—Clan Head Jiang Fangyou. The figure on the right was a tall young lady who carried an air of valiance through her demeanor. She was the Inceptive Sage of the Celestial Designer Guild, Jiang Feifei!

Jiang Feifei seemed to have been dragged back by Jiang Fangyou, and she had an unhappy frown on her face. She groaned in protest, “Father...”

“I allowed you to squander your time learning all that celestial designer nonsense in the past, but the circumstances are different now. The Master Teacher Continent will be undergoing a massive change very soon, and there could very well be an upheaval. As the prodigy who possesses the purest bloodline in our Jiang Clan, you have to bear this responsibility!” Jiang Fangyou lectured sternly.

“Father, it’s not as if you don’t know my current level of cultivation. I’m still a long way off from reaching Saint 8-dan, so even if I want to shoulder the burden of the Jiang Clan, what can I possibly do?” Jiang Feifei complained reluctantly.

“The strength of our Jiang Clan is derived not from our zhenqi cultivation but our soul cultivation! Due to your pure bloodline, your soul has always been far stronger than your peers. If you could comprehend our founder’s Soul Quintessence, you’ll be able to inherit the complete heritage of our founder and experience rapid growth in your fighting prowess!” Jiang Fangyou explained.

With an expectant gleam in his eyes, he continued. “I’m not joking around with you. This matter concerns the very survival of our Jiang Clan. If things go wrong, our Jiang Clan could very well face extinction! We can’t afford to have you throwing a tantrum at a crucial moment!”

“Alright, alright! I get it...” Seeing how severely her father was making things out to be, Jiang Feifei could only nod her head helplessly. “I’ll try my best, alright? However, you should also know that it’s incredibly difficult to grasp the Soul Quintessence, such that many of our predecessors have failed to do so. I don’t think that I stand much of a chance!”

“... You’ll just have to do your best. We have just received intelligence that there are hints that suggest that Zhang Xuan from the Zhang Clan has comprehended the Time Quintessence, and Luo Tianya from the Luo Clan has been confirmed to have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence... Of the Three Premier Clans, our Jiang Clan is the only one that is lagging behind!” Jiang Fangyou released a troubled sigh.

“That Zhang Xuan you speak of is a ridiculously talented prodigy. Despite his young age, he’s already the head of the Zhang Clan and the Sanctum of Sages. It’s no surprise that he was able to comprehend the Time Quintessence. However... who is that Luo Tianya you spoke of?” Jiang Feifei asked doubtfully.

So far, the Luo Clan had not officially announced the inauguration of their new clan head. As such, only the top echelons of the Jiang Clan were aware of the matter so far.

Furthermore, Jiang Feifei spent most of her time in the Sanctum of Sages instead of the Jiang Clan, and she had not formed her own faction. As such, it was inevitable that she would be unaware of this matter.

“According to the intelligence we have received, Luo Tianya is from the side family of the Luo Clan. It seems like he has maintained a low profile in the Luo Clan all along, but his sudden comprehension of the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing has brought him into the limelight. After a bloodline test, it was shown that he has a bloodline purity of ‘9’. On top of that, he even defeated the descendants of Ancient Sage Zi Rong of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers!” Jiang Fangyou explained.

Even as he spoke, there was an incredulous look in his eyes. It seemed like he still bore some skepticism toward the existence of this figure who had appeared out of nowhere.

But if the matter was true, he really had to say that the Luo Clan was really too lucky.

It was not too long ago that the Zhang Clan had found their missing young prodigy and realized that the latter already wielded astounding influence on the continent, thus causing

the reputation of the Zhang Clan to soar to new heights. Shortly after that, a person who had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing appeared in the Luo Clan...

Given that their Jiang Clan was lagging behind the pack, it was inevitable for Jiang Fangyou to get anxious.

“Luo Tianya was from the side family of the Luo Clan? Father, why don’t you try looking among our side family as well? We might just have some extraordinarily talented clan members who have comprehended the Soul Quintessence... If you find one, you won’t have to worry about finding a successor anymore!”

Hearing his daughter’s words, Jiang Fangyou struck her head furiously and berated, “How in the world did you manage to think of something as ridiculous as that! If even you, a core member of the Jiang Clan, are unable to comprehend the Soul Quintessence, how do you expect those of the side family to do so? Are you dreaming? It’s already a miracle in itself for a Luo Tianya to appear in the Luo Clan! Do you really think that experts of that caliber can be found that easily?”

“Why are you denying the talents of our side family? If other clans have such formidable prodigies in their side family, we might just have some, too...” Jiang Feifei grumbled with a pout.

Despite her prodigious talent in soul cultivation, she was not fond of cultivating. Her interests lay in designing, and she was adept in the field as well. Otherwise, she would not have been able to become the Inceptive Sage of the Celestial Designer Guild.

Unfortunately... it was apparent that the Jiang Clan would not permit her to pursue her interest.

“If such a figure truly exists, I’ll invite him over right now and hand over the position of clan head to him!” Hearing his daughter’s words, Jiang Fangyou harrumphed impatiently.

“Alright, stop dreaming of the impractical and go in! Your job right now is to sit in front of the Jiang Clan’s Jade Hieroglyph and comprehend the Soul Quintessence as soon as possible. Don’t bother thinking about other things. Otherwise, if you

fail, in order to ensure that our clan is able to deal with the impending upheaval... we'll have no choice but to betroth you to a stronger power in order to ensure the preservation of our Jiang Clan!"

Hearing that she would be forced to marry if she failed to comprehend the Soul Quintessence, Jiang Feifei's eyes widened in horror as she hurriedly shook her head. "Father, I don't want to marry!"

"This matter isn't up to you anymore. The peril we'll face is far greater than what we have ever been through. I'm afraid that our Jiang Clan won't be able to survive this upheaval alone given our current strength..." Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply as he gazed at his daughter with a resigned look.

"However, you don't have to worry. Even if I betroth you to someone else, he will be either Zhang Xuan of the Zhang Clan or Luo Tianya of the Luo Clan... In any case, I won't allow any grievances to come upon you!"

# 1639 The Jiang Clan's Treasure Vault

“I don't want to marry that Zhang Xuan! All he does is to humblebrag his strength and crush the confidence of others. Furthermore, he even rejected the little princess of the Luo Clan publicly, not paying any considerations for the other party's dignity at all!” Jiang Feifei harrumphed furiously.

“...” Zhang Xuan's complexion darkened.

I humblebragged? I crushed the confidence of others?

Please! I am already incredibly low profile, alright?

Otherwise, I would have overshadowed all of you so much that none of you will be able to see the light of the day!

Furthermore, what rights do you have to be complaining about me? You are speaking as if I'm interested in marrying you!

You wish!

“If that's the case, I guess it'll have to be Luo Tianya then. It might be difficult on you though. I heard that he has quite an old appearance despite his relatively young age, and his facial features look as if someone has smashed the door in his face. Furthermore, it seems like he's already attached!” Jiang Fangyou said.

“...” Zhang Xuan nearly exploded on the spot.

Are you saying I'm ugly?

Ugly your head! You are the one who is ugly, your entire family is ugly!

My Luo Tianya might not be dashing, but he's at least decent-looking!

“I refuse to marry anyone!” Hearing that Luo Tianya was already attached, Jiang Feifei could feel her final string of sanity being pulled taut, on the verge of snapping at any moment.

“If you don’t want to marry anyone, you’ll have no choice but to comprehend the Soul Quintessence. Feifei, I don’t want to force you into anything, but for the Jiang Clan, I have no other choice either...” Seeing that his threat was working, Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply and said.

“... I understand!”

Jiang Feifei could tell that her father was intentionally trying to scare her, but there was some truth in what he was saying. If someone in the main family was unable to pull her weight, the greatest way she could contribute to the clan was through a political marriage.

“In order not to marry that Zhang Xuan, I’ll have to give it my all then...” Jiang Feifei clenched her jaws tightly together.

“...” Zhang Xuan had no idea what to make of the situation anymore.

Am I that detestable? In order not to marry me, you are going to set your mind to cultivating as hard as you can... Is my reputation that bad?

“Alright, go on!” Jiang Fangyou ushered her into the treasure vault.

With a look reminiscent of a soldier marching to her death, Jiang Feifei walked up to the treasure vault and used a unique token to release the seal.

That’s the grade-9 pinnacle Ether Ascension Concealing Dragon Formation! Zhang Xuan thought.

Dragons were known for their ability to adapt their situation flexibly. Large, they could devastate. Small, they could ambush. Ascend, they could soar beyond the atmosphere. Conceal, they could mask themselves amidst spatial ripples.

For this reason, dragons were extremely difficult beings to deal with. This was the rationale behind the naming of the formation as well.

To use such an advanced formation to seal the treasure vault, it seemed like there was plenty of good stuff inside.

“You can only rely on yourself to comprehend the Soul Quintessence. May the heavens bless you so that you’ll be able to reach a height that few in the Jiang Clan has ever reached before... Otherwise, I’ll really have no choice but to betroth you to Zhang Xuan!” Jiang Fangyou gazed quietly as his daughter’s silhouette disappeared into the treasure vault before shaking his head and leaving the area.

“The heck!” Not expecting to receive another insult in such a roundabout manner, Zhang Xuan felt completely stifled.

Forget it! Let me head in to see what treasures there are inside... They should have known that retribution would come to them when they chose to betray mankind! Tossing aside the unhappiness bottled in his heart, Zhang Xuan walked warily over to the treasure vault.

If he didn’t know what the formation was, he might have still required the help of the Library of Heaven’s Path. However, he had already seen through the nature of the formation earlier when Jiang Feifei entered. Thus, with just his Eye of Insight and deep understanding of formations, he could slip past the formation easily and enter the treasure vault.

He casually walked around the perimeter of the treasure vault and kicked a few points here and there. After which, he made his way to the area where Jiang Feifei had entered the treasure vault from and walked into the premises too.

As soon as he entered the treasure vault, he activated his spatial prowess to seal the space around him, thus preventing others from sensing his presence.

Jiang Feifei had just entered the premises not too long ago, and he had no intentions of having a ‘touching reunion’ with her inside.

For one, it would reflect badly on him and the Zhang Clan if he were to be found sneaking into the treasure vault of another major power, especially since the treachery of the Jiang Clan wasn’t revealed yet. Besides, he wouldn’t want to alarm the Jiang Clan either.



Unlike the treasure vault of the Luo Clan, where artifacts seemed to be randomly scattered around the area, Zhang Xuan found himself standing in the midst of a vast hall. At the very center of the room was a jade wall which spanned roughly several dozen meters in length.

He couldn't tell exactly what kind of jade material the wall was made of, but it had a smooth and glistening appearance. Vaguely, he felt spiritual energy pulsating within the jade wall.

Jiang Feifei, who had entered a few minutes ahead of him, was standing roughly ten meters away from the jade wall, staring at the jade wall intently. Her body was trembling non-stop, and cold sweat was pouring down her forehead.

There was a massive character inscribed on the jade wall, and it induced an indescribable sensation within one. Just by glancing at the jade wall, Zhang Xuan felt a powerful attraction force drawing his Primordial Spirit in. At the same time, the jade wall was emanating immense pressure, threatening to dissipate one's Primordial Spirit.

It's the hieroglyph of the soul oracles... Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes coldly.

It would have been nigh impossible for ordinary cultivators to recognize the massive character inscribed on the jade wall, but having inherited the heritage of the soul oracles, he knew that the character was inscribed using the unique hieroglyph of the soul oracles—'Soul'!

As a crucial aspect of the heritage of the soul oracles, this hieroglyph harnessed great power over souls.

The hieroglyph seems to harness the method to comprehending the Soul Quintessence. It's probably left behind by the founder of the Jiang Clan! Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

It was no wonder why Jiang Fangyou had brought his daughter here to comprehend the Soul Quintessence. The pressure of the hieroglyph would allow one to temper one's soul, and its conception was important in comprehending the Soul

Quintessence. In a sense, it had a similar purpose to the ‘劍 (Sword)’ character on the wall of the Zhang Clan.

I’ll just leave her to do whatever she wants here. Meanwhile, I’ll head to the upper floors to take a look...

Zhang Xuan had already compiled the books relating to the Soul Quintessence into a Heaven’s Path manual. He was just too busy trying to raise his soul cultivation that he didn’t have the time to cultivate it earlier... While the pressure coming from the jade wall would be hard for most cultivators to bear, something of this extent wasn’t enough to faze him anymore.

Besides, his purpose here was not to cultivate but to find suitable cultivation resources to support his soul cultivation. He didn’t have the leisure to be wasting time here.

The layout of the second floor was vastly different from the first floor. Many shelves were placed in neat rows in the room, and countless treasures were placed neatly on them.

It seems like the wealth of the Jiang Clan doesn’t pale in comparison to the Luo Clan at all! Zhang Xuan chuckled softly as he looked at the treasures laid before him with glowing eyes.

Since he had already gone through the trouble to make his way in here, he wouldn’t hold back with the Jiang Clan.

Without any regards to whether they were valuable or not, Zhang Xuan extended his Spiritual Perception across all of the shelves on the second floor.

Keep!

Hula!

All of the treasures on this floor were kept into his storage ring.

With a gleeful smile, Zhang Xuan skipped his way joyfully up to the third floor.

Were it to be any other power, no matter how much the treasures they had moved him, he would have made sure to hold himself back. After all, he was a master teacher. He had his own dignity and pride to uphold!

Well... it was a different story regarding books. What was the use of knowledge if it was just going to be kept in a musky library, not effectively utilized to bring prosperity to the world? Besides, he had only compiled copies of them in the Library of Heaven's Path; it was not as if he had taken the physical copy of the books! So, it couldn't be considered as stealing... Probably...

However, it was a different thing if he were to take their material possession!

That was an act frowned upon by all master teachers worldwide!

However, it would be a different matter if the person he was stealing from was a traitor of mankind. That would be equivalent to depriving the enemies of their resources, and it was considered as a heroic deed.

The treasures on the third floor were clearly much more valuable than those on the second floor. Zhang Xuan swiftly swept them into his storage ring before heading up.

The same happened for the fourth floor, the fifth floor, the sixth floor...

Very soon, he arrived at the highest floor—the ninth floor.

Compared to the floors beneath, the ninth floor appeared particularly empty. There was nothing except for a stone platform roughly half a chi wide, and a seal floating directly above of it.

Zhang Xuan couldn't discern what the seal was, but its very presence exerted tremendous pressure on his Primordial Spirit. He tried to approach the seal, but the incredible pressure halted him in his footsteps.

“What is this seal?” A perplexed frown sat on Zhang Xuan's forehead.

Having advanced his soul cultivation to Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm, ordinary soul offense shouldn't be able to faze him anymore. Yet, the seal before him was actually able to leave him with a suffocating

sensation in his chest... Without a doubt, the seal was no ordinary artifact!

Zhang Xuan circled around the stone platform when something suddenly caught his eye.

Hm? There seem to be some words inscribed here...~16cm

# 1640 Comprehending the Soul Quintessence

There were a few words inscribed on a certain side of the stone platform. These words were written with the hieroglyphs of the soul oracles, and they induced an uncanny feeling when viewed from afar.

Grasp the Quintessence and seize the Seal of Souls!

Zhang Xuan was able to decipher the meaning of the hieroglyphs on the stone platform.

Through the soul oracle manuals that he had acquired from Mo Hunsheng, he was able to achieve a decent level of proficiency in the language.

The seal floating on top must be the Seal of Souls. I can't really tell what tier it is, but it seems to be a rather powerful artifact, Zhang Xuan thought.

He could not tell exactly what tier the Seal of Souls was, but just from the fact that it could halt him in his footsteps and prevent him from approaching it, it was likely to be at least at the level of Ancient Sage Zi Yu's inkstone.

I have to take it. Otherwise, many master teachers will likely lose their lives to this artifact.

Judging from the close relations between Jiang Fangyou and the scholarly young man, there was little question to whom the Jiang Clan would side with should a war break out. The stronger the artifacts of the Jiang Clan were, the greater the damage they would cause.

He did not have the ability to deal with the Jiang Clan at the moment, so all he could do was try to weaken them as much as he could.

Let me give it a try!

Taking a deep breath, he attempted to walk over to the seal.

However, barely after taking two steps, his perspiration was already trickling profusely down his body. It felt as if countless needles were piercing relentlessly into his Primordial Spirit, making it hard for him to push on.

This won't do. My soul won't be able to take it if I force my way forward...

Zhang Xuan hurriedly retreated a few steps from the seal in order to alleviate the pressure on his Primordial Spirit.

It seemed like it was indeed beyond his current capabilities to claim the Seal of Souls.

Since that's the case, perhaps I should try doing as the stone platform says... It says that I would be able to take the seal away by comprehending the Soul Quintessence. Let me give it a try...

Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment, but no better ideas came to mind. Thus, he decided to go along with the instructions inscribed on the stone platform.

In any case, it was just a matter of time before he would have to cultivate the Soul Quintessence, and it was likely to augment his fighting prowess significantly as well. His initial plan was to take away the treasures of the Jiang Clan first and head to a safe place before cultivating the Soul Quintessence, but it seemed like he needed a change of plans right now.

Standing on the spot, Zhang Xuan immersed himself in the Library of Heaven's Path and retrieved the compiled Heaven's Path manual to comprehending the Soul Quintessence.

Touching the manual, he felt knowledge flowing into his mind. Gradually, his understanding of souls deepened.

The reason he was able to grasp the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing so swiftly was because he had already cultivated the 3-dan Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel. All he had to do was cultivate the fourth dan of the technique, so it did not take him too long.

It was apparent that he had taken significantly more time to comprehend the Time Quintessence, but it still took less than an hour.

As for comprehending the Soul Quintessence, he did have a strong understanding of souls, and his soul was extraordinarily powerful.

In just ten breaths, he had already opened his eyes once more.

Weng!

Vortices suddenly formed within his eyes, dizzying those who dared peer into them.

After cultivating diligently for ten breaths, he had already successfully comprehended the Jiang Clan's Soul Quintessence. If he fought with someone, his soul energy would become a powerful offensive option for him.

...

At the same time...

“Submission of the Predecessors... Someone has managed to comprehend the Soul Quintessence!”

Standing in the midst of the ancestral hall, Jiang Fangyou's face reddened in excitement as he watched the phenomenon occurring around him. “This is wonderful. Wonderful! I never thought that the lass would actually be able to comprehend the Soul Quintessence so quickly!”

It was just a moment ago that he sent his daughter over to comprehend the Time Quintessence when this phenomenon occurred a moment later. Naturally, it stood to reason that the one who had comprehended the Soul Quintessence was his daughter!

“The heavens are truly looking after our Jiang Clan! With this, the fighting prowess of our Jiang Clan will be significantly bolstered! As long as she inherits the heritage of our founder, even when an upheaval happens, our Jiang Clan will still have the strength to protect itself!” Jiang Fangyou tensed body visibly loosened up significantly as he heaved a sigh of relief.

After hearing the news from the scholarly young man, he had been unable to calm himself. However, upon knowing that there would be someone whom he could count on to protect the Jiang Clan, his heart was finally at ease.

The individual who had comprehended the Soul Quintessence would be able to wield the Seal of Souls. Even if they did not mobilize the Ancient Sage of their clan, they would still be able to handle most crises by themselves.

“You can all start preparing for the clan head inauguration ceremony. I’ll go take a look at Feifei!” Suppressing the glee in his heart, Jiang Fangyou instructed the elders behind him before heading out.

“Yes, clan head!”

The elders also quickly left the ancestral hall with proud looks on their faces.

The Zhang Clan had Zhang Xuan, and the Luo Clan had Luo Tianya. They had been worrying that their Jiang Clan would be doomed to lag behind the other two Premier Clans, but who could have thought that Feifei would successfully make a breakthrough at this juncture?

As expected, the talents of their Jiang Clan did not lose out to anyone at all!

...

It took around ten breaths for Jiang Fangyou to rush into the treasure vault. The moment that he entered the hall on the first floor, he saw a young lady standing ten meters away from a jade wall. She was still sweating profusely, unable to walk any closer to the jade wall at all.

Taken aback by what he was seeing, Jiang Fangyou hurriedly rushed up to her and asked, “Feifei, what’s wrong?”

One who had comprehended the Soul Quintessence should be able to remain unfazed against the pressure of the jade wall... but why did it seem like his daughter was still unable to withstand the pressure?

“Father, you can rest easy. I’ll try my best to achieve a breakthrough as soon as possible...” Seeing how her father was still worried despite the reassurances she had given him, even going to the extent of checking on her after just a few minutes, Jiang Feifei could not help but feel a little irritated.



“You haven’t comprehended the Soul Quintessence yet?” As if struck by lightning, Jiang Fangyou’s body stiffened in disbelief. He could not understand what was happening.

“It hasn’t even been ten minutes since I came here. How could I have comprehended the Soul Quintessence so quickly?” Jiang Feifei was rendered speechless.

Had her father lost his mind?

If it was that easy to comprehend the Soul Quintessence, she would have already comprehended it long ago! She would not have dragged it out until then.

“But...”

Jiang Fangyou’s body trembled weakly. His mind could hardly keep up with the happenings, and he nearly fainted on the spot.

He had thought that the person who had just achieved a breakthrough and comprehended the Soul Quintessence was his own daughter... However, if it was not his daughter, who else could it be?

Noticing the look on her father’s face, Jiang Feifei realized that something was amiss. She quickly stepped away from the jade wall before asking her father doubtfully, “What’s wrong? Did something happen?”

“After I parted from you, I went straight to the ancestral hall. Just a minute ago, the ‘Submission of the Predecessors’ phenomenon occurred, so I thought that... you were the one who had made a breakthrough!” Jiang Fangyou explained.

“It wasn’t me...” Coming to understand the reason behind her father’s behavior, Jiang Feifei was a little startled as well.

“Could it be that a member of the side family has comprehended the Soul Quintessence, similar to Luo Tianya?”

“Side family... How can our side family be that formidable?” Jiang Fangyou did not think it likely to be the case.

With a deep frown on his forehead, he mulled deeply over the matter, but he was still unable to figure out what was going on. Shaking his head helplessly, he turned to his daughter and

asked, “Did you notice anything amiss while you were cultivating here?”

Jiang Feifei thought for a moment before shaking her head. “No, I didn’t notice anything at all!”

She had been completely absorbed in trying to comprehend the Soul Quintessence, so she had not noticed any anomaly at all.

“To be able to trigger the ‘Submission of the Predecessors’, the person who has comprehended the Soul Quintessence has to be our clan member. Otherwise, there’s no way he could possibly pull this off... However, is it really possible for anyone to make a breakthrough without the Jade Hieroglyph?” Jiang Fangyou frowned in incomprehension.

Even with the aid of the Jade Hieroglyph, not a single core member of the Jiang Clan had been able to comprehend the Soul Quintessence in the past tens of thousands of years. Just who in the world could be so formidable as to pull it off without the aid of the Jade Hieroglyph?

All of a sudden, a thought came to Jiang Fangyou’s mind. His body trembled in horror as he exclaimed, “Could it be... This is bad. Feifei, follow me up!”

He quickly dashed for the stairs after saying those words.

Uncertain of the reason behind her father’s sudden outburst, Jiang Feifei hurriedly followed behind him.

In the blink of an eye, they were already on the second floor. With just a glance, Jiang Fangyou’s face turned ghastly white.

A room that should have been filled with treasures had been completely emptied. Not even a shred of rat poop could be seen in the room.

“A thief has managed to sneak into our treasure vault! From the looks of it, it seems like the incident happened not too long ago... I have to activate our Clan Seal!” Jiang Fangyou exclaimed anxiously

# 1641 Who Are You?

Hula!

Right after those words were spoken, a jade token flew forth from Jiang Fangyou's palm. It floated out of the window of the treasure vault, and the next moment, the surroundings seemed to suddenly come to life. An overwhelming aura suddenly shrouded the entire area.

With Jiang Fangyou's eye of discernment, he could tell that the treasures had not been taken too long ago. With a swift calculation, he deduced that it was likely that the thief had not managed to escape from the treasure vault yet.

As long as he sealed the area with the formation and combed the entire treasure vault carefully, he would surely be able to weed that darned thief out!

After sealing the area, the two of them moved on to the third floor. Seeing that the third floor had been emptied as well, Jiang Fangyou's eyebrows twitched in trepidation. His chest felt so stifled that it seemed as if it would blow up very soon.

This was the fortune that the Jiang Clan had accumulated with difficulty over the past tens of thousands of years! To dare steal their entire wealth...

Wait till I catch you! I swear that I'll shred you into pieces!

...

Exhaling a mouthful of turbid gas, Zhang Xuan stood up.

It's done!

Wrapping his body with his soul energy, he walked to the stone platform at the center.

As expected, the pressure from before had lowered to a level that he could endure.

He took a few steps forward and grabbed the seal floating atop the stone platform.

Hula!

To his surprise, his hand slipped right past the seal, leaving him to grab at thin air.

“What? Does this mean that... the seal is fake?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Due to the immense pressure emanated by the seal, he thought that it was an artifact that was at least on par with Ancient Sage Zi Yu’s inkstone. Yet, he was not able to touch it at all.

Could this be an illusion?

If only he had known that this would happen, he never would have wasted his effort cultivating the Soul Quintessence...

That was ten breaths that he had wasted there!

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to leave the room in disappointment, a thought flashed across his mind. Wait a moment, this artifact is called the Seal of Souls, right? Could it be that... it can only be grasped by a soul?

He was certain that he had felt the pressure from the seal on his soul; there was no way to fake that... Since the pressure was real, it did not make much sense for the artifact to be a mere illusion. Yet, he was still unable to grasp it with his hands.

Since that was the case, could it be that the seal was simply intangible in form, reminiscent of a soul? If that was the case, he would only be able to grasp it with his Primordial Spirit.

Thus, Zhang Xuan took a seat on the floor and drew his Primordial Spirit out from his glabella. With a sweep of his hand, he felt a cooling sensation rippling across his Primordial Spirit as he grabbed something tangible.

He immediately knew that his deduction was right, and his eyes lit up in excitement. He quickly closed his grip on the item and attempted to pull it out.

Huala!

He nearly fell to the ground while trying to do so.

Heavy! Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in surprise.

While the seal might not have looked big, it felt even heavier than an entire mountain. With his Introspective Convalescence realm soul cultivation, he was still unable to pick it up in his unprepared state!

Let me see just how heavy it is! Zhang Xuan thought as he took in a deep breath.

He gathered his strength and attempted to lift the seal once more.

Hong long long!

The seal slowly rose up as innumerable surges of spiritual energy swiftly gathered around the seal. Following which, the treasure vault beneath his feet began shaking non-stop. It was as if the seal served as to contain the fortune within this building, and taking away the seal spelled the collapse of the entire building.

...

“This is bad! Someone is on the top floor!”

On a floor below, Jiang Fangyou felt the shaking of the entire treasure vault, and his face turned incredibly livid. Knowing that there was no time to waste, he hurriedly rushed up the stairs.

...

“Store!”

Knowing that the shaking treasure vault would surely draw people over, Zhang Xuan knew that it was unsafe to remain in the area. Thus, he quickly kept the Seal of Souls into his storage ring.

While the entire treasure vault had shaken intensely as he took away the seal, it did not collapse as he had expected.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Zhang Xuan returned his Primordial Spirit to his body, and just as he was about to leave, he heard footsteps sounding below. Someone was rushing over.

“So fast?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in alarm.

With a flick of his hand, he swiftly distorted the space around him, causing his body to vanish from view.

Hula!

The next instant, Jiang Fangyou and Jiang Feifei rushed into the room.

Looking at the empty stone platform, Jiang Fangyou nearly lost his mind. He swiftly diffused his Spiritual Perception into the surroundings, leaving the area feeling heavy as though it had been infused with mercury.

“Father...”

This was the first time that Jiang Feifei had seen such a frightening look on her father’s face, and she trembled a little in fear.

“Check the surroundings. It’s unlikely that the thief has gotten far!” Jiang Fangyou commanded with a wintry voice.

“Yes!” Jiang Feifei nodded and rushed down the stairs.

Right after the young lady left the area, Jiang Fangyou walked up to the stone platform and stroked its smooth surface lightly, seemingly unable to believe that someone had actually managed to rob the Seal of Souls. With twitching cheeks, he growled in anger, “Just which b\*stard could it be...”

Before finishing his words, he abruptly turned around and thrust his finger toward an empty corner of the room.

This wily fox!

Seeing a finger art darting in his direction, Zhang Xuan could not be bothered with concealing himself anymore. He hurriedly leaped away to dodge the attack.

It was one thing for Jiang Fangyou’s strength to be on par with Sword Saint Xing and the others, but more importantly, he possessed an extraordinarily powerful soul as well. In truth, he had already noticed Zhang Xuan when he scanned the area with his Spiritual Perception earlier. However, he had chosen to feign ignorance in a bid to make the other party lower his guard.

Sila!

An attack harnessing the burning rage of a Great Sage expert, Jiang Fangyou's finger art tore Zhang Xuan's spatial barrier apart. Realizing that he would not make it in time to dodge the attack, Zhang Xuan's goosebumps rose in astonishment.

Activate!

Knowing that there was no way he would be able to survive if he got into a direct confrontation with Jiang Fangyou, he immediately ignited the Zhang Clan blood essence within his body.

In an instant, time seemed to have slowed down.

The finger that he could hardly see earlier seemed to have frozen in midair, and the other party's infuriated expression appeared in high definition before him.

Sensing the incredible might pulsating around him, Zhang Xuan felt his hairs stand on end. He's too powerful! Even with time acceleration, I won't be able to last too long against him...

The last time he saw Jiang Fangyou, the latter still had a smile on his face... Who could have thought that he would wield such frightening strength!

This was especially so given the powerful soul pressure that he was constantly emanating. Even when tapping into the Zhang Clan's bloodline ability, Zhang Xuan knew that he would not be able to last too long. At the same time, his spatial barrier would not be of much use either.

When a soul was too powerful, it would be able to suppress time and space!

In the end, the problem was that his cultivation was simply too low. If the both of them had been at the same cultivation realm, Zhang Xuan would have been able to stroll leisurely before Jiang Fangyou without drawing his attention at all.

Knowing that he was no match for Jiang Fangyou in his current state, Zhang Xuan unhesitatingly dashed out of the room.

Huala!

But before he could even get too far away, Jiang Fangyou's finger art broke Zhang Xuan's time acceleration before shattering the spatial barrier that he had set up.

The shockwave from the collision exploded into the surroundings and struck Zhang Xuan's back. A sweet sensation welled up at the back of his throat, and he nearly spurted blood.

“Are you from the Zhang Clan, or are you from the Luo Clan?” Jiang Fangyou asked with an utterly cold voice.

That scoundrel had been hiding in the midst of a spatial barrier earlier, but upon realizing that his hiding spot had been exposed, he immediately utilized the power of time to flee.

As a result of that, he had failed to even catch the other party's appearance...

To think that there was a person in the world who would have comprehended both the Spatial Quintessence and the Time Quintessence!

Who in the world was the other party?

Hula!

Paying no heed to Jiang Fangyou's questions, Zhang Xuan immediately darted for the windows.

What was he to do after ravaging the other party's treasure vault if not flee? Was he supposed to wait for the other party to serve him tea?

Seeing that the thief was intending to escape from the treasure vault, Jiang Fangyou bellowed furiously, “Where do you think you're going?”

Tss la!

His soul energy rippled outward and shrouded the treasure vault swiftly, forming a massive barrier.

But barely after Jiang Fangyou formed the barrier, the enemy's deep voice echoed in the air.



“Break!”

Following which, the barrier formed of soul energy shattered apart.

“This is... Soul Quintessence? Y-you... Who in the world are you?” Jiang Fangyou was startled.

# 1642 Mental Breakdown, Jiang Fangyou

It was already inconceivable that the person before him had managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence and the Time Quintessence... but who could have thought that he would have successfully grasped the Soul Quintessence as well!

In the past tens of thousands of years, nearly no one in the Three Premier Clans had managed to comprehend any of these three Quintessences. Even Ancient Sages would view comprehending any one of these Quintessences as their greatest pride, regarding it as their bragging rights toward their fellow Ancient Sages.

But somehow, a single person had actually able to grasp all three of them. How in the world was this possible?

Just what kind of monster was he?

Kacha!

In Jiang Fangyou's moment of shock, the thief had already broken through the windows of the treasure vault, ready to escape at any moment.

“Do you think that I'll allow you to escape after emptying our Jiang Clan's treasure vault? You are really taking me too lightly!”

With a face reddened with rage, Jiang Fangyou pushed his foot forcefully against the ground and leaped out of the window as well. Raising his right hand, he swiped forward ferociously.

Hong long!

A powerful surge of zhenqi burst forth with astounding speed, forming an energy wall which sealed all possible escape routes. At the same time, Jiang Fangyou concentrated his soul energy into his hand to forge a sharp sword and slashed it down on the thief forcefully.

Peng!

Through the sheer congregation of soul energy, Jiang Fangyou's sword overcame the limitations of space and time to sever the thief's neck.

Weng!

However, as the sword of soul energy came into contact with the thief's neck, a faint ripple of luminescence flowed out from the thief's body. It easily deflected the sword, allowing the thief to escape unharmed from this offense.

“Barrier of Soul Ripple? You are... a soul oracle?” Jiang Fangyou's heart jolted once more as he nearly plummeted from the sky.

The shock that he had received that day was far more than what he had encountered in his entire life!

Barrier of Soul Ripple was a battle technique unique to the soul oracles. By wrapping one's body with flowing soul energy, one would be able to deflect most soul offenses.

It was a technique which only the most authentic soul oracles were able to pull off. Even Jiang Fangyou wasn't capable enough to execute it...

On top of comprehending the Time, Spatial, and Soul Quintessences, the thief was actually a soul oracle too?

Just when in the world did such a formidable expert appear on the continent?

However, Jiang Fangyou knew that this was not the time for him to remain stunned in shock. With a swift flick of his wrist, a triangular flag materialized on top of his palm and rose into the air.

Great Sage artifact, Darksoul Flag!

This was an artifact that had been forged by an Ancient Sage of the Jiang Clan. It had been a hundred years since Jiang Fangyou gained possession of the flag, and he had been nourishing it with his soul energy every single day.

Furthermore, he had not used it since the major fight eighty years ago.

In other words, there was eighty years worth of soul energy stored within the Darksoul Flag!

With the activation of the Darksoul Flag, a profuse amount of soul energy gushed frenziedly into the surroundings, preventing anyone within its sphere of dominion from escaping.

A sinister aura drifted across the air, and it felt as if the temperature around the Jiang Clan had abruptly plummeted. Even though Saint cultivators possessed a certain degree of resistance to heat and cold, the cold vibe seemed to seep right into their souls, leaving them shuddering uncontrollably.

The soul energy emanated by the Darksoul Flag held malevolent intent. Those whose cultivation was weaker could end up turning into retards under the hostile assault of the flag. Even those who were stronger would find themselves light-headed, inhibiting their reaction speed. This would create an opening for others to exploit.

Many years ago, Yang Shi had a friendly duel with Jiang Fangyou. He had been caught off guard by the prowess of the Darksoul Flag and nearly suffered a huge setback.

Before the prowess of the Darksoul Flag, the body of the thief was forcefully halted on the spot. As if an ant cast within a block of ice, he was unable to escape no matter how desperately he struggled.

Seeing that he had managed to seal the movement of the thief, Jiang Fangyou heaved a sigh of relief. "You might be a true soul oracle, but you are simply too weak at the moment. You are no match for the prowess of the Darksoul Flag!"

Just as he was about to apprehend the thief to see the face of the culprit, he suddenly felt the flag in the air trembling non-stop. To his astonishment, it felt like the Darksoul Flag was running out of control!

*TZZZZZZ!*

The eighty years worth of soul energy accumulated within the Darksoul Flag suddenly surged into the seemingly-trapped

thief beneath it. Before long, a huge whirlpool had already formed between them.

“H-he... is absorbing the soul energy in the Dark soul Flag? This is bad...” Jiang Fangyou’s face turned ghastly pale, and he nearly blacked out.

The Dark soul Flag is one of the strongest artifacts in the Jiang Clan! Yet, not only are you unfazed by its attack, you are even absorbing soul energy from it...

You monster! Show your true form!

With a livid expression, Jiang Fangyou maneuvered the Dark soul Flag to pierce into the body of the thief. “You b\*stard, there’s no way I’ll let you do that! Die!”

The Dark soul Flag was not just capable of soul offense, it wielded formidable physical prowess as well. Under its full might, even a Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm cultivator would be completely destroyed!

Hula!

The Dark soul Flag pierced right toward the thief with astounding speed. Jiang Fangyou thought that he would finally be able to subdue the thief with this move, but to his bewilderment, the thief raised his hand and stroked the flag lightly. Following which...

The Dark soul Flag suddenly twisted and twirled delightfully around the thief, and a moan of delight echoed from its body. It was almost as if it had just been reunited with its long-lost father!

Pu!

Jiang Fangyou’s face paled, and he spurted a mouthful of blood. To his horror, he could feel his mental connection with the Dark soul Flag being decisively severed!

“Y-you... You tamed my Dark soul Flag...” Jiang Fangyou was on the verge of bursting into tears.

It is one thing for you to be able to steal my soul energy within the Dark soul Flag, but to be able to tame it in the blink of an eye as well...

What in the world is happening? Who am I? Where am I?

Jiang Fangyou had been traumatized so badly that he was starting to doubt the reason behind his existence.

That was an artifact that he had spent over a hundred years nourishing! Yet, it had actually betrayed him for a new master without any second thoughts...

It was as if all of the tender love that he had showered upon it had gone to naught. This betrayal came like a dagger plunged into the depths of his heart...

Huhu!

After taming the Darksoul Flag, the thief quickly stowed it into his storage ring before continuing his escape.

“Is that the thief who has stolen from our treasure vault? Where do you think you’re going?”

“If I allow you to escape today, I shall cast away my Jiang surname!”

The clashes between Jiang Fangyou and the thief had caused a huge commotion and alarmed the members of the Jiang Clan. Dozens of elders from the Jiang Clan flew out and encircled the area, sealing all escape routes of the thief.

Seeing that reinforcements had arrived, Jiang Fangyou heaved a sigh of relief. With a wrathful look on his face, he whipped out a jade token and tossed it into the air.

Hong long!

As soon as the jade token appeared, a formation shrouding the entire Jiang Clan suddenly whirred into action, and an immense amount of energy swiftly gathered in the air.

The Guardian Formation of the Jiang Clan had just been activated!

Narrowing his eyes, Jiang Fangyou pointed his finger at the jade token and commanded, “Seal!”

Weng!

Amid blinding radiance, energy swiftly gathered in the area.

This was not any manipulation of space or soul art. Rather, it was the true accumulation of raw, unrefined energy.

There was no weakness to exploit in this massive accumulation of energy. Once trapped within this raw energy, there would be nowhere for the thief to escape to.

Seemingly noticing the frightening prowess of the accumulation of energy, the thief cowered backward fearfully, even stumbling over nothing in the midst of doing so.

Kacha!

But all of a sudden, the accumulation of raw energy suddenly exploded. A powerful shockwave swept across the area before everything vanished completely.

“The formation was halted?” Jiang Fangyou was startled.

At that moment, he felt as if ten thousand divine beasts were stampeding through his mind.

Somehow, the thief seemed to wield some mysterious ability to overcome everything that he threw at the other party.

Bro, is there anything in this world that you can't do?

Unfortunately, that was not the end of it.

Before Jiang Fangyou could even recover from his shock, the thief beckoned with his hand, and the jade token floating in the air swiftly flew over.

Hu!

The jade token landed on the thief's hand. With a slight stroke, an excited hum sounded from the jade token...

It had been tamed as well!

Pu!

Another mouthful of fresh blood spurted from Jiang Fangyou's mouth as he saw the world before him turning dark.

He did not know how much trauma his old body could take before breaking down!

Can you please stop stealing my possessions?

Taming the Darksoul Flag and my Clan Head Token... Those are mine, not yours!

How in the world did you even manage to tame them?

Looking at it now, it seems like I'm the outsider instead!

Seeing the bad condition that her father was in, Jiang Feifei quickly rushed forward anxiously. "Father..."

However, Jiang Fangyou quickly stopped her with a bellow. "Don't come over! Be careful and don't get tamed by that fellow..."

Given how the thief had managed to tame the Darksoul Flag, Clan Head Token, and even the Guardian Formation, he felt like the other party would tame his daughter if she rushed over.

In fact... he was thinking that the other party would be able to tame even him if he were to rush over!

"..." Jiang Feifei.

"..." Zhang Xuan.



# 1643 I Am Your Clan Head

Knowing that it would be dangerous to leave the situation be, Jiang Fangyou swiftly turned to the dozens of elders surrounding them and instructed, “Elders, heed my orders. Take down that thief!”

Hong long!

The dozens of elders charged forward simultaneously, driving their zhenqi and soul energy in unison to launch a devastating attack toward the thief at the center. Their prowess swiftly converged together like a domineering dragon, tearing countless dimension rifts around the area.

“This isn’t good...”

Trapped at the very center, Zhang Xuan’s face turned livid.

He had thought that as long as he could flee from the encirclement of the Jiang Clan, he would be able to buy enough time to teleport away using the Dragonbone Divine Spear. He did not think that these elders would suddenly make a decisive move on him simultaneously.

Due to violent energies permeating the surroundings, the space around the Jiang Clan had become incredibly unstable. If he forced a teleportation right now, there was a chance that he would fall into spatial turbulence, thus plunging him in more danger than he was in now.

In other words, he could not rely on his spatial arts to get him out of there.

What the heck was this! Had he known earlier, he would not have been so eager to take the Seal of Souls. Perhaps, he might even have been out of the Jiang Clan by now!

Boom!

However, it was clear that the elders around him would not give him the time to lament on his lapse in judgement. Their

might was swiftly pushing closer with unstoppable momentum.

Judging from the scale of the attack, even the Sempiternal realm Yang shi would have trouble coping with this.

Knowing that he would be reduced to a heap of meat if he confronted the combined prowess of the elders with his current strength, Zhang Xuan raised his palm and bellowed, “Hold them off!”

Hu!

The Clan Head Token of the Jiang Clan, which he had tamed just moments ago, floated up from his palm. Under the command of the token, the Guardian Formation swiftly formed a transparent barrier around him.

Boom boom boom!

The attacks of the elders fell on the barrier, causing devastating energy to ripple all over it. Fortunately, even their combined strength was unable to breach the barrier.

“It worked...” Zhang Xuan stared at the scene before him in trepidation before heaving a sigh of relief.

He had recalled his experiences with the Guardian Formations of the Zhang Clan and Luo Clan, so he had quickly whipped out the Jiang Clan’s Clan Head Token in a bid to control their Guardian Formation. It was truly fortunate that everything had worked out according to plan.

The Clan Head Token was the key to controlling the Guardian Formation. Taming it would mean that he had all of the formations of the Jiang Clan at his disposal. In other words, the greatest trump card of the Jiang Clan that instilled fear in its enemies had already become his safety amulet.

“Y-you...”

Jiang Fangyou knew that the thief had tamed the Clan Head Token, but he did not think that the other party would successfully manipulate their formations on the first try. In fact, the reason he had ordered the elders take down the thief

swiftly was so as to retrieve the Clan Head Token before the thief could figure out how to use it.

Yet, at that moment, he felt as if he was going insane.

It was not that he had never seen his fair share of experts before. In fact, the scholarly young man who had paid him a visit earlier likely wielded strength that surpassed even Yang Shi... but it did not seem like the scholarly young man would be capable of pulling this off either.

“Continue the attack!” Jiang Fangyou bellowed.

Hearing the commands of the clan head, the elders persisted with their attacks.

Knowing that he was protected by the Guardian Formation, Zhang Xuan was no longer flustered anymore.

“Hold it right there!”

With a light chuckle, he tapped his finger on the space before him.

Huala!

An overwhelming outburst of spiritual energy exploded into the surroundings, sealing the movements of the elders in the area. They could neither attack nor escape.

Taken aback by the happenings, the elders glanced at one another in confusion.

Unable to take it any longer, one of the elders bellowed, “Clan head, what’s going on?”

“Why is the Clan Head Token in his hand? Why is he able to control our Guardian Formation?”

“Who in the world is that fellow?”

Questions flooded out from the bewildered elders.

“What’s going on? Who is he?” Jiang Fangyou clutched his hair frenziedly. That’s something I would like to know as well! I darn well want to know who he is and what in the world is happening, too!

Knowing that the urgent matter at hand was to apprehend the thief, Jiang Fangyou growled coldly, “That scoundrel snuck into our treasure vault and emptied out all of our possessions...”

However, before he could finish his words, the thief shouted out as well, “Elders, heed my words! That man is an Otherworldly Demon Emperor. He has disguised himself as me and stolen all of the treasures of our Jiang Clan. You mustn’t let him get away!”

That voice echoed resoundingly in the air, piercing through the heavens.

Taken aback by those words, Jiang Fangyou quickly turned his gaze toward the thief standing at the very center. The other party had already given up on escaping, and he slowly turned his body over to reveal a face identical to his!

The similarity did not just stop at appearances. The other party’s posture, demeanor, voice, and even soul aura were completely indistinguishable from his!

It was almost as if he was looking into a mirror!

“You...” Jiang Fangyou’s body stiffened, taken aback by what he was seeing.

He had seen others disguising themselves before, and he had done it quite often in the past too... However, no matter how a cultivator disguised themselves, the most they could do was alter their appearance and demeanor. It was completely unthinkable for a cultivator to disguise their soul aura and make it completely identical to the person that they was impersonating!

The elders were equally stunned by what they were seeing.

All of a sudden, they found two clan heads standing before them... and they were speaking completely opposing words.

Who should they believe?

Seeing that the elders had started to waver, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. “The Clan Head Token only obeys the

commands of the clan head. As elders of the Jiang Clan, surely you can't be oblivious to this fact?"

With a wave of his hand, the Clan Head Token released a magnificent glow.

Following which, the elders felt the energy binding their body vanishing into thin air, granting them control over their bodies again.

"The Clan Head Token can only be tamed by the clan head. That person over there must be the real clan head!"

"How can a person who can control our Guardian Formation possibly be a fake?"

...

The ability to control the Guardian Formation was a distinctive ability of the clan head. With such persuasive evidence before them, it did not take long for the elders to be convinced by Zhang Xuan's words. One by one, they directed hostile gazes toward the real Jiang Fangyou.

"..."

Jiang Fangyou did not expect the thief to turn the tables on him like that.

He could still tolerate the thief possessing the Time, Spatial, and Soul Quintessences, and he could accept the fact that the other party possessed the abilities of a soul oracle...

But to disguise as him and impersonate the clan head, even convincing all of the Jiang Clan's elders to turn against him... Unforgivable!

"Everyone, don't believe his words. I am the real Jiang Fangyou! Earlier, I used the Guardian Formation to attack him! He's the one who stole the Clan Head Token..." Jiang Fangyou quickly explained himself in the hope of salvaging the situation.

"Audacious! Do you think that the Clan Head Token can be tamed by just anyone? Even if it was stolen and tamed by another person, do you think that our Jiang Clan's Guardian Formation is that easy to control?" Zhang Xuan harrumphed

coldly. “You should at least try to come up with something more convincing than that!”

After berating Jiang Fangyou, he turned his gaze to the elders around him and asked, “Isn’t that right, elders?”

“Our Jiang Clan’s Guardian Formation has been refined and reinforced by the hands of countless predecessors, to the point that it has become a unique entity in itself. Without inheriting the heritage of our Jiang Clan, not even the head of the Formation Master Guild headquarters would be able to control our Guardian Formation!”

“Indeed! Given how smoothly he was able to manipulate the Guardian Formation with the Clan Head Token, there’s no doubt that he’s the real clan head!”

“I heard that the Otherworldly Demon Emperors are able to disguise themselves as humans, such that even 9-star master teachers would find it difficult to discern the differences... Could the fake clan head really be a disguised Otherworldly Demon Emperor?”

“I’m not too sure... To be honest, I’m still rather confused by the situation...”

The crowd fell into deep thought.

Putting aside the impossibility of taming the Clan Head Token within such a short period of time, even if the enemy had succeeded in doing so, there was no way he could control the massive and intricate Guardian Formation so quickly, right?

Without many years of effort, it would be impossible to achieve such a refined level of control over the formation!

“Who are you? Are you an Otherworldly Demon?” one of the elders bellowed at Jiang Fangyou.

“Otherworldly Demon your head! I am Jiang Fangyou! Jiang Fangping, don’t tell me that you can’t even recognize me? I have known you ever since we were seven! When you were eight years old, you were unable to master the Heart Turmoil Art and looked to me for some guidance. Out of gratitude for my help, you gave me a Jadecrimson Fruit as compensation. However, I didn’t know that those with low cultivation

mustn't consume the Jade-crimson Fruit, and I nearly died from my energy running amok... Surely you should still remember this matter, right?" Jiang Fangyou bellowed furiously.

# 1644 The Indiscernible Duo

To be honest, the thief had left Jiang Fangyou feeling so traumatized that he was starting to feel that he would never feel well again.

But putting that aside, considering that their appearances, demeanor, and even soul aura were identical to one another, it was pointless to be tussling over who was real and who was fake. The best way for him to prove that he was the real Jiang Fangyou was through memories!

He had grown up in the Jiang Clan since a very young age, so he was extremely familiar with all of the elders there. No matter how good the other party's disguise was, he could not possibly know about the little things that had happened between them!

Thus, he unhesitatingly revealed one of his personal secrets to verify his identity!

“This...”

Those words left Elder Fangping stunned. Doubt surfaced in the depths of his eyes.

Such a thing had indeed happened back when they were still very young, and the only ones who knew of this matter were the both of them. There was no way an outsider would know of this matter.

In other words, if the person without the Clan Head Token was truly an impostor, there was no way he could have known of this matter!

Could the person with the Clan Head Token really be an impostor?

“What’s wrong?” another elder beside Jiang Fangping asked.

“What that person said... is true!” Jiang Fangping replied awkwardly.



It was quite embarrassing to have the little mistakes that he had committed back when he was younger dug up before such a huge crowd.

“Really?”

Hearing those words, the elders quickly turned their gazes back to Zhang Xuan with deep frowns.

There was bound to be a fake between the two of them. If the person without the Clan Head Token was real, the person with it had to be a fake!

“There’s no need to look at me like that. Even though very few people know of this matter, it’s still not too difficult to hear about it from the elders in the clan!”

Zhang Xuan did not expect Jiang Fangyou to react so swiftly, raising the crux of the issue right away. Nevertheless, he maintained a calm smile on his face, not showing the slightest hint of fluster. He turned his gaze over to Jiang Fangping as well and said, “Jiang Fangping, the cultivation technique you practice is the Three Points Soul Tempering Art passed down by Elder Jiang Chao. However, due to several mistakes you made in your cultivation, you experience excruciating pain at your Qimen acupoint whenever a storm comes in. You find yourself unable to control your zhenqi, and sometimes, it might even flow in reverse...”

Previously, when the dozens of elders launched a simultaneous attack against him, he had swiftly compiled a book on all of them in the Library of Heaven’s Path. As such, he had a good grasp over the problems that they were suffering from.

Since Jiang Fangyou wanted to play a game of ‘who can go deeper’, he did not mind playing along too.

“This...” Jiang Fangping was taken aback by the revelation and nodded stiffly. “Yes, that’s right... but I have never told anyone about this affliction of mine before. How did you know?”

Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows twitched.

Cr\*p. I was too focused on outdoing Jiang Fangyou that I accidentally blurted too much...

The Library of Heaven's Path could see through the flaws of an individual. He could still pass off as an unfathomable expert with that knowledge at his disposal, but it was not so easy when it came to impersonating an existent person in the world, especially before those who were close to him.

Often, the information revealed by the Library of Heaven's Path was too much, such that even the individual themselves might not even be aware of it.

Despite feeling a little suffocated on the inside, Zhang Xuan put up a compassionate front and sighed in sympathy. "To be honest with you, I saw through it a long time ago! I was afraid to raise your expectations only to disappoint you later, so I decided to keep quiet about the matter. All along, I have been searching for a method to resolve your affliction. Fortunately, just two days ago, I succeeded in finding a cure. Here, take a look at it!"

After saying those words, Zhang Xuan tapped his finger.

Hula!

A cultivation technique manual was imprinted onto Jiang Fangping's mind.

Having browsed through all of the books in the Jiang Clan Repository, he had also collected the manual of the Three Points Soul Tempering Art into the Library of Heaven's Path as well. As such, he knew what mistakes were within the cultivation technique. By compiling it against the Heaven's Path Soul Art, he could easily resolve the problems that Jiang Fangping was facing without much trouble.

"T-this..."

Browsing through the manual that had just been imparted to him, Jiang Fangping suddenly began trembling uncontrollably, as if he had been struck by a bolt of lightning.

With his eye of discernment, he could easily tell just how valuable the cultivation technique was to him. If he cultivated in accordance with it, not only would his affliction be resolved, he would also be able to advance his cultivation considerably too!

Could it really be true that the clan head had already seen through his affliction and had been searching far and wide for a solution for him?

If that was truly the case, he was really indebted to the clan head then.

“Congratulations, Elder Fangping!”

Just by looking at Jiang Fangping’s expression, it was apparent that the manual that had been imparted to him was truly effective. The elders beside him quickly clasped their fists and congratulated him.

“Don’t be fooled by that fellow!”

Jiang Fangyou had not thought that the thief would actually be able to pinpoint an affliction that Jiang Fangping was suffering from and even have a solution for it. Just by thinking about the monster that he was faced, he felt his hair standing on end. “I am the real Jiang Fangyou! Elder Fangcheng, we have known me for more than a hundred years now, and...”

Before Jiang Fangyou could finish his words, Zhang Xuan cut in. “Elder Fangcheng, we have known one another for more than a hundred years now, and I believe your Soul Appeasement Art must have reached the third level, right? However, this soul art happens to be in conflict with the Lucid Soul Formula that you practiced previously, so I advise you to switch to cultivating this for the time being. I guarantee that you will be able to advance your cultivation much faster than before!”

After saying those words, Zhang Xuan flicked his finger and sent a sliver of his will over.

Swiftly browsing through the cultivation technique manual imparted to him, Jiang Fangcheng also froze on the spot, flabbergasted by what he had received.

This cultivation technique was from the same lineage as the Lucid Soul Formula that he had cultivated previously, and it was far stronger than the Soul Appeasement Art that he was currently cultivating!

“Actually, I haven’t just been paying attention to Elder Fangping and Elder Fangcheng. In order to bring our Jiang Clan to greater heights, I have been observing all of you closely, and I know the difficulties and problems that you are facing in your cultivation...”

“Elder Fangzhen, if I’m not mistaken, are you cultivating the Soul Codex 4-dan at the moment? Your cultivation isn’t up to par yet, so I advise you not to do it forcefully. Otherwise, it’ll bring about more harm than benefit. Do you feel your breathing often becoming ragged, and your soul and physical body seem to be losing harmony?”

“Elder Fanglin, the deficiency in your vitality has been quite severe recently. I advise you stop taking in concubines for the time being, or else you might just have your lifespan shortened...”

“Elder Fanghu, I know that you enjoy painting, but you mustn’t allow it to hinder your cultivation. Your cultivation has been stagnant for a very long time now...”

...

Zhang Xuan slowly went through the dozens of elders around him one by one. Before long, the entire area was plunged into absolute silence.

His words had struck a chord with them. He had managed to pinpoint the major flaws and problems that they were facing at the moment.

Could he really be their clan head?

Otherwise, how could he possibly know so much about them? It was almost as if he had stripped them bare and peered into all of their secrets!

“...”

Seeing how all of the elders had fallen silent, Jiang Fangyou tore out yet another clump of his hair frenziedly.

Just who in the freaking world are you?

Even I am unclear about the cultivation of the elders in the clan, so how in the world do you know?

Furthermore, to pinpoint them precisely without any margin of error, winning all of the elders over to your side in the blink of an eye...

And those elders too... What am I to do now that all of you have chosen to side with him?

Has my life really been a lie? Am I really not Jiang Fangyou?

Where am I? Who am I? What am I?

Overwhelmed by the happenings around him, Jiang Fangyou felt a splitting migraine. He turned to Jiang Feifei, his last ray of hope. "Feifei, I am your father. You are able to recognize me, right? I am the real one!"

Even if all of the elders could not recognize him, his daughter should at least be able to recognize him, right?

"I..." Jiang Feifei did not expect herself to be faced with two fathers all of a sudden, and she could not react instantly.

What was she supposed to make of this situation?

A moment later, she gathered her thoughts and said, "Before entering the treasure vault, my father told me that I have to comprehend the Soul Quintessence by hook or by crook, or else I will be forced into a political marriage. I will have to marry either Zhang Xuan from the Zhang Clan or Luo Tianya from the Luo Clan... Only my father will know my response to his words. If you are able to quote my response to that, it will prove that you are the real one!"

# 1645 Fake!

Just from the appearance and soul aura, Jiang Feifei was unable to tell who was real and who was fake. Thus, she could only use her conversation with her father as a gauge.

“You said that...” After pondering for a moment, Jiang Fangyou was just about to answer the question when a voice interjected him.

“You said, ‘I don’t want to marry that Zhang Xuan! All he does is humblebrag with his strength and crush the confidence of others. Furthermore, he even rejected the little princess of the Luo Clan publicly, not showing any considerations for the other party’s dignity at all!’”

“This...” Jiang Feifei was stunned for a moment before nodding slowly. “Indeed, that’s what I said...”

“...”

Jiang Fangyou’s body jolted once more. At that moment, he felt like the thief had slipped into his mind and taken a peek at his memories.

Those were the words that his daughter had said to him earlier, so how was the other party able to recite them so accurately?

With veins popping on his temples, Jiang Fangyou roared angrily, “No, that’s not right... You were hiding by the side earlier, weren’t you? Otherwise, how could you have known the conversation between me and Feifei?”

He was supposed to apprehend the thief who had stolen the treasures of the Jiang Clan, but things had swiftly spiraled out of control, to the extent that he was even beginning to doubt his own identity. No words could begin to describe how he was feeling.

“Hah, I can also say that you were snooping around earlier!” Zhang Xuan scoffed disdainfully. “Alright, stop this pointless struggling and reveal your true form! Otherwise, if all of us

make a move together, the only fate that will await you is death!”

“I...”

Hearing those words, Jiang Fangyou’s body trembled in agitation. He wanted to refute the thief’s words, but he was unable to find any convincing argument to back himself.

The tides were truly against him now. The elders did not believe him, and he did not have the Clan Head Token or any insignia to prove his identity. If they made a move against him, he would not stand a chance at all.

In the worst-case scenario, he might even lose his life.

“Alright, why don’t I speak some words of fairness?”

Just as Jiang Fangyou was at a loss over what to do, a voice suddenly sounded amid the elders. Following which, an old man walked out from the crowd.

Zhang Xuan shot a glance over and recognized the other party to be Elder Fangyun of the Jiang Clan.

Even though his standing within the clan was not too high, he was a highly respected elder whose words carried much say in the Jiang Clan. Earlier, Zhang Xuan had also offered him guidance.

“Elder Fangyun, please feel free to speak!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist.

“Un!” Elder Fangyun nodded. With a complicated look in his eyes, he said, “Earlier, you offered us guidance on our cultivation. I was listening closely to it, and your words were directed right at the crux of soul cultivation. In fact, it’s no exaggeration to say that there are no flaws in your words at all... I would have been truly delighted to have you as our clan head. Under your lead, it would only be a matter of time before our Jiang Clan surpasses the Luo Clan and the Zhang Clan... A pity it is, but you aren’t!”

“I am not?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback. “I truly am Jiang Fangyou...”

Elder Fangyun raised his hand to stop Zhang Xuan. “To be honest with you, I’m not the only one who has noticed it. All of the elders over here have become vaguely aware of it, be it consciously or subconsciously. All of us have known Clan Head Jiang Fangyou for at least a century now, and we are all well aware of the limits of his capabilities. To see through our flaws and resolve them impeccably... he doesn’t possess the ability to do so! If he really had that in him, our Jiang Clan wouldn’t have been ranked at the bottom of the Three Premier Clans...”

“Elder Fangyun is right. Jiang Fangyou is a decent person, but there’s really nothing outstanding about his capabilities!”

“You are way more formidable than our clan head!”

Right after Elder Fangyun said his piece, a few other elders quickly voiced their agreement.

Hearing about his mediocrity, Jiang Fangyou really wanted to find a place to hide.

The hell! Is this how you all view me? Nothing outstanding about my capabilities? Good, I’ll remember you! We’ll have a good talk later on!

At the very least, can’t you all not put me down in front of a stranger?

It was just a moment earlier that he had been desperate to prove his identity to the elders, but now that they had finally recognized him as the real clan head, instead of delight, he felt as if his heart had been pierced by countless arrows.

In this moment of sorrow, he saw his daughter nodding in agreement. “My father’s capabilities are indeed a little lacking. There’s no way he would be able to point out everything you just said!”

Jiang Fangyou clutched his chest tightly.

I know that you are trying to convince the other elders for me, but surely you don’t have to say such hurtful words!

How in the world did I come to have a daughter like you?



It was just a moment ago that Jiang Fangyou had felt guilty about threatening his daughter with a political marriage. However, since his daughter did not seem to have much respect for him, he suddenly felt that it might not be such a bad idea to marry her off to Zhang Xuan...

While Jiang Fangyou's heart was bleeding profusely, Zhang Xuan could not help but be startled by the situation before him.

He had thought that he would be able to win the crowd from the Jiang Clan over by pointing out their flaws and resolving their issues, but it turned out to be the key that gave him away...

It was indeed a difficult life for those who were too outstanding. No matter how he concealed himself, others would still see through him easily.

No matter where he was, he would shine like a firefly in the midst of the night. So conspicuous, so outstanding...

“To be able to offer us guidance on our soul cultivation and not make the slightest mistake in the details at all... If I'm not mistaken, you must have browsed through all of the books in our Jiang Clan Repository, right? Also, just a moment ago, the ‘Submission of the Predecessors’ phenomenon occurred. You are the one who has comprehended the Soul Quintessence, right?” Jiang Fangyun asked.

Even though he had been exposed, it did not seem like the elder of the Jiang Clan was intending to corner him. Thus, he nodded and admitted to it. “That's right!”

“To be able to comprehend the Soul Quintessence and have such a deep understanding of our Jiang Clan... Could you possibly be a member of the Jiang Clan's side family?” Jiang Fangyun asked doubtfully.

They were aware that a top-notch genius had appeared in the Luo Clan—Luo Tianya!

Despite being from the side family, Luo Tianya had managed to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. Could the same have happened to them?

Otherwise, how could the other party have such a deep understanding of them and their cultivation techniques?

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan was conflicted. He had no idea how he should answer that question.

“Actually, regardless of whether you are from the side family or not, the fact that you have comprehended the Soul Quintessence means that you are qualified to become our clan head! Furthermore, you have already tamed the Clan Head Token and taken control of our Guardian Formation!”

With eyes glowing in excitement, Jiang Fangyou took a step forward, clasped his fist, and bowed down. “Thus... I hope that you can become our real clan head and lead our Jiang Clan through the crisis that lies ahead of us!”

“...” Zhang Xuan was startled by the sudden turn of events.

It took him a moment before he could respond. He shook his head and said, “To be frank, I am not from the Jiang Clan!”

It would have been one thing if he was a member of the Jiang Clan’s side family, but he had absolutely no ties to the Jiang Clan at all!

“You aren’t from the Jiang Clan?”

Everyone was taken aback.

“It’s fine. It doesn’t make a huge difference. The fact that you have comprehended our Jiang Clan’s Soul Quintessence means that you have an inseverable relationship with our Jiang Clan... Why don’t we marry Feifei to you then? This way, you’ll still be qualified to be our clan head!” Elder Fangyun offered.

“No way!” Not expecting the Elder Fangyun to determine her marriage so casually, Jiang Feifei hurriedly shook her head in disapproval.

Putting aside the fact that the person before her had disguised himself as her father, she did not even know who and how old the other party was! How could she possibly be willing to marry a complete stranger?

“Elder Fangyun, you are too courteous. I’m willing to negotiate on the matter of becoming the clan head of the Jiang Clan, but as for marrying her... forget it!”

If the Jiang Clan did not mind an outsider becoming their clan head, he could still consider the matter.

Jiang Fangyou did have some ties with the scholarly young man, but as a clan whose heritage could be traced back to tens of thousands of years ago, it was unlikely that the entire clan had betrayed mankind. Most likely, it would just be a few black sheep here and there.

Otherwise, the Master Teacher Pavilion would have noticed something by now.

More importantly, if the Jiang Clan had truly betrayed mankind, his position as the clan head would help him steer them back to the right path and stop them from doing anything that would harm mankind.

“You said... forget it? What do you mean by that?” Jiang Feifei exploded furiously. I haven’t even said my piece yet, and you are already in such a rush to reject me...

# 1646 Unknown Secrets of the Soul Oracles 1

No matter what, she was a famed genius of the Master Teacher Continent. Furthermore, she was blessed with great beauty, so she had no lack of suitors in the Sanctum of Sages...

Yet, the other party actually showed such a disdainful look when Elder Fangyun proposed a political marriage with her... What did the other party mean by this?

“You don’t need to think too deeply into it; my words mean exactly how they sounded. You are too ugly. I don’t like it.”

After saying those words, Zhang Xuan paid no heed to the exploding Jiang Feifei and turned his gaze toward Elder Fangyun once more. “I already have someone whom I fancy, so I’m afraid I’ll have to turn down your offer of marriage. If you are still willing to have me as your clan head despite that, I won’t turn down your offer anymore. I’ll try my best to lead the Jiang Clan to greatness without straying down the wrong path!”

Otherworldly Demons had started appearing on the Master Teacher Continent—that was a sign that a war was just around the corner. He already had the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan on his side. If he could rope in the Jiang Clan as well, that would be for the best.

It would also be a good opportunity to find out what was with the scholarly young man.

After all, with the betrayal of the Seer Guild, the Jiang Clan, and the Master Teacher Pavilion... he felt that there was something deeper than what he was seeing.

Perhaps, it might even be a huge misunderstanding.

On the other hand, hearing that Zhang Xuan was unwilling to marry into the Jiang Clan, the elders fell silent.

They had never had an outsider as their clan head before.

“That won’t do. We’re a clan, not a sect! Our clan members will never accept an outsider as our clan head!”

“But he’s tamed the Clan Head Token, read through all of the books in our repository, and even comprehended the Soul Quintessence. If we allow him to leave just like that, it could bring us greater danger in the future!”

“The fact that he has comprehended the Soul Quintessence means that he has forged an inseverable relationship with our Jiang Clan. He might be unwilling to marry into the Jiang Clan for the time being, but as long as he stays in our Jiang Clan long enough, we should be able to convince him into doing so... Feifei might not be too pretty, and her temper is abhorrent, but I believe that they can cultivate their feelings for one another over time...”

“Furthermore, those from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers have also come to the Master Teacher Continent. Based on the news we have just received from them, the Otherworldly Demons have been making some movement in the Subterranean Gallery. The manpower of the Master Teacher Pavilion and the Combat Master Hall is already stretched thin... If an upheaval occurs, our Jiang Clan will surely have to stand in the frontlines! We’ll surely require a strong leader to lead us at a time like this!”

“Furthermore, he possesses a deep understanding of soul cultivation. Even some casual pointers from him could bring us great benefits...”

...

The elders discussed vehemently among themselves.

There were some who were for it; there were some who were against it.

After a long, fruitless discussion, Jiang Fangyun suddenly turned his head over and asked, “If I may ask, if you aren’t from the Jiang Clan, who are you?”

The others also halted their discussion and directed curious gazes over as well.

Even Jiang Feifei had forgotten about how others were insulting her looks and personality in this moment.

“To be honest, I am actually...” Knowing that the Jiang Clan bore him no ill will, he knew that it was meaningless to maintain his disguise any longer. Thus, he reverted to his original appearance and said, “... Zhang Xuan!”

“Zhang Xuan? You are the young prodigy of the Zhang Clan?”

“The head of the Zhang Clan?”

The crowd looked at one another in utter shock.

The head of the Zhang Clan had actually snuck into their Jiang Clan, browsed through all of their books, comprehended the Soul Quintessence, and even tamed their Clan Head Token...

They had thought that even if the fake clan head was not really from the Jiang Clan, he would likely be some honorary elder who had resided in the Jiang Clan for a very long time. How else could he know so much about the Jiang Clan?

Not even in their wildest dreams did they expect the other party to be a twenty-year-old young man!

More importantly... the other party had never been to the Jiang Clan before!

In other words, it was his first encounter with the heritage of the Jiang Clan, and he had already grasped the Soul Quintessence...

“Y-you...”

At the same time, Jiang Feifei’s face turned as pale as a sheet of paper, and her eyes nearly popped out.

She suddenly recalled how she had insulted the other party to his face... Did she just make a formidable foe for the Jiang Clan?

But thinking again, the other party was even more overboard. He had actually said that she was ugly!

She had initially been thinking of finding an opportunity to pummel the other party and exact vengeance, but from the looks of it, she would never have the chance to do so...

That fellow was simply too powerful!

Even more than a dozen 9-star master teachers from the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, along with the Pavilion Master Ren, were not able to faze him at all. If she challenged him, it was likely that she would be blasted off in a single strike!

“You are Zhang Xuan... That explains why you were able to utilize the Time Quintessence!”

Jiang Fangyou also found it hard to believe that the thief who had snuck into the Jiang Clan’s treasure vault would actually be the famed Zhang Xuan. As if struck by lightning, he had a flabbergasted look on his face.

He had thought that it would be some formidable expert, but who could have thought that it was a young lad whose age was even smaller than that of his own daughter!

“No, something is wrong here. Other than the Time Quintessence, I recall that you had tapped into the power of the spatial sealing as well...” Recalling the fight that he had with the young man, Jiang Fangyou suddenly narrowed his eyes in astonishment. “It can’t be that you have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing too, can it?”

“Indeed. I have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing too!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

The situation had been too perilous for him earlier, and he had been left with no choice but to use everything at his disposal. It was too late for him to cover up the matter anymore, so he might as well admit it frankly.

“If you have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, then... the Luo Clan’s Luo Tianya...”

Jiang Fangyou thought about how the young man was able to impersonate him, to the point that even the elders and his own daughter were befuddled as to who the real one was... Putting it together with the timing of Luo Tianya’s appearance, Jiang Fangyou suddenly widened his eyes in utter horror.

“Luo Tianya is indeed one of my personas, too!” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

“This... No wonder!” Jiang Fangyou’s mouth remained agape for a long while before it morphed into a bitter smile.

He had been wondering just how coincidental it was for such a formidable genius to appear in the Luo Clan shortly after they suffered a crushing humiliation. In the end, it turned out to be Zhang Xuan in disguise...

Jiang Feifei was also dumbstruck by what she had just heard.

The young man before her was actually the clan head of two of the Three Premier Clans...

Was such a thing even possible?

Putting herself against him, she realized that she could not compete with him in anything at all.

The Time Quintessence, the Spatial Quintessence, and the Soul Quintessence... He had actually accomplished something that no one had ever done in the past tens of thousands of years...

When did Quintessences become so worthless that even a twenty-year-old young man could learn them?

In the Three Premier Clans, other than the founders, there were barely any descendants who had managed to grasp the Quintessences... Honestly, when put against the monster standing before her, it suddenly felt like the so-called geniuses that had been held in high regard in the Three Premier Clans were actually no different from trash!

“Everyone!” Recovering from his shock, Jiang Fangyou did a sweeping gaze across the crowd and said, “I only have one thing to say. I’ll leave it up to you to decide what to do after hearing my piece!”

“Clan head, please feel free to speak your mind!” Jiang Fangyun and the others quickly replied.

“The Seal of Souls in the treasure vault has vanished,” Jiang Fangyou said. “If I’m not mistaken, it was taken away and tamed by him!”

“I did take the Seal of Souls, but I have not tamed it yet!” Zhang Xuan said with a reddened face.



It was one thing for him to empty their treasure vault, but having it pointed out explicitly like that still made him feel rather embarrassed.

From the looks of it, it seemed like he had no choice but to return those treasures to them...

“He took away the Seal of Souls?”

Hearing Jiang Fangyou’s words, the elders widened their eyes in astonishment. Following which, Jiang Fangyou took a step forward and kneeled down, “Jiang Clan’s Jiang Fangyou pays respect to the guild leader!”

“The descendants of the Jiang Clan pay respect to the guild leader!”

The other elders also quickly kneeled down as well.

“Guild leader?” Zhang Xuan frowned in confusion.

Was he not supposed to be their clan head?

Why were they addressing him as their guild leader now?

Noticing the confused look on Zhang Xuan’s face, Jiang Fangyou sent a telepathic message over. “Since you have browsed through the cultivation techniques of our Jiang Clan, you should know that most of our soul manuals stem from the soul oracles’ heritage!”

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

This was something that he had been wondering about ever since going through the Jiang Clan Repository.

Had the heritage of the soul oracles not been destroyed by the Master Teacher Pavilion? Why did the Jiang Clan still have books containing the heritage of the soul oracles?

Furthermore, why were they allowed to exist so openly on the Master Teacher Continent despite the nature of their heritage?

“The Seal of Souls is the insignia of authority that was passed down within the Soul Oracle Guild back then. The person who wields the Seal of Souls is the chosen leader of the Soul Oracle Guild, as well the master that our Jiang Clan serves!” Jiang Fangyou explained.

# 1647 Unknown Secrets of the Soul Oracles 2

“The Seal of Souls is the insignia of authority of the Soul Oracle Guild?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in shock.

No wonder it was so heavy! Without comprehending the Soul Quintessence, he was not even able to lift it with his Primordial Spirit. It turned out that there was actually such a history behind the seal!

“What’s going on? How did the Jiang Clan obtain the heritage of the soul oracle? Why would it serve the master of the Seal of Souls? Weren’t the soul oracles eradicated by the Master Teacher Pavilion for betraying mankind?” Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

He simply could not make sense of the situation.

As one of the Three Premier Clans, the Master Teacher Pavilion was bound to keep a close eye on the Jiang Clan. They should be able to discern that the Jiang Clan had inherited the heritage of the soul oracles. After all, being skillful at soul arts and being a soul oracle were two different things. So, why would the Master Teacher Pavilion still allow the existence of the Jiang Clan?

Jiang Fangyou hesitated for a moment before saying, “This matter concerns the most crucial secret of the Jiang Clan. It isn’t convenient for us to speak of it here, so I’d like to invite Zhang shi to follow us into the main hall to follow up on the conversation!”

Even though the Guardian Formation did prevent outsiders from eavesdropping on their conversation, this matter had great implications and required the utmost confidentiality, so it was best to take as many precautions as possible.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

“This way, please!” Jiang Fangyou heaved a sigh of relief.

Zhang Xuan nodded in response. Since he still had control over the Jiang Clan's Guardian Formation, he was not worried that they would pull anything on him.

Following behind Jiang Fangyou, they soon arrived in a grand hall.

After Zhang Xuan sat down on the main seat, Jiang Fangyou and the other elders swiftly took their seats by the side.

They swiftly activated the barrier in the hall to isolate it completely from the world. After which, Jiang Fangyou turned his gaze over and said, "Zhang shi, I heard that you once taught a direct disciple named Lu Chong. He has made great advancements as a soul oracle, reaching the level of Great Sage... May I ask if that's true?"

"There's indeed such a matter!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

In order to save him back then, Lu Chong had gotten into a huge fight against the 9-star master teachers from the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters. Even though the matter had eventually been resolved, news had still spread far and wide. Thus, it was not surprising for Jiang Fangyou to be aware of the matter.

"If that's the case... would it be right to say that you are a soul oracle as well, Zhang shi?" Jiang Fangyou asked.

"You can say so!" Zhang Xuan replied candidly.

"Then there's no mistake..."

Seeing that Zhang Xuan had admitted to it, the crowd heaved a sigh of relief. With an agitated look in his eyes, Jiang Fangyou continued his questioning. "May I know where you acquired the soul oracle heritage from? Could you have, by any chance, met other soul oracles?"

"My heritage originates from a soul who has coincidentally survived through the years. I'm afraid that I haven't met any soul oracles before!" Zhang Xuan shook his head.

In truth, Mo Hunsheng could not be considered as a true soul oracle anymore. In precise terms, he was simply a fragmented soul possessing a consciousness.

And other than Mo Hunsheng and Lu Chong, he had not met any other soul oracles before.

“You have never met any soul oracles before?” Jiang Fangyou asked with a hint of dejection in his voice.

“That’s right!” Zhang Xuan replied with a doubtful edge in his voice. “Aren’t soul oracles existences shunned by the world? I believe that their heritage should have already been eradicated from the Master Teacher Continent, right?”

“Shunned?” Hearing those words, Jiang Fangyou fell silent. A moment later, he shook his head bitterly and said, “It seems like you are unaware of the truth!”

“The truth?”

“I know that it might be hard for you to believe it, but the truth is that the soul oracles never betrayed mankind!” Jiang Fangyou said earnestly.

“They didn’t betray mankind?” Zhang Xuan was perplexed to hear those words.

This betrayal of the soul oracles was an incident that had been recorded in detail by the Master Teacher Pavilion. There was no one on the Master Teacher Continent who was unaware of their treachery... Yet, Jiang Fangyou was actually denying it?

Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply before beginning on his story.

“The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was simply too strong. Back then, even under the leadership of Kong shi and his seventy-two direct disciples, the forces of mankind were still hardly a match for the Otherworldly Demons... In fact, there was a point in time when an Otherworldly Demon Emperor successfully trapped Kong shi in Chen Cai. Having lost Kong shi, mankind found itself driven into a corner...”

Zhang Xuan nodded in response to those words. He recalled hearing this matter from Vicious before.

“The war was simply too disadvantageous toward mankind. The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe knew us like the back of their hand, but our knowledge of them was terribly limited. For one, we were completely helpless against their Zhenqi of Slaughter... Even if a human cultivator was equally powerful

to an Otherworldly Demon, the human cultivator would swiftly lose their rationality upon coming into contact with the overwhelming killing intent from the Zhenqi of Slaughter, thus making them easy prey for the Otherworldly Demon!” Jiang Fangyou continued.

Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

This was something that he could relate to. When he first encountered an Otherworldly Demon during the Master Teacher Tournament in Myriad Kingdom City, the same had almost happened to him. If not for his Heaven’s Path zhenqi, he might have succumbed there and then.

The Zhenqi of Slaughter affected one’s soul directly. Even master teachers would find themselves unable to stand properly in its face, let alone ordinary cultivators.

“In order to salvage the situation, Kong shi made the decision to have cultivators specializing in soul cultivation infiltrate the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe and uncover the secrets behind their soul...”

At this point, Jiang Fangyou’s face suddenly darkened a little. “Despite the dangers, the soul oracles took up the mission. However, in order to win the trust of the Otherworldly Demons, the soul oracles had to make a complete breakaway from the Master Teacher Pavilion. The result of that is what you see in the records of the Master Teacher Pavilion. Deemed to be evil as a result of their malevolent practices and treachery, the soul oracles were massacred by the Master Teacher Pavilion, and their heritage was completely destroyed...”

“This...” Zhang Xuan’s body jolted upon hearing those words.

If what Jiang Fangyou had said was true, the soul oracles had really made a huge sacrifice for mankind!

They should have been the heroes of mankind, but they had been scorned by the very people that they had saved for tens of thousands of years...

As if having read Zhang Xuan’s mind, Jiang Fangyou continued. “Back in that era, mankind had suffered a life

worse than livestock under the tyranny of the Otherworldly Demon. They didn't even have control over their life and death. There was not a single man whose hopes and dreams weren't to drive them away and grasp control over his life back. The soul oracles viewed their sacrifice as necessary for the greater good, and they had no qualms doing so!

“In order to put up a convincing act before the Otherworldly Demons, the Master Teacher Pavilion mobilized a huge number of master teachers to encircle the soul oracles. In a single night, the entire occupation fell into ruin. The leader of the Soul Oracle Guild was then captured by the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, and he committed suicide shortly after.”

“The leader of the Soul Oracle Guild committed suicide?” Zhang Xuan questioned in bewilderment.

If the leader of the Soul Oracle Guild had committed suicide, how did the soul oracles manage to infiltrate the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe?

“The suicide was just a front. It looked as if he had committed suicide, but his soul had actually survived the ordeal. He entrusted his heritage to our founder before seeking refuge with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!” Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply.

“Having witnessed the complete destruction of the entire lineage of soul oracles, the powerful Otherworldly Demon expert who had sealed Kong shi didn't doubt the intentions of the guild leader at all. Over time, the guild leader successfully uncovered the secret behind the Zhenqi of Slaughter and found a way to deliver the intelligence back to the Master Teacher Pavilion. He also designed a scheme to assassinate that powerful Otherworldly Demon expert!

“On top of that, he even designed inherently flawed soul cultivation techniques in accordance to the unique traits of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. His ambition wasn't just to weaken an Otherworldly Demon or two but the entire Otherworldly Demonic Tribe! However, in order to do so, he knew that he had to convince as many Otherworldly Demons

as possible to practice his soul cultivation technique, and it went without saying that the Otherworldly Demons wouldn't be willing to practice a flawed soul cultivation technique!

“As such, he designed the soul cultivation technique in a manner such that the flaws wouldn't be apparent to the practitioners. In the short run, practicing his soul cultivation technique wouldn't cause any trouble, and it would strengthen one's soul. However, if one continued practicing it, one's Zhenqi of Slaughter would gradually weaken, eventually resulting in an overall diminishment of one's fighting prowess!”

“Flawed soul cultivation technique?” Zhang Xuan's body jolted as realization dawned upon him.

Back then, when he entered the Subterranean Gallery beneath the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy, he had managed to kill the Goldenleaf King and the Greenleaf King and acquired their possessions. There had been plenty of soul cultivation technique manuals in their storage rings, but to his astonishment, he had found that those techniques were riddled with flaws!

Back then, he had thought that it was weird how the soul cultivation techniques cultivated by the Otherworldly Demons were so mediocre, especially since they had the soul oracles on their side. However, if Jiang Fangyou's account on the soul oracles was true, everything made perfect sense!

The mediocre soul cultivation techniques of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were an intentional action by the guild leader, and the aim was to weaken their forte!

To willingly sacrifice themselves and bear a vile reputation just so that mankind had a shot at victory... the soul oracles were indeed the true unsung heroes of mankind!

Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly in agitation.

At this moment, he suddenly recalled a matter. “You mentioned a certain powerful expert of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe who had sealed Kong shi earlier. Do you know... what his name is?” “Chen Cai is a location, and this is a

reference to how Confucius was trapped in the state of Chen  
and the state of Cai.



# 1648 Descendants of Ancient Sage Zi Yuan

That Otherworldly Demon expert had been able to corner Kong shi to the point where the latter had no choice but to sacrifice an entire occupation in order to infiltrate the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe as a spy... Given so, just how powerful could that Otherworldly Demon expert be?

Would his prowess not have already exceeded that of an average Otherworldly Demon?

Jiang Fangyou did not think that Zhang Xuan would ask such a question. He pondered for a long while before replying slowly. “The name of that Otherworldly Demon expert has already been lost in history. All we know is that he wielded indomitable strength and viewed life as nothing more than dirt. He was callous and capricious, and when he was in a bad mood, he had no qualms killing his own brethren...

“As such, both the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe and mankind chose to address him as... Vicious!”

“Vicious?” Zhang Xuan’s body jolted.

As expected!

When he heard that Kong shi had been trapped in Chen Cai, he had already guessed as to who the culprit could be.

Nevertheless, he was still shocked when he heard the answer.

To think that the little Vicious whom he had sealed in his Book of Heaven’s Path would really be a formidable figure who had once cornered Kong shi!

The soul oracles even had to bear a vile reputation that remained with them to this date in order to kill him...

It was no wonder Vicious had been so haughty the first time they met. It turned out that he did have the power to match his ego during his prime!

“Indeed. According to the news that the founder of our Jiang Clan received from the leader of the Soul Oracle Guild, Kong shi concocted a scheme in advance after learning of Vicious’ movements and prepared an ambush for him. That fight was truly of epic proportions; even the sky and the earth cracked before their incredible prowess! In the end, Vicious was completely destroyed by Kong shi, such that not even his corpse remained in the world!” Jiang Fangyou said.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan fell silent.

It was indeed true that Vicious’ body had been torn into innumerable fragments. Having collected so many of Vicious’ scattered parts, he knew that better than anyone else. However, he had not thought that there would be such a heavy story behind it.

There were simply too many sacrifices made in order to defeat Vicious once and for all.

“Regarding your account of the soul oracles, I think it’s questionable whether even the Master Teacher Pavilion has any records of the matter or not. How can you be certain that the information on your hand hasn’t been distorted over time?” Zhang Xuan asked.

This matter would definitely have to be kept with the highest level of confidentiality, such that even the current Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would not necessarily be aware of it. In other words, the Jiang Clan would be the only ones in possession of this piece of information.

In order to ensure that the success of the operation, the Jiang Clan could not possibly have been so foolish as to create a physical copy to detail this piece of information. That would be as good as leaving a tip-off to the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe! That was also probably the reason Zhang Xuan had remained oblivious to this matter despite having gone through all of the books in the Jiang Clan Repository.

So, the chances were that the story was passed down through the Jiang Clan verbally. However, could verbal information that had been passed over for tens of thousands of years really be trusted? There was bound to be some distortion over the

years, resulting in certain aspects of the story being warped to suit their convenience.

“It’s recorded in the Seal of Souls by Kong shi personally!” Jiang Fangyou replied. “As long as the head of the Jiang Clan places the Clan Head Token against the Seal of Souls, he will receive a message through soul telepathy informing him of the history of the soul oracles. It’s through this system of inheritance that the members of our Jiang Clan have been able to remember the sacrifices our predecessors made even after the passing of tens of thousands of years!”

“I see!” Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

It seemed like Kong shi had thought the matter through in advance and prepared a countermeasure so that the soul oracles would not have to go down in history ignominiously.

The soul oracles had sacrificed themselves for mankind and the greater good. If their descendants had to live in shame of their ancestors, unaware of the truth, how tragic would the soul oracles be?

However, if they recorded it on paper, there would be an inevitable risk of information getting out. If the Otherworldly Demons obtained the piece of information by some chance, the soul oracles who had successfully infiltrated the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would have all hell to pay for!

This was indeed a huge dilemma. The sacrifice of the soul oracle could not be left unknown, but recording it could very well render their efforts futile. It was likely that Kong shi had been placed in a quandary as well, so he could only choose to seal the information within the Seal of Souls and pass it down to the successors of the soul oracle.

Hopefully, if there were to be a day where the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was completely eliminated, the soul oracles would finally be able to be cleansed of their disrepute!

“The Jiang Clan is the descendant of the guild leader, and his blood flows through our veins. Thus, if anyone gains control of the Seal of Souls, they will be deemed to be our new guild

leader, and all members of the Jiang Clan will have to heed his commands unconditionally!” Jiang Fangyou explained.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

At the same time, the many elders of the Jiang Clan also lowered their heads contemplatively.

They knew that the lineage of the Jiang Clan had its roots from the soul oracles, but they were not too certain about the details. However, hearing Jiang Fangyou revealing everything in detail, the questions that they had harbored for many years were finally answered.

“To think that our ancestors were actually the soul oracles...” Jiang Feifei was also astounded by what she had just heard.

All along, she had prided herself as a master teacher, and she had carried deep abhorrence for the soul oracles. She had viewed them as a bunch of despicable people who carried no regard for the sanctity of life.

However, after hearing the sacrifices that the soul oracles had made for mankind, she realized that her view of them might have been twisted all along.

Without them, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe might have still been the dominant power on the Master Teacher Continent, and mankind would still have been living a life worse than death.

“Zhang shi has comprehended the Soul Quintessence and successfully retrieved the Seal of Souls. Be it from the perspective of a soul oracle or from the view of the Jiang Clan, I believe that there’s no doubt that no one is more qualified than him to become our clan head!” Jiang Fangyou looked at the elders and declared his stance.

“Indeed. The fact that Zhang shi was able to comprehend the Time, Spatial, and Soul Quintessences and achieve deeds that astounded even the Master Teacher Pavilion, he might just be able to cleanse the reputation of the soul oracles and allow them to stand beneath the light once more without facing the criticism of others!”

“As the descendants of the soul oracles, this is what we have been waiting for all our life!”

“Zhang shi, please lead us to a brighter future!”

...

The elders rose up and clasped their fists respectfully.

The Jiang Clan was a blood lineage, but the Soul Oracle Guild was not.

The fact that Zhang Xuan had been able to grasp the Seal of Souls meant that he had been recognized as the rightful successor as the head of the Soul Oracle Guild. He had also been the only person to successfully do so in the past tens of thousands of years.

The soul oracles had been wronged for far too long. As their descendants, the members of the Jiang Clan were unwilling to allow such a situation to continue any further. Even if their ancestors could not be praised for their heroic sacrifice, they did not deserve to suffer the condemnation of the entire world!

“This...” Zhang Xuan was silent for a moment before nodding slowly. “I’m willing to become the head of the Jiang Clan... But prior to that, Clan Head Jiang Fangyou, there’s a doubt in my mind that I hope that you can answer.”

“Please feel free to speak,” Jiang Fangyou said.

“When I arrived in the Jiang Clan just earlier today, I unintentionally saw you coming into contact with a scholarly young man... To be frank with you, I have met that scholarly young man before, and we have even fought on two occasions. If I’m not mistaken, he’s very likely an Otherworldly Demon!” Zhang Xuan said before directing a piercing gaze at Jiang Fangyou.

If everything that Jiang Fangyou had said was true—that the soul oracles had truly made such a huge sacrifice for mankind—it would not make sense for their descendants to betray mankind and undo everything the efforts of their ancestors.

But... no matter how Zhang Xuan looked at it, there was no way he could rationalize the apparent close relations between

Jiang Fangyou and the scholarly young man.

“Scholarly young man?” Jiang Fangyou was taken aback by the question. He pondered for a moment before asking, “Are you referring to Yan Xue?”

“Yan Xue?” Zhang Xuan frowned doubtfully.

“Yes, that’s the name of the young man who has visited me earlier on. He isn’t an Otherworldly Demon but a descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yuan from the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. He has already reached the level of Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm consummation for his cultivation, making him a renowned figure even in the Great Phrontistry of Confucianism. In fact, it was said that his name is on the Heaven Board,” Jiang Fangyou explained.

“Ancient Sage Zi Yuan... You are referring to Kong shi’s first direct disciple, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan?” Zhang Xuan’s body jolted in astonishment. “How could that be possible? I saw him colluding with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe with my own eyes!”

He was completely flabbergasted by what he was hearing.

The first time that he had encountered the scholarly young man was at the White Creek Mountain. While they were fighting over the Celestial Amulet of Legacy, a person among the group of four revealed his true form as an Otherworldly Demon.

The second time they met was at the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild. At that time, not only were there a handful of Great Sage cultivators, he even found himself facing an Ancient Sage Otherworldly Demon!

If the scholarly young man was truly a descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, why was he together with so many Otherworldly Demons? Furthermore, he had even aided the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe in claiming the Celestial Amulet of Legacy!

“This... He came to me requesting to establish connections with the soul oracles in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. I am only a messenger, so I’m not too sure about his true intentions.

After all, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers has never been accountable to anyone for their actions,” Jiang Fangyou said.

# 1649 Taking Jiang Feifei in as a Student

“He’s trying to connect with the soul oracles in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe?” Zhang Xuan was getting a little confused.

If that person was truly the descendant of Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, the Seer Guild’s betrayal might not necessarily be a true betrayal. The same went for the Master Teacher Pavilion as well. But still, it didn’t make much sense for an expert of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers to have close ties with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

After all, the Hundred Schools of Philosophers were the direct descendants of Kong shi’s 72 direct disciples, so it was unthinkable for them to betray mankind. Taking a step back, even if they were to betray mankind, would the Otherworldly Demon be willing to trust them?

Yet, at the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild, they were residing peacefully with the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages! This was truly inconceivable.

No matter how Zhang Xuan thought about the matter, he was unable to make sense out of it. After questioning a little longer, he found that Jiang Fangyou truly knew nothing about the scholarly young man at all. His responsibility simply stopped at forming connections between the soul oracles and the Hundred Schools of Philosophers.

“Our ancestors have made such great sacrifices for mankind! As their descendants, how could we sully their heroism? Furthermore, our Jiang Clan is established upon the deaths of countless predecessors in the Subterranean Gallery over the past tens of thousands of years! We wouldn’t be worthy of being called humans if we were to trample over their sacrifices and collude with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!” Upon realizing that Zhang Xuan was suspecting them of treachery,



Jiang Fangyou stood up, clasped his fist, and declared indignantly.

“I apologize for my reckless behavior. I shouldn’t have come to such a quick conclusion!” Zhang Xuan quickly rose to his feet and said.

The soul oracles had done so much for mankind, yet he still doubted the loyalty of their descendants. It was not to say that he regretted his decision. He would still do it again if he had to—when the fate of mankind was at stake, it was always better to be safe than sorry. Nevertheless, since it was proven that he had made a mistake, it was only right for him to offer an earnest apology.

“Considering the reputation of the soul oracles in the world, it’s no surprise that you would come to this conclusion...” At this point, Jiang Fangyou suddenly widened his eyes in realization and asked, “Is that the reason why you emptied our treasure vault? You thought that we were in cahoots with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe?”

“I’m afraid that’s the case...” Zhang Xuan’s face reddened in shame.

Hearing those words, Jiang Fangyou sighed deeply and said, “Well, I can at least understand why you did what you did. If we were truly in collusion with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, it would be foolish to uphold propriety with us...”

Propriety only came in when the world was at peace. If extinction was on the line, it would be foolish to remain polite and courteous with one’s enemies.

If there was truly a major human power in the world who had betrayed mankind for the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, robbing it of its resources would indeed be a fair move.

“I’ll return your treasures back to your treasure vault later on...” Zhang Xuan replied hurriedly.

Having learned that the Jiang Clan hadn’t truly betrayed mankind and had even sacrificed a lot in order to protect it, no matter how thick-skinned Zhang Xuan was, there was no way he could continue to brazenly claim their treasures for his own.

On the other hand, seeing the look on Zhang Xuan's face, Jiang Fangyou couldn't help but chuckle softly.

Even though Zhang Xuan's actions might have seemed a little unprincipled here, he had to admit that it was indeed an effective move. If the Jiang Clan had truly betrayed mankind, this single move would have set them back by a great deal.

After having cleared things up, the remaining issues weren't too much trouble.

Zhang Xuan agreed to be the stand-in head of the Jiang Clan for the time being. Until the matter with the soul oracles had been reviewed and resolved, they mustn't be shown to have any ties with the Jiang Clan. Otherwise, he would have surely recommended Lu Chong to the position instead.

Considering that his student had found the Ancient Domain of the Soul Oracles and obtained their heritage, he was bound to become a leading figure of the occupation in the future.

And speaking of the Ancient Domain of the Soul Oracles, the truth was that Zhang Xuan had been harboring some doubts about its existence for a long time now.

Considering that the Master Teacher Pavilion had gone all out to eradicate the soul oracles, how could they possibly spare the latter's ancient domain? From the looks of it now, it seemed like Kong Shi helped to conceal its existence so as to preserve the lineage and heritage of the soul oracles.

Otherwise, with the prowess of the Master Teacher Pavilion, it would have surely rooted it out and destroyed it a long time ago.

By the time the inauguration ceremony concluded, it was already late at night.

Zhang Xuan quickly returned all of the treasures back to the treasure vault except for a couple of items which harnessed concentrated spiritual energy. After which, he called Jiang Feifei over and handed a book over to her.

"Recorded in here is my comprehension of the Soul Quintessence. As long as you cultivate in accordance with it, you should be able to comprehend it very quickly. You don't

need to waste your time and effort at the Jiang Clan's Jade Hieroglyph anymore," he said.

"Your comprehension of the Soul Quintessence?" Jiang Feifei flipped the manual open uncertainly and swiftly flipped through it.

By the time her hand flipped over the final page, her eyes were already widened in disbelief.

Formless and intangible, it was much more difficult to cultivate the soul as compared to the physical body. Despite her aptitude toward soul arts, she still had no confidence that she would be able to comprehend the Soul Quintessence. In fact, she felt that even if she were to devote her entire life to it, the chances were that his efforts would be futile.

However, the manual which the newly inaugurated clan head had just given her harnessed the very crux of soul cultivation. It wasn't needlessly complex, and it was structured in a logical manner which first reinforced her fundamental understanding of what a soul was before moving on to the more complex aspects... With such a manual, she was confident that she would be able to comprehend the Soul Quintessence with a month of hard work!

One must know that this was a feat which countless predecessors had tried but failed at!

"T-this... It's too valuable!" Jiang Feifei exclaimed with trembling hands. She bit her lips tightly, seemingly resolving herself to some important decision, before raising her gaze to look at Zhang Xuan, "How can I ever repay you for this valuable manual... If you really wish to, I'll agree to an engagement with you..."

She still didn't like the young man before her, but she knew how important he was to the Jiang Clan. It would be a blessing if the young man were to be bound to the Jiang Clan, even if through a political marriage.

At the very most, she would just have to sacrifice herself for this cause.

Even though the young man said that there was someone whom he liked, in the worst-case scenario, she would just have to become his concubine.

With her looks and standing, she believed that there was no reason for the young man to turn her down.

“Engagement? You are thinking too much. Even though the manual I have just imparted to you may seem easy to cultivate, there’s a high chance your cultivation might go berserk if you were to practice it without my guidance!” Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan shook his head said. “Alright, I’ll take you in as my student and guide you on your cultivation of the Soul Quintessence!”

“Student?” Jiang Feifei was taken aback.

She thought that the reason why Zhang Xuan was willing to hand such a precious manual to her was to force her to promise herself to him... Who could have thought that he was intending to take her as his student instead!

The abrupt change in the train of thoughts left her a little dumbstruck.

“What are you waiting for? Hurry up and pay your respects! Even if you are just an ordinary student of the clan head, it would soon become your greatest pride!” Jiang Fangyou exclaimed in agitation, jolting his daughter out of her daze.

On top of being the head of the Zhang Clan, the Luo Clan, and the Sanctum of Sages, Zhang Xuan’s students were also the Progeny of Combat, the chief of the Glacier Plain Court, the leader of the Spirit Awakener Guild, the head of the Yuan Clan... All in all, there was no mediocre student under his tutelage.

If his daughter could become his student, even if just in name, it would be highly beneficial for her future. Perhaps, she might even exceed him in time to time!

Hearing her father’s words, Jiang Feifei was stunned for a moment before nodding hurriedly, “Yes, I understand!”

She was still holding onto the notion that Zhang Xuan was the same young genius who had challenged her back at the

Sanctum of Sages. She had failed to realize that over the span of less than a month, the young man had already reached the top of the Master Teacher Continent. Their standing was no longer the same as before.

Putting aside all of his other identities, just on the account that he was Yang Shi's senior, it wouldn't be overboard even if Jiang Feifei were to call him great grandfather!

"Jiang Feifei pays respect to teacher!" Jiang Feifei knelt to the ground and greeted.

"Good! Come, get up!" Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

Earlier, when the young lady knelt down earlier, another golden page was formed within the Library of Heaven's Path. Zhang Xuan couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief.

The opponents he had to face was no longer limited to just Saint cultivators. There was no doubt that he would be forced to battle against Great Sages and even Ancient Sages in the near future.

With a golden page in his inventory, his safety would at least be assured for the time being. Even if an Ancient Sage were to come after him now, he had the confidence that he would be able to subdue the other party with the golden page.

Should I try to take in more students to gather more golden pages? Junior Yang's direct disciple, Feng Ziyi, isn't too bad either. Hmm... Should I negotiate with Junior Yang to let him to me? Zhang Xuan stroked his lower jaw as he pondered seriously over this issue.

Given his current standing, just the title of 'Zhang Xuan's student' was enough to put one on a high pedestal. Thus, he had to take absolute care in choosing the students he took in. However, it was easier said than done to find good students.

After all, not everyone was as outstanding, compassionate, righteous, and noble as him...

# 1650 Heavenly Flame Tribulation

In the end, Zhang Xuan gave up on the idea.

The sanctity of lineages had to be upheld. Since Feng Ziyi was Yang shi's direct disciple, it would be inappropriate for him to take the young man in as his student.

It seemed like he would have to search carefully for suitable individuals to take in as his student in the future.

Considering how powerful the golden page was, it would be best for him to collect as many of it as possible.

If he were to have a few hundred golden pages in the Library of Heaven's Path, he just might be able to defeat all of the Ancient Sages of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe single-handedly!

Wait a moment... Kong shi had three thousand students, right? Could his reason for taking so many students be for this as well? Such a thought suddenly came to Zhang Xuan's mind.

Kong shi only had 72 direct disciples, but he had over three thousand normal students. Could it be possible that Kong shi had the Library of Heaven's Path as well, and the reason why he took in so many students was to form as many golden pages as possible?

Perhaps, he might have even defeated Vicious by tossing golden pages at him as if they were nothing, forcefully smashing him into meat paste!

It was one thing to be defeated by a powerful expert, but to be defeated under a barrage of books... Well, Vicious would have really suffered the most tragic defeat in history!

I should look more into Kong shi's affairs in the future and see if he has a history of using books as his weapon. That should give me a clue as to whether he possesses the Library of Heaven's Path as well...

In the end, this was only Zhang Xuan's hypothesis at the moment. He needed to look further into it to know for sure.

Putting those miscellaneous thoughts at the back of his mind, Zhang Xuan focused his attention on deciphering the crux of the manual to Jiang Feifei and clarifying her doubts. By the time she had fully grasped the manual, it was already late at night.

There's still some time before sunrise. Let me see if I can advance my soul cultivation so the Aureate Body realm! Knowing that it was still rather early, Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply before standing up.

The main reason why he came to the Jiang Clan was to temper his soul so that he could enter the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage corpse. Since he had already gathered the Introspective Convalescence realm and the Aureate Body realm Heaven's Path Soul Art, and he had the required cultivation resources on hand too, it would be good for him to make a breakthrough as soon as possible.

Zhang Xuan had Jiang Fangyou prepare a silent residence for him. He entered the cultivation chamber of the residence and sat down. After which, he drew his Primordial Spirit out from his body and began conditioning himself.

Alright, I should start!

Once he felt that his condition had reached its peak, he flicked his hand, and the spiritual energy-rich cultivation resources he had taken with permission from the Jiang Clan's treasure vault earlier fell all over the ground, emanating an invigorating aura.

Gugugu!

Spiritual energy began surging into Zhang Xuan's Primordial Spirit furiously.

His aura was growing stronger at a visible pace, and within a tea's time, he had already reached the very peak of Introspective Convalescence realm, seemingly ready to make the final step forward at any moment.

Thus, he attempted to make a breakthrough. However, after a few attempts, he found that the bottleneck limiting him was a

little too resilient.

Zhang Xuan analyzed with a frown, It might be because I have just achieved a breakthrough to Introspective Convalescence realm and have yet to fully reinforce my soul cultivation yet, so my soul energy hasn't been fully condensed together yet...

It had been less than half a day since he had reached Introspective Convalescence realm, so his soul energy hadn't fully settled down yet. He could attempt to force a breakthrough right now, but even if he were to succeed, this weaker foundation would surely come to haunt him in the future.

The difficulty in advancing his cultivation had already gotten much harder ever since he reached Great Sage. He had no wish to further up the difficulty for himself.

But still, will I really have to spend two to three days just to reinforce my soul cultivation? Zhang Xuan rubbed his temple in distress.

Two to three days just to reinforce a cultivation realm... That was too slow, too slow!

With the perilous circumstances around him, he had to raise his cultivation as soon as possible.

Otherwise, even with a weapon as powerful as the Dragonbone Divine Spear, he would still be unable to exert his full strength.

"If there's something I could use to compress my soul energy together, I would be able to do it much faster..." At this point in time, a spark flashed across Zhang Xuan's mind as his eyes lit up in excitement. "Right, the Seal of Souls!"

Without using the Soul Quintessence, the pressure the Seal of Souls could exert on his Primordial Spirit was immense, unbearable even.

If he had to reinforce his soul cultivation alone, the rate which he would improve at was extremely slow. Without at least three days of effort, it would be difficult for him to fully reinforce the foundations for Introspective Convalescence realm. However, through using the pressure of the Seal of



Souls, the process could be sped up significantly. Perhaps, he might even be able to finish the task by tonight!

“Go!”

With a flick of his hand, a seal materialized at the center of the room.

As soon as it appeared, Zhang Xuan immediately felt intense pressure crushing down on him. It felt as if his Primordial Spirit would be compressed infinitesimally under the pressure.

Without driving the Soul Quintessence, he slowly approached the Seal of Souls with his Primordial Spirit.

Tzzzzzzz!

As if approaching a scorching inferno, his Primordial Spirit began corroding under the immense pressure, seemingly on the verge of dissipation.

Heaven’s Path Soul Art!

Harrumphing coldly, he began driving the Heaven’s Path Soul Art, and his dissipating Primordial Spirit slowly began to stabilize.

This was similar to how he had used the pressure from the Dragonbone Divine Spear back then to temper his Primordial Spirit.

The theory behind Introspective Convalescence realm for soul cultivation was similar to that for zhenqi cultivation. It focused on altering the basic underlying structure of a soul so as to make it more resilient and powerful.

With the pressure, his soul energy swiftly condensed together, making his Primordial Spirit more and more compact and powerful. A vague golden glow was beginning to emanate from the surface of his Primordial Spirit, a sign that he was steadily advancing toward a breakthrough to the Aureate Body realm.

Is this the Aureate Body realm?

Noticing the golden glow from his Primordial Spirit, Zhang Xuan quickly inspected on the changes and found that the

parts of his soul shrouded in golden glow was much more resilient as compared to the others.

Resilient was a word rarely used to describe intangible and formless souls. However, after being suffused with the golden glow, the resilience of his soul had astonishingly surpassed the level of Saint pinnacle artifacts.

“Incredible!”

Zhang Xuan remarked with an excited gleam in his eyes as he continued to temper his Primordial Spirit using the pressure from the Seal of Souls.

Four hours later, he finally came to a halt

After a tough session of cultivation, his Primordial Spirit, which had become a little bloated after reaching Introspective Convalescence realm, had been fully compacted once more. At the same time, his disposition had undergone yet another change. From afar, he gave off a fleeting presence, similar to that of an unworldly deity.

There was a fine line between Great Sage and Sainthood. Traversing beyond this fine line meant a metamorphosis in one's level of existence.

At this moment, Zhang Xuan's Primordial Spirit was streaked with golden lines. If he were to drive his prowess to its maximum potential, a brilliant burst of golden light would shine from him, giving him an appearance reminiscent to that of a Buddha.

“Continue!”

Knowing that he had already reinforced his soul cultivation to its limits, he kept the Seal of Souls and began furiously absorbing spiritual energy into his Primordial Spirit once more. Similarly, his soul cultivation also began advancing for greater heights too.

Hong long!

There was a resounding buzz as the bottleneck limiting him and shredded apart. The golden lines streaking across his

Primordial Spirit melted and shrouded his entire soul, giving off a golden glow that filled the entire room.

Aureate Body realm, reached!

“This is truly formidable...” Sensing the changes in his Primordial Spirit, Zhang Xuan trembled in excitement.

At his current level, he could execute Soul Traverse freely without fear that his Primordial Spirit would be harmed as a result of squeezing through space.

It seems like Lu Chong has reached Aureate Body realm as well... Zhang Xuan thought awkwardly.

It had always bothered him how his students were able to advance their cultivation faster than him. While it could be partially credited to their unique constitutions and the resources they had at their disposal, it still left him feeling deeply frustrated.

Hong long long!

Just as Zhang Xuan’s mind was wandering, thunderous rumbling suddenly echoed outside the room. Heading outside, he saw storm clouds congregating above the Jiang Clan. Overwhelming energy was swiftly gathering in the vicinity.

“Lightning tribulation? Achieving a breakthrough in one’s soul cultivation to Aureate Body realm would induce a lightning tribulation too?” Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up in astonishment.

However, in the next moment, the Dragonbone Divine Spear wrapped around his waist suddenly exclaimed, “It isn’t a lightning tribulation but a heavenly flame tribulation! Lightning tribulation served to temper one’s Primordial Spirit whereas heavenly flame tempers the Aureate Body!”

“Heavenly flame tribulation?”

Zhang Xuan was startled for an instant before his face flushed in excitement, “Wait a moment... Doesn’t that mean that I would be able to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison in advance?”

# 1651 Empyrean Heavenly Flame

Kong shi had once said that in order to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison, it would have to be seared with heavenly flames. He thought that this would require him to advance his zhenqi cultivation to Great Sage, but who could have thought that he would end up drawing it in with his soul cultivation?

If he could make use of it to temper his physical body, wouldn't he be able to resolve the threat which had been worrying him over the past year once and for all?

“Will the heavenly flame tribulation sear my Primordial Spirit directly?” Zhang Xuan asked the Dragonbone Divine Spear anxiously.

The Saint Ascension Ordeal was divided into the Soul Ordeal, Body Ordeal, and Heart Ordeal. Given that the heavenly flame tribulation was also the retribution that the heavens brought upon the cultivators, would it come in the same order as well?

Hearing the question, the Dragonbone Divine Spear pondered for a moment before replying, “There are three phases to the heavenly flame tribulation, namely Scorching Soul Tribulation, Scorching Spirit Tribulation, and Scorching Heart Tribulation. With your prowess, you should be able to survive the Scorching Soul Tribulation. However, I'm afraid that the same cannot be said about the Scorching Spirit Tribulation and Scorching Heart Tribulation. Even the slightest carelessness can easily result in the dissipation of your existence!

“This is especially so for the final Scorching Heart Tribulation. Inner demons will attempt to break down your will, and once the will extinguishes, everything else goes to rest as well. If your physical body had reached Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm, together with the formidable prowess of your Primordial Spirit, you might still be able to withstand the inner demons. However, in your current state, I'm afraid that it'll be

difficult for you to oppose the inner demons with your Primordial Spirit itself! Countless soul oracles in the ancient era had died as a result of the heavenly flame tribulation. It was only those who were blessed with great luck and the utmost talent who managed to survive this ordeal...”

The Dragonbone Divine Spear had witnessed Zhang Xuan refining his Primordial Spirit using the pressure exerted, so he was aware of the fact that the young man cultivated his soul as well.

“You mean to say that... it would have been safer for me to challenge the heavenly flame tribulation if my zhenqi cultivation were to reach Aureate Body realm as well?” Hearing the words of the Dragonbone Divine Spear, Zhang Xuan asked.

“That’s right. The body is much more formidable at fending off inner demons as compared to the soul. With the physical body bearing the brunt of the impact and the soul assisting by the side, the chances of overcoming the heavenly flame tribulation would be much higher. If you were to challenge it with just your Primordial Spirit itself... Honestly speaking, I don’t personally know of anyone who has succeeded in doing so yet!” the Dragonbone Divine Spear flew out from Zhang Xuan’s waist and remarked worriedly.

As a member of the Dragon Tribe, there was no way it could allow its master, which it had found with great difficulty, to be burned to cinders. Otherwise, if others were to learn of the matter, how embarrassing it would be for him!

Even though it was just a pile of bones now, it didn’t mean that it didn’t have any pride!

“My physical body is indeed rather lacking at the moment...” Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan shook his head grimly.

He hadn’t acquired Kong shi’s superior breakthrough method to advance his zhenqi cultivation Introspective Convalescence realm, so he couldn’t afford to force a breakthrough right now.

Besides, even if he were to make a breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation right now, he would still be an entire realm away

from reaching Aureate Body realm. He hadn't compiled the Aureate Body realm Heaven's Path Divine Art yet, so it wouldn't solve the quandary he was in.

"Let it come then! I would like to see how formidable this heavenly flame tribulation is!"

The Dragonbone Divine Spear had once conquered the world by Ancient Sage Ran Qiu's side. Even though it had lost much of its powers and memories after being sealed, its eye of discernment and worldly knowledge were still far superior to most cultivators in the world.

Since it had said that the heavenly flame tribulation would be a difficult foe to deal with, it was likely that would indeed be the case.

However, as a practitioner of the Heaven's Path Soul Art, he was an invincible existence amongst soul oracles of his level. The heavenly flame tribulation might have been powerful, but he was confident that he would be able to overcome it.

If there were soul oracles who could survive the heavenly flame tribulation, surely I would be able to do so too!

Hong long long!

In the midst of his conversation, the ominous clouds in the sky had finally finished congregating together.

Similar to the storm clouds of the lightning tribulation, the clouds of the heavenly flame tribulation were also pitch black in color. However, if one were to take a closer look, one would notice that the clouds were dancing around, reminiscent of flames. Even from a distance away, one could already feel scorching heat blistering one's skin, and the air was gradually becoming intolerably arid.

Tzla!

A bundle of flames descended from the sky, aiming right for Zhang Xuan's Primordial Spirit.

Unlike the conventional crimson color, the bundle of flames were pitch-black in color, almost similar to ink.

If not for the suffocating heat it was emanating, one could have mistaken it as a botch of ink floating in the air.

“This is the heavenly flame?”

Even before the flame even arrived, dimension rifts were beginning to surface around the area. A powerful aura burst forth from the flame, imposing tremendous pressure on those standing beneath it. Zhang Xuan felt his hairs standing on end.

He had encountered many flames over the past year, facing even the most formidable earth flames... However, he had never met such an eerie and oppressive flame before!

Black as if ink, it was devoid of the slightest radiance. Yet, the heat it exerted was so great that even space was unable to tolerate its existence. This was the heavenly flame?

Was this really something that a soul oracle could withstand?

Putting aside his Primordial Spirit, even his physical body, which had already exceeded the resilience of an average Saint pinnacle artifact, would melt upon contact with it!

“T-this... This isn't an ordinary heavenly flame but the Empyrean Heavenly Flame!”

While Zhang Xuan was overwhelmed by the frightening might commanded by the heavenly flame before him, the Dragonbone Divine Spear was also trembling in disbelief.

“Empyrean Heavenly Flame? What is that?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Heavenly flame could be divided into various tiers too. The Tier-3 Heavenly Flame has a fiery crimson color, and it would be summoned by most cultivators during their Aureate Body Ordeal. This is also the weakest heavenly flame of all.

“The Tier-2 Heavenly Flame takes on an ashen white color, and it's summoned only by the more formidable combat masters and master teachers.

“As for the Tier-1 Heavenly Flame, it's azure in color, and only cultivators who have cultivated the best cultivation technique and possess the purest zhenqi would be able to summon it. So far, the only ones I have seen who were able to

do that were Ancient Sage Ran Qiu and the other direct disciples of Kong shi. Naturally, it goes without saying that the higher the heavenly flame's tier is, the more resilient the cultivator's Aureate Body would be after overcoming it...

“However, legend has it that there's an Empyrean Heavenly Flame which far surpasses the Tier-1 Heavenly Flame. It's also known as the Flame of Heaven's Path, and it's distinguished by its color of utmost darkness... As far as I know, Kong shi is the only one who has summoned the Flame of Heaven's Path and survived it. Furthermore, it was said to have only appeared when his zhenqi cultivation reached Aureate Body realm... How in the world did you manage to summon it here?” Floating in the air in agitation, the eyes on the tip of the Dragonbone Divine Spear flickered in horror.

The Empyrean Heavenly Flame was a force of nature that destroyed all beings that stood in its path. Putting aside Primordial Spirits, even Sempiternal realm cultivators would be burned to cinders in the face of its prowess!

The young man had only achieved a breakthrough in his soul cultivation, so how did he end up summoning this fearsome heavenly flame here?

It was difficult enough to overcome an ordinary heavenly flame, but the tribulation he had to face was actually that of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame... This was practically an impossible feat!

Without a doubt, this was truly the worst card to draw at this moment!

“How would I know?” Not expecting such an epic background to the heavenly flames he had summoned, Zhang Xuan cried in aghast.

It should have just been an ordinary heavenly flame tribulation! Was there really a need for the world to give him such a 'special treat'?

Zhang Xuan felt deeply stifled inside, but he knew this wasn't the time to be fussing over it. Barely after gathering his



strength, the black flame had already arrived before his Primordial Spirit and wrapped itself around it.

Xiong xiong!

As soon as the black flame came into contact with his Primordial Spirit, his Primordial Spirit immediately began burning up. Intense pain caused his face to distort awfully as his body began shuddering uncontrollably.

He thought that it would be reminiscent to the lightning tribulation, where he would just have to endure it. However, the black flame was far more formidable than what he had expected. Even the slightest lapse in his concentration could cause his Primordial Spirit to be reduced to cinders, leaving nothing behind at all.

“Heaven’s Path Soul Art!”

Knowing that he had to make a move quickly, he gritted his teeth and gathered all of the energy he had to fend against the black flame.

Weng weng!

A brilliant golden light gushed out and enveloped his Primordial Spirit.

His transparent Primordial Spirit was suddenly cased in a golden afterglow, contrasting him to be a massive Buddha idol.

Tzzzzzz!

The prowess of the golden light was formidable, but the black flame was even more potent. Even before coming into contact with the golden light, it had already torn the surrounding space into shreds, seemingly ready to drag Zhang Xuan into the midst of spatial turbulence.

“Seal!”

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan tapped his finger ahead and executed the prowess of his Spatial Quintessence.

Weng!

The ripped space swiftly settled down once more.

However, the might of the black flame was still as formidable as before. It swiftly corroded the golden light around Zhang Xuan, dyeing it the color of black.

# 1652 Tempering the Aureate Body

At this rate, I'll really lose my life...

Knowing that nothing would be left of him by the time the flames finished burning, Zhang Xuan swiftly drove the Soul Quintessence.

Gathering his power, he sent a burst of soul energy right into the ball of black flame around him.

As the burst of soul energy collided with the black flame, it swiftly scattered into countless seeds of fire. However, before Zhang Xuan could react, they had already gathered back together around him once more, continue their relentless assault on his Primordial Spirit.

"I'm able to forcefully split it apart, but the rate of regeneration of the black flame is simply too fast..." Zhang Xuan analyzed grimly.

The attack with his Soul Quintessence was a trial attack to see if soul energy would work on the black flame, and to be honest, he didn't think that it would be effective.

Unfortunately, the black flame reconverged together too quickly for the attack to make much of a difference.

Right! I can use the Time Quintessence... A thought came to Zhang Xuan's mind.

No matter how quickly the black flame gathered together, it would require some time. As long as there was a lapse in time, he would be able to use the Time Quintessence against it!

Break!

Thus, he gathered his soul energy together to launch a powerful attack against the black flame. At the same time, he raised his finger and tapped the space in front of him lightly.

Weng!

Everything around him suddenly grew incredibly slow. The black flame slowly split into countless seeds of fire, and when they finally reached a certain distance away from him, they began to reconverged together in the middle.

Scatter apart!

Pushing his mind to its limits, Zhang Xuan scattered his soul energy into each of the smaller seeds of fire and pushed them further away from one another.

Barely after that was done, the time acceleration came to an end. As expected, the searing sensation he felt on his Primordial Spirit alleviated considerably.

The power of the black flame does indeed reduce accordingly to scale... Zhang Xuan thought as he heaved a sigh of relief.

Even if they were of the same temperature, a blazing inferno was surely much more menacing force as compared to just a couple sparks of fire.

After continue the process several times, the black flame was finally split into a hundredth of its original size. Finally, the searing sensation had been reduced to a level which Zhang Xuan's Primordial Spirit could tolerate.

“Time, Space, and Soul, these are the three Quintessences that are the hardest to grasp... He's probably the only one in the world who has managed to master the three of them...” Not expecting to see such a maneuver, the Dragonbone Divine Spear muttered in a daze beneath its breath.

When it first saw the Empyrean Heavenly Flame descending from the heavens, it had no doubt that the young man would be reduced to cinders. Who could have thought that the young man would actually be able to find a feasible way to cope with the Empyrean Heavenly Flame through the skillful manipulation of those three powerful Quintessences?

“However, this isn't the end of the Aureate Body Ordeal yet. Even if he's able to withstand the Scorching Soul Tribulation, it would still be hard for him to overcome the Scorching Spirit Tribulation and Scorching Heart Tribulation...”

The Dragonbone Divine Spear shook its head, clearly unconfident in the young man's ability to withstand this trial.

...

This is much better!

Oblivious to the Dragonbone Divine Spear's worries, Zhang Xuan's pounding heart finally calmed down after he found that the searing sensation on his Primordial Spirit had reduced to a level where he could cope with. He couldn't help but be thankful that he had mastered the Spatial, Time, and Soul Quintessences. Otherwise, he would really have been helpless before his current situation.

Weng!

A golden light shone brilliantly on the surface of his Primordial Spirit, keeping the many seeds of fire scattered equally on the outside. It had reduced the intensity of the flame, and the excruciating pain on his Primordial Spirit had diminished significantly too.

As he continued driving his soul energy, the golden light grew brighter and brighter. Whenever the black seeds of fire began gathering once more, he would use his Soul Quintessence to tear them apart once more. Of course, it was an extremely tiring process, but fortunately, he was still able to cope with his powerful Primordial Spirit.

Let me try using the heat of the heavenly flames to drive away the Innate Fetal Poison... Seeing that he was finally out of danger for the time being, Zhang Xuan knew that his chance had come.

This was a rare opportunity for him to try driving out the Innate Fetal Poison within him.

As long as the Innate Fetal Poison remained unresolved, the countdown on his lifespan wouldn't stop. Since he had finally found a chance to take a breather, it was a good timing for him to give it a try.

Gathering his consciousness together, he threw out yet another burst of soul energy and divided a bean-sized seed of fire into sesame seed-sized ones. With his will, he slowly nudged the

divided seed of fire toward the area where the Innate Fetal Poison was.

After which, he channeled the searing energy in from the seed of flame through the golden light and into his Primordial Spirit.

SZZZZZZZZ!

A heart-wrenching pain immediately assaulted Zhang Xuan, but he gritted his teeth and bore with it. If this was the pain he had to go through in order to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison, he would just have to pull through it.

However, a moment later, a deep frown appeared on his forehead, “Why isn’t it working?”

Kong shi had once said that the heavenly flames could destroy the Innate Fetal Poison, but to his astonishment, the searing energy from the seed of flame didn’t seem to faze the Innate Fetal Poison in the slightest. It was almost as if the Innate Fetal Poison was impervious to it!

Or... could it be that I’ll have to pull the entire seed of flame right into my Primordial Spirit? Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in horror.

He had only channeled the searing energy from the black flame into his body previously; the black flame itself still remained guarded by the golden light. In a sense, it was similar to scratching one’s leg through one’s shoes. Could this be the reason why the Innate Fetal Poison wasn’t affected by it?

But even if that was truly the case...

It was true that his Primordial Spirit wasn’t vulnerable to heat, unlike ordinary soul oracles. However, the black flame was no ordinary flame either. It was the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, the strongest heavenly flame of all!

If he were to draw something that could even destroy a Sempiternal realm expert into his Primordial Spirit, the chances would be that he would die before he could even eliminate the Innate Fetal Poison!

Forget it! At this rate, I'm bound for death anyway...

Knowing that he wouldn't be able to rest easy as long as the Innate Fetal Poison remained in his body, Zhang Xuan didn't hesitate for long before making up his mind.

Driving the Heaven's Path Soul Art furiously, he continued to uphold the barrier of golden light around his Primordial Spirit to fend off the black flame. But at the same time, he opened a small gap to take in a seed of flame into his Primordial Spirit.

Tzzzzzzz!

As if fresh meat being pressed on top of burning charcoals, a deafening sizzling sound echoed in the air. This was a pain which Zhang Xuan had never experienced before. It felt as if something was consuming him from within, leaving him scrunching around uncontrollably. Gradually, he could feel his consciousness seeping away from him.

He hurriedly lowered his head and saw the areas which had come into direct contact with the seed of flame had already been reduced to a hole. At the same time, the parts of his Primordial Spirit around the hole was visibly much more sparse than before. At this rate, it was a matter of time before his Primordial Spirit dissipated for good.

This... How am I supposed to do this? Zhang Xuan's complexion warped in despair.

He had only taken in a sesame seed-sized flame, and it had already inflicted grievous wounds upon his Primordial Spirit. If he were to absorb any more than that, he would really be reduced into a wisp of smoke!

What should I do?

He was still thinking that he would be able to overcome the heavenly flame easily and resolve the Innate Fetal Poison while he was at it. However, it was as if the difficulty of the game had suddenly switched from easy mode to hell mode.

I have no choice now. If a sesame-sized seed of flame wouldn't work out, I'll just have further divide till it's the size of the tip of a needle! Zhang Xuan clenched his fists determinedly.

The division of the black flame would reduce the intensity of the heat significantly. Since that was the case, he would just have to continue dividing it till it was at a level where his Primordial Spirit could endure.

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan continued using his soul energy to further divide a seed of black flame.

With his level of cultivation, even for a speck of dirt, he could still easily see the bumps on it through his Spiritual Perception. With his sharp control over his soul energy, he was able to accomplish this fine maneuver with ease.

After three more divisions, the sesame-sized seed of flame was finally reduced to roughly the size of a needle tip. Even with such a small size, its imposing presence still gave one no room for doubt that it was capable of melting everything in the world.

“Absorb!”

Zhang Xuan carefully guided one of these needle tip-sized seed of flame toward his Primordial Spirit and swiftly absorbed it in.

Tzzzzzzz!

Upon seeing the seed of fire, the Innate Fetal Poison hurriedly retreated out of fear.

However, it was unfortunate that the seed of fire was too small. Even though the Innate Fetal Poison was frightful of it, it was incapable of dealing any substantial damage to the Innate Fetal Poison.

It’s effective! I need to press on!

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan absorbed another needle tip-sized seed of flame into his Primordial Spirit, thus forcing the Innate Fetal Poison to retreat in terror once again. However, it didn’t take long for the small seed of flame to extinguish too.

Hmmm? My Primordial Spirit seems to have grown stronger?

He realized that after absorbing two seeds of flame, the parts of his Primordial Spirit where the seeds of flame had passed



through had grown much more resilient, as if they had been tempered a thousand times over. At the same time, the golden glow emanating from those areas became much more brilliant too.

The heavenly flame is indeed able to temper the Aureate Body! Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in excitement.

Let me put aside the Innate Fetal Poison for now. By the time I have tempered my entire Primordial Spirit, that fellow wouldn't be able to run even if he wanted to!

Trembling in agitation, Zhang Xuan was just about to crush the other seeds of flame into smaller portions in order to temper his entire Primordial Spirit when the storage ring on his physical body suddenly shook. Following which, a figure materialized before him.

He was Zhang Xuan's clone!

For some reason, this fellow had come out of the Myriad Anthive Nest of his own accord.

“You can't even handle a heavenly flame properly? I can't bring myself to look on anymore...” Shooting a disdainful look at Zhang Xuan, the clone dashed right into the ominous clouds above.

Hong long long!

As if in retaliation to the clone's aggressive actions, a bundle of heavenly flame descended from the heavens. However, the clone simply opened his mouth wide and swallowed it into his body.

“...”

Zhang Xuan's cheeks twitched.

# 1653 Flight of the Innate

## Fetal Poison

At this moment, Zhang Xuan really felt like crying. If there was a hole he could dive into right now, he would do so without the slightest hesitation.

He had to execute his Time, Spatial, and Soul Quintessences, and even so, he only managed to absorb two needle tip-sized seed of flames so far. Furthermore, he even felt accomplished for being able to do so...

But in the next moment, his clone appeared and swallowed an entire bundle of it whole...

Furthermore, what the heck was with that fellow's expression? Was that fellow putting up an attitude with him? Was that fellow looking down on him?

Screw you! You are only a clone! You get it? A clone!

Which part of being a clone do you not understand?

Can you open your eyes and realize that I'm the main body? There's an unbreachable gap in the standing between the main body and the clone... Realize that!

Thinking of standing, Zhang Xuan's complexion turned even more awful...

He had challenged that fellow ever since he appeared, but it seemed like every fight had ended with a tragic loss on his part... In terms of standing, it did really seem like he had none of that before his clone...

In the midst of wallowing in his sorrow, Zhang Xuan suddenly raised his head and looked at his clone with unreadable eyes. For the first time, he felt that it wouldn't be so bad to see his clone being torched to death by those black flames.

But contrary to his wish, what he saw was the other party burping leisurely, "Delicious!"

Hula!

After which, he dived right into the clouds and vanished.

“What?”

Watching the entire sight from start to end, the Dragonbone Divine Spear rattled in stupefaction. It was almost as if it had used up its entire lifetime worth of surprise today.

The fact that its master had a clone wasn't really a big deal. Many experts had forged a clone out of themselves, and even Kong shi had one as well... However, this was the first time he had seen one which was even cockier than its master!

More importantly... that was the Empyrean Heavenly Flame which even it was afraid of! Yet, not only was that fellow unfrightened by it, he even charged right into its midst... Was he not afraid of being burned down to cinders?

In his moment of shock, he saw a pair of thighs poking out from the clouds, and a hand was scrubbing it leisurely.

Pilipala!

A huge bundle of black flame was being spread equally over a body by a hand, and the sound of deafening explosions could be from above heard now and then. However, it didn't seem like the owner of the body was terrified at all. On the contrary, he was releasing pleased moans instead, clearly enjoying the entire process...

“T-this... Is he still a human?” the Dragonbone Divine Spear cowered in fear.

To be honest, it was still a little apprehensive as to whether it had made the right choice submitting to Zhang Xuan or not. After all, it was the personal weapon of the renowned Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, a legendary existence in history! However, after seeing the prowess Zhang Xuan's clone, it suddenly felt its pride being utterly crushed.

If even the clone wasn't being choosy with his master, what rights did it have to be choosy?

With such a thought in mind, the Dragonbone Divine Spear turned its gaze toward Zhang Xuan and saw the latter

trembling with a livid look on his face.

“Who’s afraid of who? Hmph!”

Sou!

Before the Dragonbone Divine Spear could process what was going on, it saw the Primordial Spirit of its master dashing right into the clouds, vanishing from sight within the blink of an eye.

“ ... ”

The Dragonbone Divine Spear was utterly frenzied.

The reason why the clone of its master dared to charge into the clouds could be attributed to the superior material used to make it, but as for its master... What in the world was he planning to do charging in with just his Primordial Spirit?

Was he tired of living?

If he were to die... Should I acknowledge his clone as my master instead? the Dragonbone Divine Spear pondered seriously as it began planning out its contingency plans.

...

How could Zhang Xuan possibly tolerate being looked at so contemptuously by his clone?

Without any hesitation, he dashed right into the clouds.

Boom!

Before he knew it, countless bundles of flames were already gushing in his direction.

My clone does have a much stronger body than mine, especially since he’s made out of the Nine Hearts Lotus. However, in terms of souls, he’s on the same footing as me. Since he’s able to endure the black flame, I should be able to do it too...

It might have been a spontaneous decision on his part to charge into the tribulation clouds, but it definitely wasn’t a reckless one.

He had already calculated the risks and decided that it was feasible before heading in.

After obtaining the subsequent levels of the Heaven's Path Soul Art, it was automatically shared with his clone when he entered the Myriad Anthive Nest. While he had been cultivating his soul, his clone had been doing the same as well. In other words, his clone had also achieved a breakthrough to Aureate Body realm as well, just like him.

Since his clone was able to withstand the black flame, why couldn't he do it too?

He must have missed out some crucial information.

Thus, he began to observe his clone not too far away. His clone was shrouded in the midst of black flames, doing backstroke at one moment, front crawl in the other, dog paddle in the next, and lying leisurely in the '太' shape after... It was as if he was out for a holiday, enjoying himself.

The black flame continued to burn around him. Soon, his body began to emanate golden light, and his Primordial Spirit also grew significantly more resilient than before.

I get it! Zhang Xuan's eyes widened as realization dawned upon him.

The Dragonbone Divine Spear said that the Aureate Body Ordeal is divided into the Scorching Soul Tribulation, Scorching Spirit Tribulation, and Scorching Heart Tribulation... I always thought that the Scorching Soul Tribulation is the very first phase, and the others will appear subsequently. That could have been true for ordinary heavenly flame tribulations, but for the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, all three appear at once!

The heat of the black flame is indeed formidable to the point that it's nearly unbearable, but it hasn't reached the level where it's completely intolerable to me yet. After all, I have cultivated my soul with the Heaven's Path Soul Art, and my Primordial Spirit has been tempered by many lightning tribulations. In terms of resilience, my Primordial Spirit already on par with most Great Sage artifacts...

However, I was fearful of the black flame. I used all kinds of ways to avoid absorbing it... This must have been a test of my determination!

My clone was able to charge unhesitantly in because he had absolute confidence in his physical body, and without fear in his heart, the prowess of the black flame is significantly reduced!

This is similar to how walking in the dark could be a frightful experience to those who hold fear in their hearts. They would constantly check on their surroundings, fearing that someone would do them harm. However, if one were to tread forward with an open mind, the night would no longer be as terrifying of an entity to one anymore...

As these thoughts flashed across Zhang Xuan's mind, he opened his Primordial Spirit wide in the face of the incoming bundles of black flame. At the same time, he also dissipated the golden light around his Primordial Spirit, leaving himself completely vulnerable to the black flames. It was as if he had already given up on himself.

Tzzzzz!

The flames began to sear his Primordial Spirit. Yet, due to his calmer state of mind, the black flame wasn't as excruciating as before. Instead, under the tempering of the flames, his Primordial Spirit was swiftly being tempered.

It's indeed as I have expected! Seeing that it was effective, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

The heavenly flame was a mystical force of nature. It didn't just sear one's body but one's spirit and state of mind as well.

The more afraid he was of the black flame, the greater its prowess would be. That was because its target wasn't just his Primordial Spirit but his mind and consciousness.

Fear made one's mind vulnerable, making it easy to plant thoughts and delusions into one. And for cultivators of their level, thoughts were no longer mere thoughts anymore.

Thus, when he abandoned his fear and embraced the black flame, the prowess of the black flame diminished instead.

Nevertheless, despite the diminished prowess of the black flame, he still felt stabbing pain assault his Primordial Spirit, leaving him feeling as if it would be torn apart at any moment.

I should focus on tempering my Primordial Spirit for the time being...

Despite the pain, Zhang Xuan opened his Primordial Spirit wide and frenziedly absorbed the flames from the surroundings.

Boom!

The flames entering his Primordial Spirit swam around it relentlessly, tempering it with the amazing heat it was emanating. His Primordial Spirit gradually turned completely golden in color, and the light it emanated was growing brighter and brighter. It was almost as if he was turning into a living Buddha.

Let me see if I can eradicate the Innate Fetal Poison now!

Upon feeling that his Primordial Spirit had gotten used to the temperature of the black flame, Zhang Xuan began concentrating the black flame toward the Innate Fetal Poison.

Gugugu!

As if having encountered something terrifying, the Innate Fetal Poison retreated fearfully.

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in response and continued driving the black flame toward the Innate Fetal Poison, cornering it.

Jijiji!

With an alarmed shriek, the Innate Fetal Poison finally reached its limits and dashed out of his Primordial Spirit. It escaped in the form of black smoke before vanishing completely from sight.

The Innate Fetal Poison had already gained its own consciousness, or else there was no way it could possibly escape from the onslaught of the Heaven's Path zhenqi.

"Finally!!" Seeing that the Innate Fetal Poison had finally escaped, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

The Innate Fetal Poison had been a time bomb to him ever since he discovered its existence. He had lived his life in fear that he would die at any moment, and it had been his greatest motivation to continue cultivating as well.

But today, he was finally free of this burden!



# 1654 The Arrogant Innate Fetal Poison

After the Innate Fetal Poison escaped, Zhang Xuan made use of the black flames to temper his Primordial Spirit for a while longer before the dark clouds gradually dispersed.

With this, he had successfully survived the heavenly flame tribulation!

After overcoming the widely-feared Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body Ordeal, Zhang Xuan's Primordial Spirit had turned completely golden. Even a snap of his fingers created a metallic reverberation.

If one did not know that it was a Primordial Spirit in advance, one would surely have thought that it was another normal body.

After tempering my physical body with the heavenly flame, my Primordial Spirit is starting to take a form reminiscent of a physical body. It's no wonder Lu Chong is able to stand his ground even against those 9-star master teachers! Zhang Xuan thought in agitation.

Primordial Spirits could change their forms according to the individual's will. If one did not want to be seen, even with a shiny golden exterior, a Primordial Spirit could still become invisible to the naked eye. If one wanted to be noticed, a Primordial Spirit could become as tough as a weapon, such that even experts of the same caliber would not be able to tell that it was actually a soul.

It was no wonder soul oracles were viewed in deference in the ancient era. Even if just a small handful of them were able to clear the Aureate Body Ordeal, those that succeeded indubitably wielded far greater prowess compared to ordinary cultivators.

More importantly, the lifespan of soul oracles far exceeded that of ordinary cultivators!

Even if a cultivator nourished their flesh with their zhenqi and altered their cells after reaching the Introspective Convalescence realm, they would still only be able to live for 1,500 years before finally meeting their end.

However, soul oracles were different. They could easily live up to three thousand years and even more!

However, there's a fatal flaw to soul oracles too, and that's the Five Soul Declines...

There were many advantages to being a soul oracle, but equally great were the disadvantages. The greatest hurdle for the soul oracles was the Five Soul Declines. Fortunately, the Heaven's Path Soul Art that Zhang Xuan cultivated had made him impervious to this problem, so he did not have to worry about it.

While he was still in awe over his improvements, he turned to look at his clone and saw that his body was golden. At the same time, his soul was also fully tempered. A powerful aura drifted off from his body, hinting at the frightening prowess he possessed.

"Aureate Body realm consummation?" Zhang Xuan's lips twitched.

He had ignited Kong shi's blood droplet and utilized the prowess of a Sempiternal realm consummation expert before. As such, even though he had never cultivated the realms himself, he still had a rough idea as to what the indicators for the various realms were.

His clone was golden all over, such that even his pupils had taken on a golden color. Without a doubt, he had already cultivated the Aureate Body to perfection!

To think that he would actually be able to advance his cultivation so quickly...

Zhang Xuan clutched his aching heart tightly.

His clone sure knew how to traumatize him!

He had thought that he had been improving fairly quickly, but this fellow turned out to be even faster than him!

“You should return to the Myriad Anthive Nest for the time being...” Zhang Xuan instructed his clone to return and reinforce his cultivation.

On the other hand, he descended from the sky and returned to the ground.

“Y-y-you... actually overcame the tribulation of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame?” The Dragonbone Divine Spear shuddered uncontrollably as it spoke.

It had thought that its master would surely be reduced to ash facing such a powerful heavenly flame tribulation, but who would have thought that he would actually be able to overcome it so quickly?

Was this still a feat a human was capable of?

“Yeah...” Paying no heed to the Dragonbone Divine Spear’s astonishment, Zhang Xuan chuckled softly in response. He was just about to return to his body when he narrowed his eyes in astonishment. “What’s going on?”

His physical body sitting on the ground had its face turned dark, and black smoke was rising from its head. It was trembling non-stop, as if being put through some kind of excruciating pain.

“Some kind of black smoke escaped from the dark clouds earlier and dived into your body. I thought that it was the remnants of your Primordial Spirit, so I didn’t stop it...” the Dragonbone Divine Spear said awkwardly.

On the other hand, black lines streaked across Zhang Xuan’s face.

Do I look dead to you? Just because you are a skeleton doesn’t mean that you should judge everyone by your standards!

Besides, how in the world does a dissipated Primordial Spirit return to its body?

Knowing that it was pointless to waste his breath with this sack of bones, Zhang Xuan quickly dived his Primordial Spirit

back into his body. Shortly after he opened his eyes once more, his face twitched in horror.

He nearly exploded on the spot.

The Innate Fetal Poison that he had just driven out of his Primordial Spirit was currently resting lazily within his physical body. When he swept his Primordial Spirit across it, it even greeted him leisurely, as if meeting an old friend.

He had thought that he had managed to clear the Innate Fetal Poison for good, but who would have thought that it would slip out from his Primordial Spirit just to return to his physical body!

Did it think that it was simply moving homes?

To slip from his body into his soul, and now from his soul back into his body...

Do I look like someone to be trifled with?

With an awful look on his face, Zhang Xuan channeled his Heaven's Path zhenqi right toward the Innate Fetal Poison.

“Die!”

It was out of fear for the Heaven's Path zhenqi that it had been forced to slip into his soul from his physical body. Since it dared to return to his body, he would just have to crush it!

Hong long long!

In a short instant, the Heaven's Path zhenqi collided with the Innate Fetal Poison, forcefully pushing it back.

However, the next instant, the Innate Fetal Poison dived right into the surge of Heaven's Path zhenqi.

Huhuhu!

It began swimming leisurely within the Heaven's Path zhenqi, just like his clone did in the midst of the black flames earlier.

“You...” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

The Innate Fetal Poison should have been extremely fearful of the Heaven's Path zhenqi. Its arrival should have scared it into hiding, so how could it be swimming within it?

Zhang Xuan's heartbeat skipped a beat. Could it be that... it has upgraded after experiencing the heavenly flame tribulation, such that it's no longer afraid of the Heaven's Path zhenqi anymore?

The Innate Fetal Poison had fled in the face of the black flames, but it had still been seared for quite a while before it managed to get away. It could not be that the short moment of searing had put it through a metamorphosis, such that it did not fear even the Heaven's Path zhenqi anymore.

As a poison master, he knew that there were quite a few poisons in the world that could be upgraded with time.

If that was truly the case, he would be in great trouble.

It was due to the suppression of his Heaven's Path zhenqi that it did not dare wreak havoc in the past. Without anything to suppress it now, if it started wreaking havoc right now or even blew up entirely, he would be doomed!

Zhang Xuan quickly tried a few more times, but it seemed like his zhenqi was really no longer effective against the Innate Fetal Poison.

Let me see if I can suppress it using my Primordial Spirit!

He began driving his Primordial Spirit toward the Innate Fetal Poison in the hope that it would be able to subdue it. In face of the approaching soul, the Innate Fetal Poison swiftly retreated in fear.

Oh? It must be because my Primordial Spirit has been tempered by the heavenly flames and thus still contains remnants of it, so the Innate Fetal Poison is still rather fearful of my soul...

Earlier, the Empyrean Heavenly Flame had tempered his Primordial Spirit. Similar to how absorbing the energy in lightning tribulations would suffuse his Primordial Spirit with lightning, his Primordial Spirit was now infused with the might of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame as well. Due to that, his soul was able to induce fear in the Innate Fetal Poison.

Just that...

He needed to harmonize his soul together with his physical body. He could not possibly constantly use his soul to suppress the Innate Fetal Poison!

Let me see if I can drive it out of my body... Zhang Xuan gritted his teeth and began to corner the Innate Fetal Poison.

A moment later, a look of consternation surfaced. Cr\*p, it's stuck...

It was true that he was able to alter the size of his Primordial Spirit after comprehending the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, but there was still a limit to the extent that he could do so. In face of the pursuit of his Primordial Spirit, the Innate Fetal Poison swiftly slipped into the thinnest meridian within his body, such that even his Primordial Spirit was unable to squeeze in.

If he squeezed in, his meridians could explode, and there would be severe consequences.

As soon as his Primordial Spirit retreated, the Innate Fetal Poison slipped out of the tiny meridian and danced gleefully in triumph. Unable to stand the Innate Fetal Poison's arrogance, Zhang Xuan immediately sent his Primordial Spirit back in, but the Innate Fetal Poison simply slipped back into the meridian to hide.

The process repeated itself several times. It was as if the Innate Fetal Poison was provoking him. "I am out. I am in. I am out again. I am in again... Hahaha, try to catch me if you can!"

"You'd better not mess around. Otherwise, even at the risk of destroying my physical body, I'll crush you to death!" Zhang Xuan harrumphed coldly as he fused his Primordial Spirit back with his physical body.

He used his Heaven's Path zhenqi to seal the meridian in order to prevent that fellow from messing around before rubbing his glabella in frustration.

This is really the worst...

# 1655 Pummeled by the Clone

It looks like I'll have to raise my zhenqi cultivation as soon as possible...

Judging from how arrogant the Innate Fetal Poison was, there was no saying when it would act up. He had thought that he would be able to kill it through the heavenly flame tribulation summoned by his soul, but who could have thought that he would only end up deepening the trouble he was in?

He really had to raise his zhenqi cultivation as soon as possible so as to draw in a heavenly flame tribulation for his body as well. This way, with the combined prowess of both his soul and his body, the Innate Fetal Poison would surely be eradicated once and for all!

Alright, the matter with the Jiang Clan has been resolved, so I should head back and resolve the conflict between the Luo Clan and the Zhang Clan soon. Afterward, I should head to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters!

He would have to pay the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters a visit and find Kong shi's superior breakthrough method in order to advance his zhenqi cultivation. Otherwise, who knew how long it would take for him to make a breakthrough?

But before I return to the Zhang Clan, I should get to forging the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage corpse first!

With his Primordial Spirit reaching the Aureate Body realm, his prowess had been enhanced manyfold. With his current strength, he should be able to forge the corpse into a Soulless Metal Humanoid and put it to use.

With such a thought in mind, he excitedly dived into the Myriad Anthive Nest, and after finding an empty clearing, he flicked his wrist.

Peng!

The corpse fell onto the ground, creating a huge depression around it.

Zhang Xuan drew his Primordial Spirit out from his glabella and approached the corpse.

Tzzzzzz!

The overwhelming pressure emanated by the corpse assaulted his Primordial Spirit, making it difficult for him to even advance a single step.

Weng!

His Primordial Spirit emanated a brilliant golden glow, and the pressure immediately alleviated considerably. He began making his way toward the corpse.

Hu!

He successfully dived into the corpse.

“Huge!”

As soon as Zhang Xuan entered the corpse, he found himself within a vast room that there was no end to. His enormous Primordial Spirit seemed to be nothing more than a toy there, not even worth a mention.

In comparison to this, his physical body seemed like a straw cottage before a royal palace.

He took a seat and began using the method to forge Soulless Metal Humanoids to slowly refine the body, harmonizing it together with his Primordial Spirit.

...

Some time later, he stood up once more.

I have already successfully forged a Soulless Metal Humanoid! Alright, let's see if I can fight with it... Zhang Xuan thought with gleaming eyes.

Typically speaking, Soulless Metal Humanoid should have been made out of living beings so as to ensure greater compatibility with one's soul. However, through the alterations that he had made with the Library of Heaven's



Path, he was still barely able to forge one out of the Ancient Sage corpse as well. Nevertheless, the Soulless Metal Humanoid's compatibility with souls would still be slightly lower, resulting in a lower precision in control.

Geji! Geji!

Using his full strength, Zhang Xuan slowly controlled the Ancient Sage corpse to rise to its feet, raise its legs, and slowly take a few steps forward.

After conducting a few simple basic movements, Zhang Xuan's face twitched speechlessly.

The Soulless Metal Humanoid was simply too demanding on his soul energy! Despite taking only three steps, a great half of the soul energy of his Aureate Body realm Primordial Spirit was already depleted!

At this rate, putting aside battling, it was questionable whether he could even launch a fist or not!

I guess I'll have to give it a try to know...

Gritting his teeth, he gathered his remaining soul energy, and the massive Ancient Sage corpse clenched its fist and thrust it forward.

Huala!

The space in the Myriad Anthive Nest immediately shook intensely, causing a deafening ripping sound to echo in the air. It was as if someone had torn the fabric of the world, revealing pitch black cracks beneath.

"Incredible..."

Seeing how the folded space that he had reinforced time and time again had nearly been destroyed by a single punch, Zhang Xuan could not help but fall into a daze.

While maneuvering the Ancient Sage corpse was extremely taxing on his soul energy, there was no doubt that the prowess that it wielded was tremendous!

After all the effort that Zhang Xuan had put into reinforcing the Myriad Anthive Nest, even with the ignition of Kong shi's

blood droplet and the Dragonbone Divine Spear in hand, it would be difficult for him to tear this folded space apart. Yet, a simple punch from the Ancient Sage had nearly undone all of his hard work...

This effectively meant that no matter how powerful a cultivator was, as long as he had not traversed the boundary to become an Ancient Sage yet, he would still be reduced to dust under a single punch from an Ancient Sage!

There was truly a huge leap in prowess between Great Sage and Ancient Sage!

With this Soulless Metal Humanoid, his safety would be guaranteed as long as he did not encounter any Ancient Sages. Even if he did encounter an Ancient Sage, he still had another golden page with him... Following which, he would have yet another Ancient Sage corpse for him to forge a Soulless Metal Humanoid out of!

“Hehehe! With this, what do I have to fear?” Zhang Xuan burst into hearty laughter.

He drew his Primordial Spirit out of the Soulless Metal Humanoid and absorbed several herbs to replenish his soul energy. After that, he re-entered the Ancient Sage corpse, placed his arms on his hips, and bellowed provocatively, “Clone, get your ass out here!”

His clone was in the midst of reinforcing his cultivation when he heard the bellow and flew out.

“Come, let me test this on you!”

Without any regards to his clone’s response, Zhang Xuan snickered sinisterly and threw a punch right over.

On the other hand, his clone did not expect that the main body would have already gained control over this Ancient Sage corpse and shuddered in fright. He realized that it would be too late for him to dodge, so he quickly protected himself with a punch of his own.

Peng!

Sou!

The clone was sent flying into the distance before vanishing completely from sight.

“Hahahaha!” Zhang Xuan laughed heartily.

All along, he had suffered greatly during the duels with his clone. This was his long-awaited comeback, and it left him feeling deeply exhilarated.

Hah! The next time my clone dares brag before me, I’ll feed him a punch from my Soulless Metal Humanoid!

As exhilarating teaching his clone a lesson was, he nearly depleted all of his soul energy after executing a single punch.

Thus, he quickly drew his Primordial Spirit out of the Ancient Sage corpse and back into his body. Just as he was about to retrieve some items to replenish his soul energy, he saw his clone dashing back with an infuriated look on his face.

“How dare you punch me? Are you tired of living?”

On the verge of exploding from rage, the clone threw a fist at Zhang Xuan without the slightest hesitation.

Upon seeing this, Zhang Xuan’s face warped in horror. “What? It’s not me! The Ancient Sage corpse is the one who hit you... Alright fine, I admit that it’s me! But at least wait till I recover and return back to the corpse first...”

“Corpse your head!”

How could the clone possibly wait for Zhang Xuan to recover and return to the corpse?

Peng peng peng peng!

Ten minutes later, a swollen-faced Zhang Xuan lay on the floor with tears streaming down his face. He had a desolate look on his face, reminiscent of someone who had been ravaged all over.

What the heck was this?

It was already a horrible day for him, with the Innate Fetal Poison sneaking back into his physical body and acting all gleefully before him... On top of that, he still had to be pummeled by his clone!

All of a sudden, he felt like his life was extremely bleak. He felt like a candle in the midst of a furious gale, constantly on the verge of being extinguished.

Anyway, he left the Myriad Anthive Nest and returned to the room with his back slumped miserably. Driving his Heaven's Path zhenqi, he swiftly recovered from his injuries before walking out of the room.

It was not as if this was the first day knowing that his clone was an abusive subordinate, prone to resorting to violence at any moment. At the very most, he would just have to stay out of the other party's way in the future.

It was already afternoon outside. After settling some administrative matters with Jiang Fangyou, Zhang Xuan took out the Dragonbone Divine Spear, opened a dimension rift, and left the Jiang Clan.

...

Before long, he was already back at the Zhang Clan.

It had been an entire day since he left the Zhang Clan. As soon as he returned back to his personal residence, he quickly called Sun Qiang over and asked, "What's the current situation?"

Before leaving, he had instructed Sun Qiang to pay close attention to the movement of the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan. A day might not have been long, but it was not a short amount of time either. Surely the two clans would not suddenly come to blows with one another in his absence, would they?

"The situation between the two clans is still relatively calm. As the head of the Luo Clan isn't back yet, those from the Luo Clan are still lying low for the time being!" Sun Qiang quickly explained.

The motive behind the Luo Clan's grand march to the Zhang Clan was so as to return the humiliation that they had suffered. However, they could not do it alone given the limits of their abilities. Thus, they could only bank on their powerful clan head to redress their grievances.

As such, till their clan head finally returned, they would not dare make a move recklessly.

“That’s a relief!” Seeing that nothing major had happened yet, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

He had Sun Qiang head off, and after a moment of contemplation, he began warping his appearance once more.

He really had to say that the disguise amulet that Luo Ruoxin had given him was truly a handy tool. He could activate it whenever he wanted to, and that was how he had managed to disguise himself as Jiang Fangyou and fooled all of the elders.

Under the effects of the disguise amulet, his appearance, soul aura, bloodline, and even cultivation realm would appear to be identical in the eyes of the outsiders.

Of course, if a battle broke out, the difference would immediately have become apparent. After all, the disguise amulet was only a disguising tool in the end.

Since the Luo Clan had been waiting for the arrival of their clan head, it would not be polite to keep them waiting for too long.

However, as for the fashion which their clan head would arrive in, that was something worth pondering about. In any case, he was ready to give the Luo Clan a huge surprise!

# 1656 Luo Tianya VS Zhang Xuan

An air of vexation floated in the guest rooms of the Zhang Clan.

“Say, where did our clan head go? Why isn’t he back yet?”  
First Elder Luo Qingchen broke the heavy silence in the room.

“Who knows? Our clan head seems to be a really carefree person, going wherever he wants as he pleases... Hai! We are supposed to be challenging the Zhang Clan to re-establish the honor of our Luo Clan, but somehow, it looks as if we are sponging off the Zhang Clan instead... How frustrating!”

“It’s the same for me too! Whenever I walk around the area, I would see the members of the Zhang Clan directing skeptical looks at me! Honestly, I don’t even know I should deal with that anymore!”

Two elders of the Luo Clan spoke up in exasperation.

“Have you not heard of the recent news? Nangong Yuanfeng and Tantai Zhenqing of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers came to challenge the Zhang Clan, but they ended up being defeated by a student whom Zhang Xuan simply offered some pointers on the spot... Could our clan head have fled in fear after hearing that news?” Luo Ganzhen rubbed his glabella.

They had marched here with an imposing momentum built up from the defeat of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. They felt that victory was already in their pockets, so they intentionally made a huge fuss out of this matter.

Yet, as soon as they arrived, they heard that Nangong Yuanfeng and the others had visited the Zhang Clan too and were forced to retreat in defeat. To make things worse, the one who had made a move wasn’t Zhang Xuan. It was Zhang Xuan’s student from the side family whom he had barely offered a couple of pointers too...

Upon learning of the news, those of the Luo Clan couldn't help but feel a little unsettled.

If even a student taught by Zhang Xuan was so powerful, they couldn't begin to imagine just how powerful the person in question was!

At this point, they couldn't help but recall the huge commotion that had happened in the Empire Alliance. Back then, even Sword Saint Xing had fallen in defeat to Zhang Xuan... Would their clan head really be able to defeat that monster of a person?

As such thoughts weighed down their minds, the atmosphere grew even gloomier.

“Actually, I'm feeling really conflicted right now. On one hand, I really wish our clan head would appear as soon as possible. On the other hand, I don't know if it's a good idea for our clan head to come. The moment he's here, the duel would definitely have to go on. It's one thing if he wins, but if he were to lose, the Luo Clan's dignity would be utterly crushed...” an elder said.

They had marched imposingly to the Zhang Clan, effectively letting the entire world know that they would be challenging the Zhang Clan to a duel. If they were to be forced in defeat, the Luo Clan would really become a laughingstock for the world!

“Actually, I'm thinking the same too...”

A couple of elders voiced their agreement.

“But it would be even more embarrassing to us if he doesn't appear at all!” another voice exclaimed anxiously.

The crowd fell in silence once more.

Indeed. It was embarrassing to be defeated, but it would be even more so if their challenger didn't appear from the start to the end.

They had come here to find trouble with the Zhang Clan, but they ended up finding themselves being cornered instead. With

the current state of affairs, they didn't know what they should do anymore.

Luo Ganzhen knew that the concerns raised by the elders were legitimate, but he didn't have any solutions for them either. Thus, he could only shake his head helplessly and turn to Luo Qingchen, "Forget it, let's not think too much into it! Shall we send a message to our clan head to urge him to return?"

"I have been sending messages to him all this while, but he hasn't been replying..." First Elder Luo Qingchen shook his head bitterly.

"It might be because he's in seclusion. It hasn't been too long since he has become our clan head, so he might not be too accustomed to the role yet. In any case, I don't think that he's the type to flee in the face of danger. Otherwise, he wouldn't have stepped up against the Hundred Schools of Philosophers for us back then!" Luo Ganzhen reassured the elders around.

Just as he was about to continue speaking, an old man suddenly barged into the room.

"Deputy clan head!"

"What's wrong?" Recognizing the old man who had just entered, Luo Ganzhen frowned.

The other party was the Sixteenth Elder of the Luo Clan, Luo Qingyuan.

For an elder to be running around so anxiously in another clan, something major must have happened.

"Our clan head... He has arrived!" Elder Qingyuan reported anxiously.

"Our clan head is here? Where is he?" Startled, Luo Ganzhen asked as he hurriedly got to his feet.

At the same time, delighted looks also surfaced on the faces of the other elders. They quickly turned their gazes toward the doorway, but there wasn't a figure in sight.

"As soon as he returned to the Zhang Clan, he headed straight to Zhang Xuan's residence... I think he's intending on



challenging the head of the Zhang Clan privately!” Elder Qingyuan explained in a fluster.

“He has already gone to challenge Zhang Xuan? Why didn’t you inform us?”

Everyone was stunned by the revelation.

The reason why they had come here was to battle it out with the head of the Zhang Clan. Yet, they were actually unaware that their clan head had gone ahead to challenge the other party privately?

“Our clan head went to confront for the head of the Zhang Clan secretly! We only found out about the matter a while ago too!” Elder Qingyuan explained.

“Quick, bring us over!” Hearing that the clan head had already gone to challenge Zhang Xuan, Luo Ganzhen and the others couldn’t bring themselves to remain seated anymore.

With Luo Qingyuan taking the lead, it didn’t take long for the crowd to arrive before a vast residence.

This residence had a powerful formation erected around it, preventing any energies within from leaking out. In a sense, it could be said to be an isolated world in itself.

At the very center of the residence, there was a dueling ring with two figures standing on opposite ends of one another. Fearsome auras were emanating from the two parties.

They were the head of the Luo Clan and the head of the Zhang Clan respectively, Luo Tianya and Zhang Xuan!

“Our clan head must have his own reason for not informing us about this, so let’s just observe silently by the side. Make sure that you don’t give yourself away, alright?” Luo Ganzhen sent a telepathic message to the crowd, and they swiftly hid by a remote corner.

Regardless of the underlying motive their clan head had for not informing them about the duel, it was apparent that he didn’t want them to know the outcome of the duel. However, this worked out fine as well. At the very least, it wouldn’t

become an embarrassment for the Luo Clan if it were to end in a loss on their part.

Hu!

The two figures on the dueling platform finally moved.

Luo Tianya flicked his palm, and the surrounding space was immediately sealed up.

Si la!

Everything within the sealed space came to an absolute halt. As if trapped within a still painting, the young man on the opposite end was unable to move at all.

Seeing how their clan head had used the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing right from the start, the faces of the crowd flushed crimson in agitation.

It seemed like their clan head also knew that his opponent would be formidable, so he had decided to go all out from the start.

However, their agitation didn't last for too long. A light chuckle sounded from the other end of the field, and the young man who should have been sealed in place nudged forward a little.

Hu la!

The surrounding space abruptly reverted back to normal. At the same time, Zhang Xuan stepped forward lightly, and as though teleportation, he appeared right before Luo Tianya in the next instant and threw a punch over.

Seeing the means that Zhang Xuan had executed, Luo Ganzhen's body stiffened as horror surfaced in his eyes, "This is... the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing too?"

He might not have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, but he could tell that the nature of Zhang Xuan's means was similar to that of their clan head. In other words, they were both Spatial Quintessence of Sealing!

A member of the Zhang Clan actually executed the Luo Clan's Spatial Quintessence of Sealing?

What in the world was going on here?

Of course, none of the Luo Clan's elders had an answer to Luo Ganzhen's question.

Meanwhile, on the dueling ring, Luo Tianya seemed to realize that he was in a precarious position, so he swiftly struggled free of the sealed space around him and retaliated with a fist of his own,

Peng!

The two punches collided with one another, but it was Luo Tianya whose face paled and was sent flying into the seal erected around the dueling ring. Clearly, he had been overpowered by Zhang Xuan.

“He's actually this powerful?”

The crowd from the Luo Clan was rendered speechless.

They thought that they would be able to see their clan head destroying Zhang Xuan, but who could have thought that their clan head would actually lose in a direct encounter...

Sou sou sou!

Reluctant to admit his defeat, Luo Tianya got to his feet and charged forward. Thus, the two fighters collided with one another once more.

However, it was as if Zhang Xuan was able to read his moves in advance. After trading a few blows, Luo Tianya was suppressed to the point where he could hardly catch his breath.

Under the incredible outpour of power, the dueling ring flickered with brilliant lights.

The relentless shockwaves that rippled out from the collisions of the two fighters rattled the surrounding seal to the point that it seemed as if it would collapse at any moment.

“They are truly formidable!”

The faces of the crowd from the Luo Clan gradually turned pale as they watched the intense fight before them.

There were a couple of them who had reached Great Sage, but they knew that it was likely that they would be defeated in a single blow if they were to face any of the two figures on the dueling ring.

To be honest, the maneuvers executed by the two clan heads weren't complex at all, and their battle techniques were also relatively simple too. However, every move that they made was purposeful, or to use a more exact word, ingenious! Every action that they carried out had a deeper significance in the later stage of the battle, leaving the onlookers awestruck by their foresight.

It was as if their eyes were able to peer into the future, allowing them to manipulate the flow of the battle to their advantage.

“This is a duel between top-notch geniuses?”

“It's indeed not at a level where ordinary mortals like us can fathom...”

“Who could have thought that the Yellow Dust of the Descending Swallow could be used in such a manner? It seems like I have been too focused on the form of the technique to see through its crux...”

“Is it just me or that Zhang shi seems to be really familiar with the battle techniques of our Luo Clan?”

“Wait a moment... You're right! How could this be?”

...

The more that they watched, the more shocked that they became. At this point, the initial excitement had already settled down, leaving nothing but a deep heaviness in their hearts.

# 1657 Tianya's Reques

“Our clan head... isn't a match for Zhang Xuan!” Luo Ganzhen remarked with a helpless look on his face.

“You're right. It's obvious that Zhang Xuan is giving some leeway to our clan head. Otherwise, he could have defeated our clan head within twenty moves!” Luo Qingchen nodded.

Shortly after Luo Qingchen said those words, the panting Luo Tianya suddenly declared with a bitter look on his face, “I admit defeat!”

It seemed like he found it hard to accept this outcome too.

“Brother Luo, you need not take this matter to heart. In truth, there isn't a great disparity in our fighting prowess at all...” Zhang Xuan walked up to Luo Tianya without the slightest glee from his victory. Instead, with an earnest look on his face, he said, “Why don't we consider it a draw instead?”

“A loss is a loss! If I can't even admit that much, I might as well change my surname to Zhang!” Luo Tianya replied with a dignified tone. “That being said, I have to say that the reason behind my loss is due to my personal reasons. It doesn't show that our Luo Clan's Spatial Quintessence of Sealing is inferior to your Zhang Clan's Time Quintessence of Acceleration at all, but simply because I'm too weak to bring out its true prowess!”

“Of course, Brother Luo!” Zhang Xuan replied earnestly. “Space and time have always been considered as equal powers; it would be meaningless to rank one of them over the other. It's not my intention to put down the Luo Clan either. To be honest, I'm extremely in awe of the Luo Clan. In fact, the main reason why I was barely able to win against you is because my understanding of the Luo Clan's Spatial Quintessence of Sealing surpasses yours!”

“What do you mean?” Luo Tianya frowned doubtfully.

“I believe that Brother Luo can tell that I have used the Spatial Quintessence earlier too!” Zhang Xuan said.

“This...” Luo Tianya was stunned for a moment before realization dawned on him. “Indeed. Why are you able to utilize the strength of the Luo Clan’s Spatial Quintessence of Sealing?”

“The founder of the Luo Clan did comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, but the lineage of the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing could be further traced up to Ancient Sage Qiu Wu! I happened to obtain Ancient Sage Qiu Wu’s heritage by a stroke of luck, which is why I wield the power of the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing as well!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Ancient Sage Qiu Wu?” Luo Tianya widened his eyes in disbelief.

“This is the ancient domain left behind by Ancient Sage Qiu Wu!” With a flick of his wrist, a crystal ball materialized before Zhang Xuan. It emanated a fleeting aura reminiscent of folded spaces.

Placing his palm on the crystal ball, Luo Tianya’s body trembled in agitation and envy surfaced in the depths of his eyes, “It’s indeed an artifact left behind by Ancient Sage Qiu Wu... I must say that I’m truly in awe of Brother Zhang’s luck!”

“Haha, it’s out of coincidence that I managed to acquire it too. The reason why very few in your Luo Clan are able to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing isn’t due to lack of talent but that the heritage passed down through the generations isn’t complete,” Zhang Xuan explained with a light chuckle. “From this Qiu Wu Palace, I found the complete Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel created by Ancient Sage Qiu Wu. I’ll entrust it into the hands of Brother Luo today. I believe that only in your hands will its true worth shine!”

Looking at the crystal ball in his hand, Luo Tianya quickly shook his head in astonishment, “How I can accept such a valuable artifact from you?”

There was no one in the Master Teacher Continent who didn't desire to obtain the heritage of the Ancient Sages.

Yet, the young man actually handed it to him just like that... This gift was simply too heavy for him to accept!

At the same time, the hidden Luo Ganzhen and the elders of the Luo Clan glanced at one another in bewilderment.

It was true that the heritage of the Luo Clan originated from Ancient Sage Qiu Wu. Thus, if they could acquire the completed version of the Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel, they would be able to deepen their comprehension of spatial laws significantly. Even if they weren't able to comprehend the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, their overall fighting prowess would soar by leaps and bounds.

Just that... there was supposed to be a grudge between the two of their clans. In fact, the purpose behind their visit was to trample on the Zhang Clan. Yet, not only did the other party pay no heed to their pettiness, he even gifted them such a valuable gift...

In an instant, the crowd suddenly felt deeply ashamed of themselves.

"Please don't be in a rush to turn me down, Brother Luo. Allow me to finish my piece first!"

Placing his hands behind his back, Zhang Xuan's expression suddenly turned grim. "I believe Brother Luo should have also received reports regarding the observation of the mirages of the Temple of Confucius at Qufu. Based on that in itself, there's little doubt that the real Temple of Confucius would surface very soon!"

"Un!" Luo Tianya nodded.

"The Hundred Schools of Philosophers has already approached and challenged both of our clans. Their motive is very clear—they wish to obtain our Celestial Amulet of Legacy. They might have failed this time around, but considering that Kong shi's heritage is at stake, there's no way they would give up just like that. They would surely try something in the near future. Furthermore, our Zhang Clan has

found evidence that experts of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe have managed to sneak into the Master Teacher Continent. In fact, I have received intelligence from the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters that the legendary Otherworldly Demon Emperor is amongst us right now!” Zhang Xuan said grimly.

“Mankind is in a very vulnerable position at the moment. Our survival is at stake. If we were to engage in infighting during such precarious times, it would be a calamity not just for both of our clans but the entire human race! At a time like this, we can’t be engaging in meaningless faction rivalry. We have to unite together as one and cooperate with one another to overcome this ordeal! Otherwise, the one who would have the last laugh would only be the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!”

Hearing those words, Luo Tianya fell silent.

“The reason why the Three Premier Clans are able to stand strong even after tens of thousands of years is because of how we hesitate not to band together in times of need to fend against the greater enemy! I know that I have done your Luo Clan wrong on the engagement ceremony, but it was definitely not my intention for things to turn out like this. Feelings simply can’t be forced!

“Ruoxin and I have already sworn our futures together. If I were to marry Yuxin when my heart isn’t with her, it’s only a matter of time before the marriage descends into misfortune. In the end, I would only be letting both her and the Luo Clan down. I know that I have failed to settle the issue appropriately, and I do feel extremely guilt-ridden for the pain and suffering I have inflicted on Yuxin and the Luo Clan... So, please consider the Heavenly Art of Dimension Unravel and the Qiu Wu Palace as tokens of my apology. I’ll have to ask Brother Luo not to turn me down, or else this matter might continue to haunt me for life...” Zhang Xuan said.

“Brother Zhang is truly magnanimous. Since that’s the case, I won’t hold back either then!” After a slight moment of hesitation, Luo Tianya took the crystal ball and kept it in his storage ring.



...

“Thinking about it, even though it’s indeed that fellow’s fault, he didn’t do it intentionally either...”

“If he had truly chosen to marry the little princess back then, I would have really doubted his character! If he could bring himself to abandon his lover, there’s no reason why he couldn’t abandon the little princess later on!”

“Have we been overreacting to the matter?”

“While our minds were still fixated on our own pride and reputation, he’s already looking at the fate of the whole mankind from a much higher position than ours. He’s truly a noble individual!”

The hidden crowd from the Luo Clan fell silent as their faces reddened in shame.

They had been too focused on the Luo Clan that they weren’t able to look at things from another perspective. If Zhang Xuan were to be a heartless person, would he be able to bring the little princess happiness even if he were to marry her?

Unlikely!

“Thank you, Brother Luo!” Zhang Xuan bowed deeply in gratitude.

“I’ll surely relay your intentions to the Luo Clan and speak up on your behalf!” Luo Tianya said. At this moment, he lowered his head contemplatively for a moment, seemingly making up an important decision, before he clasped his fist and said, “Brother Zhang, there’s something which I would like to request of you!”

“Brother Luo, please feel free to speak!” Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up in surprise. “As long as it’s something within my means, I’ll surely try my best to help you!”

“There’s something which has been bothering me for a long time now, and I think it’s about time for me to put an end to it. Regardless of whether I succeed or not, it’s unlikely that I’ll be able to return to the Luo Clan afterward. Even though I have only become the head of the Luo Clan a few days ago, I don’t

wish to see the Luo Clan falling into decline in my absence...”  
Luo Tianya said with a darkened look.

“It’s unlikely that you’ll be able to return to the Luo Clan? Brother Luo, are you going to enter an ancient domain, or are you intending to exact vengeance? If you require my help, just give me the word and...” Startled by those words, Zhang Xuan hurriedly said.

“Brother Zhang. I appreciate your kind intentions, but this is my personal affair. I wish to settle it with my own hands. Even if death lies at the end of the path I seek, I’ll still willingly tread down that path!” Luo Tianya shook his head and replied determinedly. “The matter which I would like to entrust Brother Zhang with isn’t that.”

Zhang Xuan frowned in confusion.

Taking a deep breath, Luo Tianya flicked his wrist and took out a token. It was the Luo Clan’s Clan Head Token.

“Brother Zhang, I hope that you can take my position as the head of the Luo Clan!”

“You want me to be the head of the Luo Clan?” Zhang Xuan’s body trembled in astonishment. He hurriedly waved his hands in a fluster and exclaimed, “How can I do that?”

# 1658 Head of the Three Clans

“Our clan head wants to make Zhang Xuan our next clan head? Is our clan head out of his mind?”

“That won’t do! I can’t accept that!”

Luo Ganzhen and the others were shocked by Luo Tianya’s words as well.

They were impressed by Zhang Xuan’s magnanimity and were willing to forgive him for the affairs at the engagement ceremony, but that didn’t mean that they could accept having him as their clan head!

“Brother Zhang, your prowess with the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing is even more adept than mine, and more importantly, you have inherited the heritage of Ancient Sage Qiu Wu. Given that even Ancient Sage Qiu Wu has acknowledged and imparted his lineage to you, you can be considered as a peer to our founder. Naturally, you are more than qualified to become the head of our Luo Clan!” Luo Tianya said.

“But...” Zhang Xuan continued waving his hands frantically, seemingly very resistant to the notion.

“Brother Zhang, correct me if I am wrong. You have just become the head of the Jiang Clan, am I right?” Luo Tianya suddenly interjected sharply.

“This... Yes, that’s indeed the case!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He flicked his wrist, and a token materialized before him. It was the Jiang Clan’s Clan Head Token.

“He’s the head of the Jiang Clan? Is this for real?”

“This is ridiculous! Why would the Jiang Clan allow an outsider like him to become their clan head?”

Luo Ganzhen and the others couldn't believe what they were seeing.

It was as if this matter had come right out of a fantasy novel. They could hardly wrap their minds around what was going on.

“Since the Jiang Clan is willing to accept you as their clan head, I believe that our Luo Clan will be open enough to do the same as well! Furthermore, given the perilous times we are in, it's of utmost importance for the Three Premier Clans to work closely with one another. I can't think of any better way to do so other than this!” Luo Tianya said.

He clasped his fist before continuing on, “Brother Zhang, I'll have to implore you not to turn me down! I have heard how your lectures in the Jiang Clan and the Zhang Clan have helped many to achieve breakthroughs in their cultivation. If you were to become the head of the Luo Clan, I'll have to ask you not to discriminate against our Luo Clan and share your knowledge with our members generously too, so that our Luo Clan will be able to better itself!”

Zhang Xuan fell silent.

The crowd from the Luo Clan also fell silent as well.

While they didn't have a good impression of Zhang Xuan, there was no denying his ability in imparting knowledge to others. His aptitude as a teacher was far beyond their imagination. The only person they could think of who could possibly compete with him was only Kong Shi.

This fact couldn't be more apparent just by looking at his direct disciples. None of his direct disciples had reached their twenties yet, but every single one of them had already become powerhouses on the Master Teacher Continent. Even the Luo Clan would have to think twice before crossing any of them!

If they could have such a formidable individual as their clan head, the fighting prowess of their clan members would surely improve tremendously!

On the other hand, if they were to continue rejecting Zhang Xuan, it would only be a matter of time before the Zhang Clan

and the Jiang Clan pulled their distance away from the Luo Clan. Before they knew it, the Luo Clan would have been completely overshadowed by the other two powers.

“If Brother Zhang could accede to this request of mine, I would be able to leave with my mind at ease. Otherwise, I’ll never rest easy not knowing what would become of the Luo Clan in my absence!” Luo Tianya bowed earnestly.

He flicked his wrist, and the Luo Clan’s Clan Head Token flew over to Zhang Xuan.

“This... Alright then, I’ll help you look after the Luo Clan in your absence. I’ll lead the Luo Clan in your stead until someone worthy emerges!” After a moment of hesitation, Zhang Xuan took the token and reassured Luo Tianya.

“Thank you, Brother Zhang. With this, my heart can finally rest easy... Farewell!”

Hu!

After bidding his farewell, Luo Tianya turned around and left without any hesitation. In the blink of an eye, he had already vanished from everyone’s sight.

“Hai! It’s not that I’m greedy for power, but only with the Three Premier Clans united will we have the strength to stand against the Hundred Schools of Philosophers and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe... Without sufficient strength to tide through this calamity, mankind would be completely eradicated, becoming nothing more than the dust of history!”

Watching as Luo Tianya left, Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed deeply. With a complicated look on his face, he waved his hand and strolled back into his residence.

Seeing that both Luo Tianya and Zhang Xuan had left the vicinity, Luo Ganzhen and the others finally emerged from their hiding spot.

“Deputy clan head...”

Aside from Luo Tianya, Luo Ganzhen wielded the greatest say in the Luo Clan. As such, the crowd instinctively turned their gazes to him to seek his view on the matter.

“Tianya is right. To survive this adversity, our Luo Clan will require Zhang Xuan’s help...” Luo Ganzhen said with a helpless sigh.

“But he’s only a Saint 9-dan cultivator...” an elder protested.

“I don’t deny that he’s still weak at the moment, but he’s the senior of the most respected grand elder of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, Yang shi! Not only that, he’s also the head of the Sanctum of Sages, the teacher of the Progeny of Combat, the head of the Poison Hall headquarters, the chief of the Glacier Plain Court, the head of the Yuan Clan, and the leader of the Spirit Awakener Guild headquarters... All of those powers would rally together on his command! If we were to factor in the Zhang Clan and the Jiang Clan as well, it’s no exaggeration to say that he’s the most powerful man on the Master Teacher Continent at the moment! If we were to let this opportunity slip by our fingers, we might really fall into a spiral of decline!” Luo Ganzhen said.

As an individual, the Saint 9-dan Zhang Xuan was not of much significance to the Luo Clan. However, it would be a different matter if one were to factor in his many identities as well.

Even the Master Teacher Pavilion might not possess as much rallying power as Zhang Xuan did. In fact, if one were to take Yang shi into account too, Zhang Xuan’s sphere of influence would encompass even the Master Teacher Pavilion as well!

Having such a powerful man as their clan head would be crucial to ensuring the Luo Clan’s survival in the impending crisis!

“Are we really going to... acknowledge him as our clan head?” another elder asked with a bitter look on his face.

What the heck was this...

They had come to humiliate the Zhang Clan, but not only did they fail in their aim, they were even on the verge of acknowledging their sworn enemy as their clan head... It was not as if they couldn’t understand the rationale behind it, but this pill was simply too difficult for them to swallow!

The more they thought about it, the more stifled they felt.

“Everything is for the sake of the clan!” Knowing their thoughts, Luo Ganzhen heaved another helpless sigh and said. “Alright, let’s return. Tianya is probably waiting for us back at our accommodations...”

Thus, the crowd quickly rushed back to the guest rooms. There, they saw Luo Tianya sitting within a room with a hesitant look on his face.

Upon seeing that the crowd had returned, Luo Tianya hesitated for a moment before speaking up, “Elders...”

“Clan head, you need not say anything. I think it’s a wise move on your part to have Zhang Xuan unite the Three Premier Clans together. We are willing to heed your command!” Luo Ganzhen clasped his fist and said.

Luo Tianya’s eyebrows raised up in astonishment upon hearing Luo Ganzhen’s words. A moment later, he shook his head and said, “Since you are already aware of the matter, I won’t speak of it anymore. This is the Qiu Wu Palace which Zhang Xuan has given me. Take care of it well!”

It’s very likely that I’ll never return after I leave this time around. You must heed Zhang Shi’s orders and make the Luo Clan far stronger than what it ever was!”

After saying his piece, Luo Tianya didn’t wait for the response from the crowd before opening a dimension rift and leaping into it, vanishing without a trace.

Facing the departure of their clan head, the crowd from the Luo Clan remained silent for a very long while.

...

“Has our son returned yet?”

In the main hall of the Zhang Clan, Sword Saint Meng was pacing around a room restlessly with a tight frown on her forehead.

“The clan head has already returned. However, he went out again shortly afterward, and I’m afraid I’m not too sure where he went this time around!” an elder replied.

“That lad! He should know that the Luo Clan is here to trample over the Zhang Clan’s pride, but he still has the mood to be wandering around the place...” Sword Saint Meng remarked with a frown.

The Luo Clan had created a huge fuss with their arrival. It was extremely clear to anyone watching the spectacle that the Luo Clan had come with the intentions of humiliating the Zhang Clan. Yet, as the head of the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan still had to mood to be roaming around at a crucial period like this... This was really unacceptable!

“Xuan-er is a sharp-witted child. I believe that he has his motive for doing so. There’s no doubt that we are at fault for this matter, so it’s only right for Xuan-er to avoid them. His presence would only remind them of the humiliation they had suffered and stoke the hostility between the two clans...” Sword Saint Xing shook his head.

“It’s one thing for him to avoid the members of the Luo Clan, but it won’t do for him to continue dragging this matter out like this! If I had a say in this matter, I would have Xuan-er marry Luo Ruoxin and Luo Qiqi together, and there wouldn’t be so much trouble now!” Sword Saint Meng harrumphed coldly.

At this moment, an elder suddenly rushed into the main hall anxiously.

“Old clan head...” Upon stepping into the room, the elder first did a bow before proceeding ahead with his report, “The matter concerning the Luo Clan has been resolved...”

Both Sword Saint Xing and Sword Saint Meng were stunned by what they had just heard. Sword Saint Xing hurriedly turned his gaze over and asked, “How was it resolved?”

In their view, this was an extremely prickly matter to deal with. Until Zhang Xuan had a duel with that Luo Tianya, it was unlikely that the Luo Clan would back down on this matter. Yet, before anything could happen, the matter had already been resolved?



With an incredulous look on his face, the elder reported, “That... The members of the Luo Clan... acknowledged Zhang Xuan as their clan head!”

“They acknowledged Xuan-er as their clan head?”

Sword Saint Xing and Sword Saint Meng glanced at one another before falling into a daze.

—

Starve’s Discord: <https://discord.gg/ATHVehx>

# 1659 Let's Go to the Master Teacher Pavilion Headquarters!

The Luo Clan had arrived imposingly with the burning resolve to humiliate Zhang Xuan and the Zhang Clan, but before anything could happen, they had already acknowledged him as the clan head... Was there a pit in the heads of those from the Luo Clan?

Otherwise, why would they do something as foolish as this?

"I don't know the details either, but I heard that..." The elder suddenly halted at this point. He was not sure if the rumors were true, so he was not certain whether he should report the matter or not.

"Speak. What is it?" Sword Saint Xing asked authoritatively.

"There are rumors that our clan head went to the Jiang Clan yesterday... and shortly afterward, the Jiang Clan conducted an inauguration ceremony and established him as their clan head!"

"..." Sword Saint Xing.

"..." Sword Saint Meng.

Can anyone tell me what in the world is going on here?

The Jiang Clan and the Luo Clan has actually acknowledged someone from the Zhang Clan as their clan head...

Is there a pit in heads of those from the Jiang Clan too?

Could this be some kind of infectious disease among the upper echelons of the Master Teacher Continent? Maybe we should keep a lookout for it.

The Xingmeng Sword Saints fell into a state of confusion. They could understand the words individually, but when those

words were put together, it formed sentences that they simply could not comprehend.

And the fact was that the Xingmeng Sword Saints were not the only ones in state of confusion. Everyone in the Zhang Clan was flabbergasted upon hearing the news.

Startled expressions could be seen on the faces of the members of the Zhang Clan as the news swiftly made its way around.

Our clan head... sure is awesome!

To actually become the head of the Three Premier Clans... This was something completely unprecedented in history!

It also did not take long for the news to make its way to the Luo Clan, and everyone was dumbstruck to hear of the matter.

Luo Xuanqing was in the midst of cultivating the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing when he heard the news.

Putong!

He collapsed to the ground, and his eyes rolled up as he blacked out.

Can anyone tell me what in the freaking world just happened?

Didn't the clan head and the elders head over there to exact vengeance?

Is this what they meant by exacting vengeance?

...

“It's finally resolved!”

Oblivious to the uproar that he had just caused, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief and returned back to his room.

As long as the matter concerning the Luo Clan was not resolved, it would have remained a thorn by his side. Left with no choice, he could only summon his clone and put on an entire skit for the Luo Clan. This gave rise to the show that Luo Ganzhen and the others saw.

His actions could not be said to be honorable, but given the current circumstances of the world, he did not have the luxury to be picky with his means. As long as he could resolve the

conflict with the Luo Clan and have them willingly collaborate with the Zhang Clan and the Jiang Clan for the crisis ahead, everything would be worth it.

He had only gone out for an entire day, but he had managed to make massive gains.

He cultivated the Soul Quintessence, advanced his soul cultivation to the Aureate Body realm, forged the Ancient Sage corpse into a Soulless Metal Humanoid, collected another golden page, and most importantly of all, become the head of the other two Premier Clans...

It had truly been a fruitful day!

“Since I’m free at the moment, I should advance my Primordial Spirit to Aureate Body realm consummation!”

Taking a deep breath, he activated the formation around the room to keep away any prying eyes before releasing his Primordial Spirit once more.

After being tempered by the heavenly flame tribulation, his soul cultivation had successfully advanced to the Aureate Body realm. However, it was still some distance away from reaching consummation.

Since he had some time, it would be good for him to quickly do so. Otherwise, the massive gap between him and his clone would only slowly drown him in depression.

After all, how could the main body be weaker than the clone?

How undignified was it for the master to be outdone by the clone?

After taking out a couple of cultivation resources, Zhang Xuan’s Primordial Spirit began devouring spiritual energy furiously.

...

Four hours later...

His entire Primordial Spirit was gleaming with a golden sheen, as if it was made out of pure gold.

“I have finally reached consummation stage...” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up in excitement.

It was a little exhausting, but he had finally done it after four hours of hard work.

“With my soul cultivation and my zhenqi cultivation, even if I encounter an Intuitive Impulse realm cultivator, I will be able to triumph over him with ease. With the Dragonbone Divine Spear in hand, I would stand a chance even against a Sempiternal realm primary stage cultivator!”

Feeling the great power coursing through his body, Zhang Xuan smiled in delight.

Even though his Primordial Spirit was only at Aureate Body realm consummation, it had been tempered by the Saint Ascension Ordeal, lightning tribulations, and the Empyrean Heavenly Flame. In terms of fighting prowess, it was already on par with Intuitive Impulse realm cultivators!

With the Dragonbone Divine Spear in hand, he would be able to subdue even Sword Saint Xing in a direct confrontation!

“I’ll be able to protect myself with such strength!”

As powerful as the golden page was, it was ultimately a consumable tool. It would disappear after it was used. The Soulless Metal Humanoid that he had forged from the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage was formidable as well, but it was highly demanding on his soul energy, and his control over it was not as sharp as compared to moving his own body.

In the end, there was nothing more reliable than his own strength.

“Zhang Xuan!”

Just as Zhang Xuan returned his Primordial Spirit to his body, he suddenly heard a voice outside.

He quickly tore down the barrier and walked out of his room.

Luo Ruoxin was seated on one of the benches by the courtyard. Upon seeing him, her eyebrows shot up in astonishment.

“You have made a breakthrough in your cultivation?”

It was just a day of absence, but there was a visible difference in Zhang Xuan’s aura. It felt much deeper than before, making it difficult for one to gauge the depth of his strength in a single glance.

“I guess so!” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

“It’s good that you have made a breakthrough. I have to make a trip to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters to settle some matters, and I can bring you to the area where Kong shi left behind his superior breakthrough method,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“You are going to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters?” Zhang Xuan asked in surprise.

“Un. I can see great energy coursing from your body, and it’s on the verge of running amok. Without a doubt, it’s about time for you to raise your cultivation. This way, even if something happens, you will have the strength to cope, and I’ll...” Luo Ruoxin paused for a brief moment before saying, “... also be able to rest assured...”

“Un. It’s indeed about time for me to push for a breakthrough!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

The Innate Fetal Poison was simply too smug. He had to achieve a breakthrough as soon as possible and burn that fellow completely with the heavenly flame.

Otherwise, if that fellow suddenly lost its rationality and attempted something, he would really be a goner.

On top of that, if he achieved a breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation to Great Sage, there would surely be a surge in his fighting prowess once more. Paired together with his Aureate Body realm Primordial Spirit, even without Kong shi’s blood droplet, he would be able to defeat any cultivator beneath Ancient Sage!

In other words, even if he encountered the scholarly young man once more, he would be able to apprehend him and force him to spit out the whereabouts of Zhao Ya and the others.

The only consolation for him right now was that Zhao Ya and the others were not in any major danger. As the heads of major powers, they were bound to have soul lanterns. If something had truly happened to them, the Glacier Plain Court, the Poison Hall, and the Yuan Clan surely would have sent word over.

Nevertheless, the close ties between the Hundred Schools of Philosophers and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe left him feeling rather unnerved. He had to find out the reason behind this uncanny partnership as soon as possible so as to determine whether the Hundred Schools of Philosophers was an ally or an enemy.

“Let’s head off then!” Luo Ruoxin said with a chuckle.

“Alright!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He quickly called Sun Qiang over and delegated some matters to him before the both of them departed from the Zhang Clan.

Shortly after leaving the perimeter of the Zhang Clan, he suddenly recalled that adolescent boy and asked, “Oh right, will Wu Chen be coming along?”

Wu Chen had followed them to the Zhang Clan, but it did not seem like he had seen him around over the past day. Of course, he had also been busy during this period of time, so he was not one to speak.

“He had some matters to attend to, so he left earlier. We are heading to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters to find Kong shi’s superior breakthrough method, not to pick a fight with anyone. There won’t be any danger, so it won’t matter whether he’s around or not,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

“You’re right.” Zhang Xuan nodded before falling silent.

He quickly went through a map that he had collected into the Library of Heaven’s Path and located the whereabouts of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters. Following which, he flicked his wrist, and the Dragonbone Divine Spear flew into his hand.

“Break!”

With a thrust of his spear, a dimension rift was torn open, and a passageway appeared before them.

Zhang Xuan took the lead, and Luo Ruoxin followed closely behind him.

The next moment, the duo found themselves standing before a cluster of towering buildings that was reminiscent of the scale of a royal palace.

The Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters!



# 1660 Master Teacher Pavilion Headquarters

Despite the massive scale of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, its appearance could not be said to be extravagant. In fact, it might not even be on par with the royal palaces of some Conferred Empires.

Nevertheless, through the Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan could still see righteous aura suffusing the area, creating a dignified and solemn atmosphere. Even the most impetuous individual would feel compelled to hold himself prim and proper under such an atmosphere.

“It is called academic aura,” Luo Ruoxin said. “The Master Teacher Pavilion has been spreading its teachings across the Master Teacher Continent for tens of thousands of years, bringing wisdom to the masses. The academic aura of the world could be said to have congregated in this area. Due to that, it’s much easier to achieve a breakthrough cultivating here.”

“I see.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He had been a little perplexed to hear that Luo Ruoxin was able to ‘see’ the academic aura just like him, but he chose not to fuss over it. Instead, he proceeded into the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters together with her.

The area right before the entrance was a clearing. There was a towering monument standing at a height of over a hundred meters tall erected in the midst of the clearing, and the tip of the tablet seemed to pierce right into the clouds.

“Is this... the Master Teacher Pavilion’s Monument of Valiance?” Zhang Xuan’s expression suddenly turned solemn.

While he had never been before, he had read many books relating to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters. He knew that there was a Monument of Valiance erected in the empty

clearing just outside of its entrance. It was used to record the names of the heroes who had sacrificed themselves in the midst of liberating mankind from oppression.

There were no ornaments on the monument, but on the ground, there were a couple of flower baskets and incense sticks that left trails of smoke drifting into the boundless sky.

There were several massive words written on the monument that induced a heavy feeling in one even before approaching it. This was a feeling that came from the depths of one's soul, compelling even Great Sage cultivators to lower their heads deferentially.

“These names were all written by Kong shi personally. They are the names of the heroes who fought against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe back then.” Luo Ruoxin explained as she gazed upon the monument with an unreadable look in her eyes. “So many lives were lost in the conflict.”

“Indeed...” Zhang Xuan nodded solemnly. “Zhang Lingyuan, Chen Qiquan, Wu Lingzhi...”

They were just names—there were no labels to indicate their accomplishments or their standing. Yet, these names seemed to contain a soul of their own. They signified the burning spirits of those who had fought valiantly for freedom back in that tumultuous era. Their resolve was passed down from generation to generation, and even to this day, it still continued to motivate others to stand up bravely for themselves and their brethren.

“If not for their valiance, we wouldn't have the peace that we enjoy right now. Perhaps, we might still be under the oppression of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe...” Zhang Xuan nodded. “They are worthy of being deemed as heroes!”

The value of the monument lay not in Kong shi's writing but the spirit of those who had died struggling against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

After a short moment of silence, the two of them walked through the entrance and entered the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

Surprisingly, unlike other Master Teacher Pavilions or occupation guilds, there was no one on guard to stop them.

Seeing through Zhang Xuan's thoughts, Luo Ruoxin explained with a slight smile, "This is the headquarters of the greatest power on the Master Teacher Continent. Unless one's tired of living, who'll dare wreak havoc here?"

The reason the other Master Teacher Pavilion branches and occupation guilds needed guards was because they feared troublemakers. However, even the most willful of troublemakers wouldn't dare to pick a fight with the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters!

Since that was the case, there was no point in wasting manpower to put up guards.

"You're right!" Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

The academic aura grew significantly stronger upon entering the premises. It seemed to rid one of the feelings of worry, frustration, and such, thus bringing about greater clarity of mind. Luo Ruoxin was right. Not only would it be much more effective cultivating here, the chances of breeding inner demons would be significantly lower as well.

With knowledge comes the wisdom to overcome inner demons!

"Esteemed guests, welcome to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters. If you have any contacts you are looking for, I can help you relay the news of your arrival to them!" a young man said after walking over.

Taking a look at the emblem pinned on his chest, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up in surprise.

Even though the young man appeared to be in his early twenties, he was actually a 7-star master teacher!

To think that a 7-star master teacher would be serving as a receptionist... This was an extravagance that he would have never dared think of!

As expected of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters!

“I’m looking for Ren shi, Ren Qingyuan!” Zhang Xuan replied.

Since he was there to look for Kong shi’s heritage, it would be much more convenient if he could seek the assistance of the deputy pavilion master.

“You are looking for Ren shi?” the young man asked.

Zhang Xuan could vaguely see from the depths of the young man’s eyes that he was slightly startled by the request, but those emotions did not surface on his face. Instead, the young man continued asking politely, “May I know how I should address you? Ah, please don’t misunderstand. It’s in order to inform our deputy pavilion master the identity of his guest!”

“I am Zhang Xuan,” Zhang Xuan replied.

“Zhang Xuan? You are Zhang Xuan?” Despite being calm all this while, the young man jolted in shock upon hearing that name. His voice abruptly grew sharper, seemingly unable to believe what he had just heard.

His voice had been a little loud, causing the crowd in the surroundings to overhear their conversation. Curious gazes began gathering on them.

“He’s Zhang Xuan?”

“After hearing of his deeds, I thought that he would have three heads and six arms, but he looks more ordinary than I thought!”

“Ordinary is an understatement. Even his appearance is nothing outstanding. His looks don’t even come close to matching mine!”

“I sure pity you. To think that you would become blind at such a young age...”

...

Such discussions could be heard in the surroundings.

Zhang Xuan did not expect to enjoy such great fame in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, and his face twitched slightly upon hearing the chatter around him. Taking a deep

breath, he focused his attention of the young man before him and clasped his fist. "I'll be troubling you then!"

"Oh... Oh! This way please, Zhang shi!"

The young man quickly shook out of his daze and led the way forward. As he made his way over toward Ren shi's office, he could not help but wonder... I heard that this fellow is a vicious figure. Would he pummel me due to my momentary discourtesy?

But I'm only a 7-star master teacher. There's no way I could be a match for him!

If he really wishes to make a move on me, should I lie down and let him do as he pleases, or should I at least try to put up a fight before being pummeled?

Ahh, what a dilemma!

Just what can I do in order to minimize my embarrassment while appearing awe-inspiring?

In a sense, it's an amazing feat to survive the beating of the legendary Zhang Xuan, right? Perhaps, I might just be able to win the heart of the woman I love once she hears of this deed!

Just like that, the young man's thoughts drifted further and further.

If Zhang Xuan knew of the thoughts of the fellow before him, he would have surely sent him flying with a single kick.

I am a peace-loving, amiable, respectful, self-loving, magnanimous, low-profile person, alright? Just how in the world did you come to the conclusion that I'm a violent man who kicks up a fuss over nothing?

...

Putting aside their miscellaneous thoughts, it did not take long for them to arrive before a massive door.

"Our deputy pavilion master is inside. I'll see you off here then..." Seeing that Zhang Xuan did not make a move on him, a hint of disappointment surfaced in the depths of the eyes of

the young man. Nevertheless, his actions still remained incredibly polite.

“Don’t you have to report my arrival?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

“Zhang shi, you are the head of the Zhang Clan and the Sanctum of Sages. There’s no need for you to report your arrival in order to meet the deputy pavilion master!” the young man replied courteously.

In terms of standing, Zhang Xuan could be considered an equal to Ren shi. Naturally, there was no need for him to go to the trouble of seeking an audience.

“Thank you for your help!” Zhang Xuan told the young man before pushing open the door and walking in.

The moment he stepped into the room, he immediately noticed that something was amiss.

There were many familiar faces within the room. Many of the 9-star master teachers that he had met back in the Empire Alliance City were there, and there was quite a number of renowned experts as well.

At the same time, the crowd also turned their heads over to the door and were taken aback by whom they saw.

“Zhang shi, you came at a timely moment. I was just about to look for you!” The first one to recover was Ren shi, and he quickly cleared up the air with a light chuckle. “You have comprehended the Spatial, Time, and Soul Quintessences, and your cultivation has reached Saint 9-dan pinnacle as well. Even though you haven’t met the formal requirements required to be a 9-star master teacher, you are already qualified to apply for a 9-star master teacher emblem. Since everyone is around today, why don’t we carry out your 9-star master teacher examination right now?”

“You are asking me to take the 9-star master teacher examination right now?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback. He did not expect Ren shi to raise such a matter all of a sudden. “I’m afraid that I’m not prepared for it yet. I didn’t even brush my

teeth after waking up earlier today, so it might not really be a good idea for me to take the examination right now...”

# 1661 9-star Master Teacher

It was not that Zhang Xuan was reluctant to become a 9-star master teacher, but he really was not prepared for it yet.

The reason why he had come here was to find Kong shi's superior breakthrough method and advance his cultivation to Great Sage 1-dan. He did not think that Ren shi would ask him to undergo the 9-star master teacher examination as soon as they met...

Anyone in his position would be dazed.

"I have checked your supporting occupations, and your proficiencies have already reached levels comparable to the Inceptive Sages. With your capabilities and talents, I don't think that you'll face any trouble in the examination. It's just a matter of when you want to do it!" Ren shi remarked with a smile.

He had witnessed the prowess of the young man with his own eyes. Be it in the impartation of knowledge, his cultivation, or his capabilities in other fields, they could be said to be impeccable. It was inevitable that he would become a 9-star master teacher! In his view, there was no reason to put off the inevitable.

Furthermore, this invitation could also be viewed as a symbol of goodwill and a desire for reconciliation from the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

"This... Alright then. May I know how the 9-star master teacher examination goes?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Since Ren shi had already put it out like that, there was no need for Zhang Xuan to hesitate too much.

He would eventually take the 9-star master teacher examination anyway, so there was no reason for him to put it off.

Given that Ren shi had already given him such an offer, he might as well get it over and done with.



Just that... the process seemed a little too informal for something as important as the 9-star master teacher examination. It was almost as if it was no big deal at all!

“Typically speaking, the 9-star master teacher examination requires the examinee to declare his philosophy of pedagogy and find a way to ascertain its effectiveness... However, just the fact that you are able to raise disciples like Wang Ying, Zheng Yang, Zhao Ya, and the others is more than enough to prove the feasibility of your philosophy of pedagogy. As such, there’s no need to go through the trouble of examining that!” Ren shi explained.

9-star master teachers had to have their own set of values and principles that they believed in when it came to teaching their students. While he was uncertain what Zhang Xuan’s values and principles were, the fact that he had been able to raise so many outstanding students was more than enough to show that his philosophy was effective.

“Aside from that, your Soul Depth must also reach 27, and you must be nominated by at least three 9-star master teachers. You have met the requirements for those two as well, so the only segment remaining is the trial of strength!

“In the interest of time, let’s not make things too complicated. Wang shi, lower your cultivation down to Introspective Convalescence realm primary stage and exchange blows with Zhang shi!” Ren shi instructed.

“Alright!”

An elder known as Wang shi walked out from the crowd. He took in a deep breath, and the next moment, his aura swiftly weakened. In the blink of an eye, his cultivation had already been suppressed down to Introspective Convalescence realm primary stage.

His true cultivation was only at Introspective Convalescence realm advanced stage, so it was not too difficult for him to suppress his cultivation. With a smile, he turned to Zhang Xuan and said, “Zhang shi, be wary. Since it’s an examination, I won’t be able to go easy on you!”

“I expect nothing less!” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

Seeing that Wang shi was already prepared, Zhang Xuan swiftly sent a fist over.

With a loud roar, Wang shi also retaliated with a fist of his own.

Peng!

Sou!

Ahhhhh!

Wang shi vanished into thin air.

“This...”

The master teachers in the room froze on the spot.

Was this really the prowess coming from a Saint 9-dan cultivator?

Even if they were the ones facing the attack, they did not have any confidence that they would be able to fare any better than Wang shi!

“Even though your cultivation hasn’t reached Great Sage yet, the fact that you were able to defeat Wang shi shows that your fighting prowess is already up to par... Liu shi, prepare the 9-star master teacher emblem. From today, Zhang shi is a 9-star master teacher too!” Ren shi nodded with a smile.

“That’s it?” Zhang Xuan was rendered speechless.

Everything had happened so quickly that he could hardly believe that this was real.

Were it not the fact that he knew that he was in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters and that the person standing before him was the deputy pavilion master, he would have thought that he was being scammed by a fraudster.

Within half an hour of entering the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, he had sent a person flying, and all of a sudden, he was being congratulated for becoming a 9-star master teacher...

Even the 1-star master teacher examination that he had taken back then had not been this easy!

If this was going to be the case, why did he even go through the trouble of advancing through the ranks? He could have just taken the 9-star master teacher examination right away and cleared everything in one go!

“Since you have officially become a 9-star master teacher, you are qualified to attend this meeting...” Paying no heed to the speechless expression on Zhang Xuan’s face, Ren shi carried on with a grim look on his face.

Knowing that the matters that they were going to confer about were confidential, Luo Ruoxin turned to Zhang Xuan and said, “I’ll wait for you outside.”

After which, she departed from the room.

Knowing that Ren shi and the others would not allow an outsider to listen in on the meeting, Zhang Xuan did not stop her.

Instead, he directed a questioning gaze at Ren Qingyuan and asked, “What is the purpose of this meeting for you to be in such a hurry?”

By this point, he had also realized that the reason Ren shi and the others were so eager to have him promoted to 9-star master teacher was so that he would have the clearance to attend this meeting.

“It’s the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe... They have just launched a mass invasion on the Master Teacher Continent!” Ren Qingyuan said with a deep frown.

“The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has just launched a mass invasion?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

A 9-star master teacher whom Zhang Xuan had met before walked to the wall and pointed to a map pinned on it.

It was a full map of the Master Teacher Continent, and there were many red dots marked on the map.

“There is a total of 108 major Subterranean Galleries linked to the otherworldly battlefields across the Master Teacher

Continent, and just a moment ago, we spotted movements in all of them concurrently. The attack has come so abruptly that the Master Teacher Pavilion and Combat Master Hall's personnel stationed there are having trouble holding the fort," the 9-star master teacher said.

"108 Subterranean Galleries?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He knew that there would be quite a number of Subterranean Galleries across the Master Teacher Continent, but he did not think that there would be so many of them.

If the Otherworldly Demons spilled out from all of them simultaneously, even with the prowess of the Master Teacher Pavilion, they would have trouble curbing them.

"What in the world is going on?" Zhang Xuan questioned anxiously.

"I'm unsure of the details either. Everything happened too quickly for us to process what's going on. It started from a minor invasion in some of the Subterranean Galleries a day ago. It was still within a scale that we could cope with, so we were intending to handle it internally within the Master Teacher Pavilion. However, the scale of the invasion swiftly grew larger, and before we knew it, some of the seals are starting to be worn down. Many master teachers have already been injured!" Ren shi said.

"Has an invasion of such a scale ever happened before?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"It has happened before but never concurrently in all 108 major Subterranean Galleries!" Ren shi shook his head. "The Master Teacher Pavilion has already dispatched nearly all of the available 9-star master teachers we have, but it still isn't sufficient to ward off the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. At this rate, it's likely that all of the seals will be breached within ten days, thus giving rise to a large-scale invasion on the Master Teacher Continent!"

"Ten days?" Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly.

He did not expect time to be so tight.

It was true that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was in an advantageous position at the moment, but a forceful, frontal assault like this would cause calamitous losses for them too! Time was currently on the side of the Otherworldly Demons. The longer they bided their time, the fewer Ancient Sages mankind would have to deal with them.

Given that they had already waited for tens of thousands of years, surely they would be willing to wait a little longer to minimize their losses.

It was irrational for the Otherworldly Demons to go on a rampage at this point in time!

Or could it be...

A thought came to Zhang Xuan's mind, and he hurriedly asked, "Does this matter have anything to do with the imminent appearance of the Temple of Confucius?"

Other than this, he could not think of any other reason for the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe launching such a reckless assault on mankind all of a sudden.

"The disturbances in the space around the Temple of Confucius are growing stronger and stronger. It's likely that the Temple of Confucius will surface very soon. We've had to station most of our 9-star master teachers there in order to prevent any Otherworldly Demons from slipping in, so we don't really have sufficient manpower to deal with the invasion at the 108 Subterranean Galleries at the moment... I believe that the Zhang Clan and the other powers should have received word regarding the invasion by now, and we would like to formally request your help in quelling the Otherworldly Demons!"

With an expectant look in his eyes, Ren shi looked at Zhang Xuan solemnly and said, "The circumstances are really not in our favor at the moment. Mankind has to unite as one in order to survive this crisis!"

"This..."

Zhang Xuan finally understood why Ren shi and the others were in such a hurry to promote him to a 9-star master teacher.

As a 9-star master teacher, one of the top experts of the Master Teacher Continent, he had an indisputable responsibility to protect mankind in times of adversity! Clearly, Ren shi and the others had already heard of the news that he had become the head of the Three Premier Clans and wanted to rope him onto this warship.

After all, the Three Premier Clans, the Glacier Plain Court, the Poison Hall... Those powers combined together formed a force sufficient to dictate the fate of the entire Master Teacher Continent!

Not even the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would dare underestimate the might of this force.

Otherwise, they would not have deferred to those powers back then at Empire Alliance City either.

Without much hesitation, Zhang Xuan nodded gravely in response. "For mankind, there's nothing I can't do!"

# 1662 Shrine of Kong shi

Zhang Xuan could not be said to be a noble and selfless individual. He was selfish from time to time, and the initial reason that he became a master teacher was not to save mankind but to make use of that identity to access more books... However, there were times when one simply could not back down.

If mankind was massacred, what use would his strength be?

He was no longer the same individual as when he first transcended over to this world. He had his family and his students. The Luo Clan and the Jiang clan were looking to him for directions. There were many people in this world whom he wanted to protect.

In fact, the reason he was so determined to mend the relations between the Luo Clan and the Zhang Clan was for this purpose.

Since the threat of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was already on their doorstep, there was no way he would back down at this point in time.

“It’s truly reassuring to have you as our ally!”

Hearing Zhang Xuan’s agreement, relief broke out on Ren Qingyuan and the other 9-star master teachers’ faces.

They had been wondering how they could talk Zhang Xuan into the matter, but who would have thought that he would accept it so decisively?

“I’ll send out an order to have the Three Premier Clans heed the Master Teacher Pavilion’s directive right now!” Zhang Xuan replied.

Watching as Zhang Xuan relayed his instructions to the Three Premier Clans without stalling for time, Ren Qingyuan quickly turned his attention back to the 9-star master teachers and issued several strategic commands before dispersing the group.

Having acquired the assistance of the Three Premier Clans, Ren Qingyuan knew that they would be able to curb the threat of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe for the time being.

Heaving a sigh of relief, he finally turned his gaze back to Zhang Xuan and asked, “Zhang shi, sorry to keep you waiting. May I know the reason behind your visit to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters?”

When he first heard the name of the young man, he had been nothing more than an insignificant figure who had chosen to pass himself off as Yang shi’s student. But before he knew it, the young man had already become a powerhouse whose influence rivaled or even exceeded his.

So many things had happened over the past month, and nearly everything was centered around him. As long as the young man did not suffer a premature death, it was likely that he would surpass Yang shi in the future.

“To be honest, I have a favor to ask of you.” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist. “I would like to pay a visit to the Shrine of Kong shi!”

On their way there, Luo Ruoxin had told him that it was likely that Kong shi’s superior breakthrough method would be placed in the Shrine of Kong shi.

The Shrine of Kong shi was a heritage site constructed after the departure of Kong shi in order to celebrate his achievements. It contained his personal writing, clothes, and personal possessions.

“I was still wondering what you were going to ask for. All newly promoted 9-star master teachers have to pay a visit to the Shrine of Kong shi as a part of the formalities, so it goes without saying that you are allowed to enter the Shrine of Kong shi! Allow me to bring you over right now!” Upon hearing the request, Ren Qingyuan chuckled softly and said.

“It’s fine. At a time like this, you probably have a lot of urgent matters to attend to, so I shan’t impose on you. However, if I may boldly request, I would like to bring Ruoxin with me into the Shrine of Kong shi,” Zhang Xuan said.



The superior breakthrough method was bound to be hidden in an inconspicuous location, so he might require Luo Ruoxin's help on that. On top of that, if Ren Qingyuan followed along, it could hinder his search efforts.

"This..." Ren Qingyuan frowned upon hearing the request. He pondered for a moment before saying, "By convention, only 9-star master teachers are allowed to enter the Shrine of Kong shi, and newly promoted 9-star master teachers have to be accompanied by a more senior master teacher in... But on account of your contributions to mankind, I'll make an exception for you. However, I'll still have to ask you not to stay in the Shrine of Kong shi for too long, roughly a day at maximum!"

"Thank you!" Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up upon hearing those words, and he quickly clasped his fist in gratitude.

As the Shrine of Kong shi contained Kong shi's personal writings and possessions, just being in the vicinity of the shrine was highly beneficial to one's cultivation. Those who had entered the premises were likely to leave with new insights or considerable advancements in their cultivation. As such, it was not rare for 9-star master teachers to frequent the place...

However, it was unsaid of for a non-master teacher individual to enter the premises and even stay an entire day there.

It truly was not easy for Ren Qingyuan to give such leeway to him.

"I'll head over right now!" Zhang Xuan said.

After receiving Ren Qingyuan's approval, Zhang Xuan clarified the location of the Shrine of Kong shi before walking out of the room. He quickly found Luo Ruoxin, and the two of them began making their way over to their destination.

The Shrine of Kong shi was founded by Kong shi's direct disciple, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, after his departure. Many of his handwritten drafts, clothes, weapons, and the sort could be found in the shrine. The main purpose for creating the shrine

was to allow later generations to feel the spirit of the World's Teacher and experience his greatness.

Many of the artifacts within the Shrine of Kong shi were not offensive in nature, wielding very little prowess. However, they were able to inspire deeper contemplation to cultivators, bringing them epiphanies.

Walking along the shrine, they saw the bloodied robe that Kong shi had left behind while fending off the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, the letter that he had sent out after being trapped at Chen Cai... Zhang Xuan found himself at a loss for words for a very long time.

Even someone as powerful as Kong shi had to go through so much in order to quell the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

After taking a walk around the room, Luo Ruoxin finally stopped before a certain artifact and pointed to it.

“This is the Sage Ascension Platform that Kong shi left behind after his breakthrough to Introspective Convalescence realm back then. If he has left a cultivation technique behind, it's likely to be hidden in there.”

Zhang Xuan quickly turned his gaze over and saw a round stone platform placed among the artifacts. Its surface was cloaked with a layer of beautiful light, reminiscent of jadeite.

“This is... a product from the heavenly flame tribulation?”  
Zhang Xuan remarked in astonishment.

There was no doubt that the material of the stone platform was the common blue jadestone. However, for some reason, it felt extraordinarily wholesome, as if it was one complete entity by itself. Furthermore, it emanated a radiant sheen far beyond that of ordinary blue jadestones, comparable to impeccable jadestones.

The only force in the world that could turn an ordinary blue jadestone into an impeccable jadestone would be the heavenly flame.

More importantly, his Primordial Spirit felt a feeling of intimacy from the blue jadestone, which further confirmed his doubts.

“It’s indeed the doing of the heavenly flame!” Luo Ruoxin nodded.

After confirming the matter, Zhang Xuan activated the Eye of Insight and began examining the stone platform carefully. A moment later, a deep frown formed on his forehead.

He had already figured out how the heavenly flame had converted an ordinary blue jade stone into its current state, but he was still completely bewildered as to how Kong shi managed to summon the heavenly flame tribulation for his breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan.

There was nothing that he could consider a clue on the stone platform.

Zhang Xuan turned to Luo Ruoxin and asked doubtfully, “If the superior breakthrough method is truly hidden in here, considering how many formidable 9-star master teachers have looked at this stone platform, its secrets should have already been uncovered by now, right?”

Master teachers were known for their sharp eye of discernment. While his Eye of Insight was particularly formidable in this field, there were still over a dozen experts before him who possessed the same ability as well, namely the preceding sanctum heads of the Sanctum of Sages.

If even they could not find anything wrong with the stone platform, was there really a cultivation technique hidden in it?

“Did you bring the Saint Ascension Platform Kong shi has left behind with you?” Instead of explaining the matter, Luo Ruoxin asked about a completely different matter instead.

“... I did!”

Zhang Xuan flicked his wrist, and another stone platform materialized before him.

Before passing the orb containing the Qiu Wu Palace to Luo Ganzhen, he had already placed the Saint Ascension Platform into his storage ring.

“Try using the cultivation technique of the Saint Ascension Decipher to infuse your zhenqi into the Saint Ascension

Platform,” Luo Ruoxin instructed.

Zhang Xuan was not sure where this was going, but he nodded in agreement. Taking a deep breath, he swiftly infused his zhenqi into the Saint Ascension Platform.

Tzzzzzzz!

As his zhenqi coursed through the Saint Ascension Platform, it began emanating energies of a myriad different colors and slowly floated into the air. At the same time, as if attracted by the energies of the Saint Ascension Platform, the Sage Ascension Platform was drawn over.

The two stone platforms began fusing with one another, and before long, they were already a single entity.

“This...” Zhang Xuan was startled.

He did not think that the two stone platforms would actually be able to fuse with one another.

Weng!

Just as he was about to ask Luo Ruoxin what was going on, a brilliant burst of light exploded from the stone platform. An illusory black silhouette appeared in the midst of the radiant surroundings, sitting on the stone platform with cross legs, his eyes tightly shut.

“This is the recording Kong shi left behind when he made a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan. The breakthrough method is found in here!” Luo Ruoxin’s voice sounded anxious.

# 1663 Kong shi's Cultivation Technique

“Recording?”

Taking a closer look, Zhang Xuan noticed that the silhouette was cultivating. Surges of spiritual energy were gushing into his body, circulating in a certain pathway.

“This is... Kong shi?” Zhang Xuan's face twitched.

Rather than a human, the silhouette looked more like a burnt sweet potato instead. If not for Luo Ruoxin's reminder, he would not have thought that it was a human... Was this blurred black thing really Kong shi?

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was distracted by such small details, Luo Ruoxin sighed helplessly. “The recording will only appear once. It's only triggered due to your successful breakthrough as a Celestial Saint. This opportunity won't come again if you don't pay close attention.”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan hurriedly focused his attention on watching the movements of the black shadow.

Since it would only appear once, he would have to pay close attention to it. Otherwise, if he missed any crucial aspects, it would be too late for regrets.

Flaws! Zhang Xuan willed.

Hula!

The Library of Heaven's Path jolted, but no book was compiled.

Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up.

It had failed him at the crucial moment once more...

Of course, it could be because Kong shi possessed the Discarnate Constitution of Divination as well, so the silhouette

that he left behind could not be compiled by the Library of Heaven's Path.

Forget it, I'll just have to remember as many things as possible by myself!

Seeing that the Library of Heaven's Path was not working, Zhang Xuan could only observe the movements of the silhouette before him seriously.

Sitting on the stone platform, spiritual energy continuously surged into the silhouette, and its aura was growing stronger and stronger.

After a moment of examination, Zhang Xuan frowned.

There is something bizarre about how spiritual energy is entering the body of the silhouette...

When pushing for a breakthrough, cultivators would usually open all of their acupoints to take in spiritual energy equally throughout their body so as to better channel it toward the dantian, thus advancing their cultivation.

However, this was not the case for the silhouette. He was taking in spiritual energy fastest from his head, followed by his innards, and finally his limbs. Furthermore, the attributes of the spiritual energy that he was taking in were different too.

The spiritual energy that he was channeling into his head was overflowing with vitality, seemingly encompassing all attributes. On the other hand, the spiritual energy that he was channeling into his innards was of the fire attribute, the wood attribute for his upper limbs, and the cold attribute for his lower limbs.

Noticing Zhang Xuan's confused frown, Luo Ruoxin explained, "It's the four seasons."

"Four seasons?" Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

"The world can be divided into four seasons. People often say that the natural world is devoid of consciousness, but it does instinctively obey a certain law in order to rid the impurities it has accumulated. For example, a poison master can concoct a poisonous substance and scatter it around the lands, creating a

blight. But with sufficient time, the world will still be able to neutralize the poison through the power of the changing seasons, thus healing the damage it has sustained,” Luo Ruoxin elaborated.

“So, this is similar to removing the damaged cells in the Introspective Convalescence realm?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

The natural world wielded the amazing power to heal any damage it had sustained with time, no matter how severe it was. It could take hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of years, but eventually, any damage would be undone, leaving nary a trace at all.

So, in terms of regeneration, there was nothing that could outdo the natural forces of the world. Not even Ancient Sages could come close to competing with it.

Zhang Xuan nodded in wonderment. What Kong shi did was comprehend the ingenuity behind the four seasons and incorporate it into his body in order to achieve a breakthrough to the Introspective Convalescence realm...

As expected of the World’s Teacher, he was truly extraordinary!

It was no wonder he was able to summon the heavenly flame tribulation as soon as he achieved a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan. Using a cultivation technique that was in such close alignment with the world, it was inevitable that he would incur the envy of the heavens.

The body as the four seasons, the innards as the five cardinal directions[1], the spirit as the heavens, the body as the earth, the creations and Yin-Yang as the soul...

The more Zhang Xuan looked, the more surprised he was. He slowly sat down and began to cultivate. The bottleneck that had limited his cultivation tightly in the past began to loosen, and it seemed as if he would take the final step forward at any moment.

Just as Zhang Xuan was just about to push for a breakthrough, a thought suddenly came to his mind. No, that’s not right...

Kong shi has his own method of pushing for a breakthrough to Great Sage, but I don't share the same constitution as him. I can use his wisdom as a guiding direction for me, but I can't blindly imitate everything that he does...

Kong shi had spent his life fighting against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, and he had his own persistence and righteousness. On the other hand, Zhang Xuan had his own encounters and experiences that were very different from Kong shi's. With such divergence in their pathways, their cultivation method could not be identical to one another. If Zhang Xuan forcefully attempted to walk down the pathway of another, it was likely that his cultivation would go berserk instead.

Possessing the Library of Heaven's Path, the techniques I have cultivated have always been perfect. In terms of comprehension of the heavens, there's no one who can compete with me... Zhang Xuan thought with a brilliant light gleaming from his eyes.

Ever since he started cultivating, he had never taken a single wrong step. Other cultivators could devote their lives to desperately scouring the world, but all they would discover eventually was just a superficial understanding of the world. On the other hand, what he had in his mind was the very embodiment of the heavens!

Was there any being in this world who boasted a greater understanding of the world than him?

Fighter cultivation techniques, Transcendent Mortal cultivation techniques, Saint cultivation techniques...

As his comprehension of each cultivation level flowed through his brain, they swiftly strung together to form a magnificent collage.

This is what I want! Zhang Xuan thought as his consciousness delved right into the collage.

The next moment, he found himself standing in uncharted territories, a world that he had never known before.

Boom!



The bottleneck that had his cultivation sealed at Saint 9-dan pinnacle was forcefully torn apart, and his zhenqi began undergoing a qualitative metamorphosis. At the same time, his aura also grew stronger at a furious pace.

I have made a breakthrough! So, this is the power of a true Great Sage...

Feeling the incredible energy coursing through his meridians, Zhang Xuan's heart pounded in excitement.

It was fortunate that Luo Ruoxin had stopped him from making a breakthrough previously. If he had used the inferior breakthrough method instead, he would have been much weaker than how he was now.

Huhuhu!

Shortly after his breakthrough, dark clouds began collapsing inward. An astounding amount of energy was gathering in the area, shrouding the entire Shrine of Kong shi.

“What’s happening?”

“That fellow couldn’t have made a breakthrough there, could he?”

“Sh\*t! That’s the Shrine of Kong shi!”

...

Upon seeing the dark clouds gathering in the area, the faces of those in the Master Teacher Pavilion paled in fright. They nearly spurted blood on the spot.

Bro, surely you could have chosen a much better place to achieve a breakthrough, right?

That’s the Shrine of Kong shi! Do you know that destroying it is no different from making enemies out of all the master teachers across the Master Teacher Continent? That’s a sin you’ll never be able to absolve yourself from!

“Quick, stop him!” Ren Qingyuan cried out in despair.

Had he known that this would happen, he never would have allowed that dastardly troublemaker in!

Other 9-star master teachers entering the Shrine of Kong shi would have their souls cleansed, becoming powerful experts who were willing to lay down their lives for mankind. Yet, that fellow actually went in and called a cultivation tribulation upon that sacred place...

It was already bad enough for him to use his cultivation tribulation to tear apart the Zhang Clan and the Glacier Plain Court... but to think that he was not satisfied with just that!

He actually wanted to tear down the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters' Shrine of Kong shi too!

Didn't I treat you courteously earlier? Why do you still want to harm me? Haven't I apologized enough for what I did to you back then?

While cursing Zhang Xuan on the inside, Ren Qingyuan rushed to the Shrine of Kong shi with the other elders. Just as he was about to rush in, he felt a furious wave of intense heat gushing out from the shrine, keeping everyone out.

Ren Qingyuan grabbed one of the 9-star master teachers and asked, "What's going on right now?"

"The Shrine of Kong shi is surrounded by a unique power that prevents us from inspecting inside with our Spiritual Perception, so we have no idea..." the 9-star master teacher hurriedly explained.

"A unique power? It's able to keep out the Spiritual Perception of 9-star master teachers too?" Ren Qingyuan was taken aback.

[1] There should only be four cardinal directions, but this is including the idea of 'center' too.

# 1664 Eradicating the Innate Fetal Poison 1

Even the weakest 9-star master teacher who remained in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters was at least at Introspective Convalescence realm primary stage. On the other hand, the strongest ones were around Sword Saint Xing's caliber.

Yet, with their strength, they were neither able to enter the Shrine of Kong shi or inspect the interiors with their Spiritual Perception... Just what in the world was going on inside?

My ancestor, will you only be appeased after you tear down the Shrine of Kong shi too?

Boom!

In his moment of exasperation, he saw ominous clouds overflowing with power gathering swiftly in the area. Ferocious flames could be seen crackling amidst the clouds, on the verge of descending onto the world at any moment.

"Is this... the heavenly flame tribulation?"

"But why would the flames be black in color?"

"Isn't he only at Saint 9-dan pinnacle? How did he summon such a powerful cultivation ordeal?"

"I don't know either! Maybe... it's because he's a genius?"

...

The crowd was stunned to see the nature of the clouds gathering in the area.

They had verified Zhang Xuan's cultivation when they tested him during the '9-star master teacher examination' earlier. There was no doubt about it, he was only at Saint 9-dan pinnacle. Even if he managed to achieve a breakthrough, he should have only been at Introspective Convalescence realm too...

But for some inconceivable reason, the cultivation ordeal he had summoned was the heavenly flame tribulation, not to mention an extraordinarily powerful one at that...

How the heck did you do it? Did you just absorb all of the treasures in the Shrine of Kong shi?

A thought suddenly flashed across Ren Qingyuan's mind, and his body began trembling uncontrollably. He exclaimed in horror, "Wait a moment... That's the Empyrean Heavenly Flame! It's the strongest heavenly flame tribulation!"

Black heavenly flames—this was a phenomenon which even the knowledgeable 9-star master teachers gathered here had never heard of. Even Ren Qingyuan only knew of its existence through vague information detailing its existence in the Pavilion Master Seal.

The Empyrean Heavenly Flame existed in the color of dusk, and there was nothing in the world that it couldn't set ablaze. If left to free rein, there was little doubt that it would scorch down everything in the world. It was the most fearsome heavenly flame tribulation, and the only cultivator that was known to have summoned it was Kong shi.

Was the young man undergoing an encounter similar to that of Kong shi?

Did he manage to find some kind of obscure heritage hidden in the Shrine of Kong shi which they have missed out on?

But even if there was some hidden heritage, it didn't make sense for the young man to find it so quickly!

"Seal the news for the time being. Make sure that not a single word about this matter leaks out!" Ren Qingyuan turned to the elders around him and ordered sternly.

Regardless of whether Zhang Xuan was able to survive the heavenly flame tribulation or not, it wasn't good news for the Master Teacher Pavilion.

If he were to survive the heavenly flame tribulation, it would mean that an expert comparable to Kong shi had appeared on the world. With the Zhang Clan and many major powers under

his leadership, the authority of the Master Teacher Pavilion would be swiftly diminished in the near future.

On the other hand, if he were to die in the tribulation... How were they to explain to the Zhang Clan, the Luo Clan, and the Jiang Clan that their head had died in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters?

For the time being, the only thing they could do was to conceal the news as long as they could. The Three Premier Clans had barely united together under Zhang Xuan, and it was through tapping into the young man's influence that the Master Teacher Pavilion was able to mobilize the Three Premier Clans. If a mishap were to happen to the young man at this point in time, everything could swiftly unravel.

Faced with internal disharmony and external crisis, even the powerful Master Teacher Pavilion would collapse in the face of such pressure!

“We understand...”

Understanding the implications of this matter, the 9-star master teachers quickly created all sorts of formations around the area to conceal the phenomenon.

...

Unaware of the panic occurring outside, Zhang Xuan's consciousness was immersed in the internal state of his body. He was carefully discerning the changes occurring in his body.

Slowly, he reconstructed the foundation of his body to a form that was in greater alignment with nature, thus allowing his energies to flow without any impediment. This resulted in a significant enhancement in his burst power.

There are some changes to my meridian network as well. It's starting to bear some resemblance to the meridian network I have reconstructed for Zhao Ya back then...

The breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation had introduced several changes to the mapping of his meridians too. His meridians had been shifted to assume a form reminiscent of Zhao Ya's meridian network.

It seemed like the meridian network he had reconstructed for Zhao Ya was indeed ideal for cultivators.

To put it in other words, this proved that the reason why the Otherworldly Demons were stronger than humans was because they were of a higher level of existence. Otherwise, their meridian network wouldn't have been so closely aligned to the ideal state.

It was possible to raise one's level of existence through cultivation, but the difference in the starting point was still a gap that was hard to bridge. Take the Dragon Tribe for example, no one in the Master Teacher Continent had ever seen a true Pureblooded Dragon before, but there was no one who would deny that they were superior existences who wielded devastating strength,

Even the Dragonbone Divine Spear would have to bow in the face of the Eight Notes of Heavenly Dragon. Honestly, Zhang Xuan couldn't even begin to fathom just how powerful Pureblooded Dragons would be. Most likely, they wielded strength far surpassing the Ancient Sages from birth.

This was the gap stemming from the different level of existences between two beings.

It was due to the fact that the Otherworldly Demons were blessed with a more logical constitution than humans that they were of a higher level of existence. This superior constitution allowed them to be born as Transcendent Mortals, and it bestowed upon them longevity far exceeding that of humans.

The fact that his constitution had changed slightly upon reaching Great sage meant that he had undergone a qualitative evolution in his level of existence.

If he were to bear any offspring in his current state, even if his offspring failed to inherit his bloodline ability, they would still command talents above ordinary cultivators due to their superior constitution.

In fact, most of the founders of Tier-3 Sage Clans were actually Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm experts who failed to reach Ancient Sage in their lifetime.

It seems like there are some advancements in my Spiritual Perception and physical strength too!

The changes weren't limited to just Zhang Xuan's meridian network. His Spiritual Perception had grown much stronger than before too. In the past, it would have been impossible for him to scrutinize the internal structure of each individual cell, but with his enhanced Spiritual Perception, he could see even the slightest crease within each cell.

At the same time, the range of his Spiritual Perception had increased to twenty li as well.

In other words, if he were to just activate his Spiritual Perception, nothing within a perimeter of twenty li would be able to escape his notice. Just by activating his Spiritual Perception, there would be no one within a perimeter of twenty li who would be able to escape his notice.

As for his physical body, the improvements weren't significant yet, considering how he had barely achieved a breakthrough and hadn't gotten a chance to temper his body yet.

Nevertheless, through the nourishment of the zhenqi coursing through his meridians, the resilience of his physical body had already surpassed that of Saint Pinnacle artifacts. It was beginning to advance toward the level of Great Sage artifacts.

Of course, the greatest change he had experienced was still his zhenqi.

It had become much purer and denser than before. An unimaginable amount of zhenqi had congregated in his dantian to form a seemingly endless ocean.

I should focus on overcoming the heavenly flame tribulation first!

All of this information gushed into his mind with a simple sweep of his Spiritual Perception. However, he knew that this wasn't a good time to be analyzing his own current condition. Taking a deep breath, he turned his gaze to the sky.

Huala!

In the moment that he turned his gaze to the sky, a bundle of black flame descended from the ominous clouds above.

Absorb!

With the previous experience of dealing with the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, there was no longer any fear in Zhang Xuan's heart. Without any hesitation, he absorbed the black flame into his body.

But in the next moment, excruciating pain assaulted his entire existence. An intense heat raged within his body, threatening to melt him down into a puddle of goo.

I have to drive my zhenqi and use the heat to temper my body!

Zhang Xuan knew that he was undergoing the Scorching Body Tribulation, Scorching Spirit Tribulation, and Scorching Heart Tribulation simultaneously. Whatever pain he felt was, in truth, a trial for him as well. three ordeals simultaneously, which included trials on his spirit and heart as well.

He couldn't afford to give up now. The moment that he surrendered himself to fear would be the moment that he would be reduced to ashes. Knowing this fact ver well, Zhang Xuan gritted his teeth and forced himself to bear with the pain as he hurriedly drove his zhenqi to disperse the heat.

Tzzzzzzz!

Under the relentless ramming of his Heaven's Path zhenqi, the huge bundle of flame was swiftly reduced to many seeds of fire. Nevertheless, they continued to burn with the same fervor as before.

Before Zhang Xuan knew it, the pain had further intensified. It felt as though it was stabbing deeply into him, rendering him light-headed.

No, this isn't right... How can this be even more painful than the heavenly flame tribulation my Primordial Spirit faced? Zhang Xuan thought in alarm as cold sweat gushed down his body.

With the experience of overcoming the Empyrean Heavenly Flame once, he thought that he had nothing to fear this time around. Yet, he realized that his previous experience wasn't any use at all.



Could it be that what I have encountered earlier was the heavenly flame tribulation whereas this one is the... Sage Ascension Ordeal? They aren't of the same level as one another?

What his Primordial Spirit had faced previously was indeed the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, but it was summoned by the breakthrough of his soul cultivation to Aureate Body realm. On the other hand, the Empyrean Heavenly Flame he was facing at the moment was a cultivation ordeal summoned by the unique circumstances of his breakthrough to Introspective Convalescence realm.

This was an unconventional tribulation which was summoned only by Kong shi in the past tens of thousands of years. There was a good chance that it was no ordinary heavenly flame tribulation.

Zhang Xuan could understand that this cultivation ordeal was unconventional, but wasn't this... way too strong?

Even his Aureate Body realm consummation Primordial Spirit was having trouble coping with the intense heat of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame! It was to the point that it seemed as if his consciousness would simply fade away at any moment...

He could hardly bring himself to think what would have become of him if he had he not advanced his soul cultivation to Aureate Body realm in advance!

Perhaps, he would have lost his consciousness in the moment he absorbed the heavenly flame in his body, thus allowing the heavenly flame to ravage his body as it pleased!

If it was already so difficult for him, how did Kong shi, who didn't possess the Library of Heaven's Path, survive this nigh impossible ordeal?

Zhang Xuan couldn't help but wonder in incredulity.~10km

# 1665 Eradicating the Innate Fetal Poison 2

Knowing that this wasn't a good time for his mind to be wandering around the place, Zhang Xuan curbed the dizziness in his head and focused his attention on the silhouette on the stone platform.

At this moment, the silhouette seemed to be undergoing a similar experience as him. Heavenly flames descending from the heavens seared him mercilessly, turning him into the color of black charcoals. His aura withered swiftly under the heat, and it felt as if he would wilt and breathe his last.

Just as his aura grew so feeble that it was nearly indiscernible, a small seed of energy suddenly sprouted from his body. The small seed of energy grew relentlessly in the face of the heat, accumulating power and vitality. Before long, it had already developed into a colossal tree.

The silhouette remained completely motionless throughout the process, but his presence seemed to be growing bigger and bigger. It came to a point where it seemed to tower over everything in the world.

This is... Resurgence After Desolation, Revival After Demise? Zhang Xuan's heart jolted in astonishment.

With the arrival of autumn, the resplendent world would gradually wilt and lose all vitality, leaving nothing but piles of discarded autumn leaves on the ground. However, when spring returned to the world once more, everything would come back to life. Vitality would surge back into the world, resuscitating the dead and bestowing new lives!

This was the cycle of nature.

And the silhouette on the stone platform was using this cycle to his advantage.

The more I try to oppose the black flame, the greater the intensity it'll burn with. In other words, if I choose not to oppose the heavenly flame, the temperature of the flame will lower accordingly too. If I could just lower the temperature of the black flame to a level that's tolerable to me, I'll be able to use the heat to temper my body and gradually adapt to the heat... Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

This was actually a common trait amongst cultivation ordeal. Be it the lightning tribulation or the heavenly flame tribulation, their prowess of the tribulation mirrored the strength of the cultivator it was dealing with.

Take the lightning tribulation as an example, the stronger one's cultivation was, the more powerful the lightning tribulation would be. To put it in other words, the more feeble one was, the weaker the lightning tribulation would be...

It was counterintuitive, but the key to overcoming this cultivation ordeal was to not oppose it. Otherwise, even if his Primordial Spirit had reached Aureate Body realm, he would still eventually succumb to the intense heat and pass out.

What he had to do was to feign weakness before the cultivation ordeal in order to give his body some time to adapt to the heat.

The arrival of the winter solstice, the silencing of all beings!

Finally seeing a plausible way out of his current quandary, Zhang Xuan immediately abandoned all attempts to ward off the heat from the black flame. Consciousness seemed to have vanished from his body as he stopped breathing altogether.

It was as if winter had descended, extinguishing the flames of life under a weight of coldness. In this moment, it seemed as if eternal silence had set upon the world.

*Tzzzzzz!*

Just as what Zhang Xuan had expected, as soon as he abandoned all resistance, the black flame realized that it had lost an opponent and swiftly calmed down. As a result of that, the temperature of the black flame plummeted sharply.

To make an analogy, Zhang Xuan's zhenqi was like gasoline to the black flame. The more he tried to fend off the black flame with his zhenqi, the more domineering the black flame would become in order to quell him.

On the other hand, if he were to seal his zhenqi together and keep it from coming into contact with the black flame, with time, the black flame would lose its momentum and extinguish.

Having given up on resistance, Zhang Xuan's aura gradually weakened down to the point where he seemed nothing more than an ordinary mortal. In reciprocation to that, the black flame also diminished to a level tolerable to him.

Under the scorching heat of the black flame, black gas began rising out of Zhang Xuan's body. Slowly, a golden sheen emerged from his physical body.

Having cultivated the Heaven's Path Golden Body, Zhang Xuan knew that the black gas was the impurities accumulated within his body. Even if he had refined his body time and time again, it was nigh impossible for him to cleanse it fully.

In a sense, this was similar to no matter how many times a person washed his body, his body would never be perfectly clean.

This was because the spiritual energy in nature was impure. This impurity was also the reason why spirit stones were divided into low-tier, middle-tier, high-tier, and pinnacle.

Even the pinnacle spirit stone, which boasted the highest purity of the spirit stones, wasn't close to being devoid of impurities. Given that even the spiritual energy absorbed by a cultivator wasn't perfectly clean, it was inevitable that impurities would gradually accumulate within one's body.

The heavenly flame wielded the power to burn these impurities into black gas and expel them from a cultivator's body. Without these impurities to hinder his bodily functions, the cultivator would be able to wield greater power at his disposal.

Gold was known to be the element that contained the least impurities. By tempering one's physical body over and over again, it would begin to emanate a beautiful golden sheen. This was also where the term 'Aureate Body' originated from.

As more and more black gas was being expelled, the golden sheen emanating from Zhang Xuan's body grew more and more brilliant.

In the previous heavenly tribulation, he had only managed to refine his Primordial Spirit to assume a golden color. However, under the intense scorching of the black flame, his physical body and zhenqi were swiftly being purified, and they were beginning to turn golden as well.

With a light knock, a metallic reverberation sounded from his body. It was almost as if his body was a legendary weapon in the making.

I think I can start raising the temperature of the black flame...

As the black flame tempered his body, he found that the excruciating pain he had suffered previously had been reduced to a level where he could hardly feel anything anymore. This was a sign that he had already adapted to the current level of heat emanated from the black flame, and it no longer posed a threat to him anymore.

Thus, he began to drive his zhenqi.

In an instant, it was as if the world had come back to life. The frost had melted, and a surge of vitality sprouted from the depths of his body.

Hong long long!

Sensing the changes in Zhang Xuan's body, the black flame realized that it had been duped and flew into a rage.

Innumerable bundles of black flames descended one after another, threatening to burn the young man down to ashes.

However, this was the exact reaction Zhang Xuan was anticipating from it.

Without any hesitation, he absorbed the bundles of black flame into his body.

Jijiji!

It wasn't too long ago that the black flame was a force far beyond his means to deal, but after undergoing a period of adaptation, his body had already built up some immunity against the heat. The damage and pain inflicted on his body had both reduced to a level acceptable to him.

Black gas continued being expelled from his body, and the golden sheen on his body was becoming more and more brilliant.

At the same time, the floor he was sitting on had initially turned black under the heat of the black flame, but at this point, it was starting to grow translucent. Slowly but surely, it was assuming a similar appearance to the blue jade stone he had seen previously.

Slowly, Zhang Xuan felt his body adapting completely to the black flame, and he heaved a sigh of relief. A glint flashed across his eyes as he thought, It's about time to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison!

The Innate Fetal Poison had managed to slip into his physical body and hide in his narrowest meridians, where he was unable to reach. This time around, he was determined to accomplish the deed once and for all!

Zhang Xuan took in a deep breath as he turned his gaze toward the ominous clouds above. With a powerful leap, he dashed right into the midst of the Emyrean Heavenly Flame.

Since he had already resolved himself to eliminate the Innate Fetal Poison, he would have to make sure to utterly obliterate it this time around such that it wouldn't be able to make a comeback again. The bundles of black flame that descended from the ominous clouds above wasn't sufficient to guarantee the complete destruction of the Innate Fetal Poison, so he would have to dive into the core of the black flame to carry out the deed.

Back then, he did dive into the ominous clouds with his Primordial Spirit too, but he had remained near the edges. That created an opening for the Innate Fetal Poison to get away.

He wouldn't make such a mistake again.

Huhuhu!

As soon as he dived into the midst of the dark clouds, he immediately felt innumerable bundles of black flame swarming in his direction, threatening to drown him whole.

In the face of the frenzied assault from the black flames, Zhang Xuan opened his acupoints and devoured them frenziedly.

As the black flames surged into his meridians, he channeled them toward the area where the Innate Fetal Poison hid.

Jijiji!

At this moment, the Innate Fetal Poison was still idling by one corner, oblivious to the fact that Zhang Xuan had already summoned the heavenly flame tribulation for his physical body too. Caught off guard by the ferocious onslaught of black flames, it released a shrill shriek and quickly took flight.

“Do you think you have anywhere to run to?”

After been tortured by the Innate Fetal Poison for so long, Zhang Xuan couldn't possibly allow it to do as it pleased anymore. Before the Innate Fetal Poison could get far away, black flames surged into the path it was intending to escape to.

Before it could even register the situation it was in, all of its paths of escape had been completely sealed.

Zhang Xuan knew how agile the Innate Fetal Poison was when it came to fleeing, so he made sure that everything was in place before launching the decisive assault.

At this moment, due to the overwhelming quantity of black flame in him, his entire body had turned into a human-shaped black fireball. If he still couldn't get rid of the Innate Fetal Poison with this, he could really just kill himself on a blob of tofu.

Jijiji!

Completely surrounded, the Innate Fetal Poison had no way to escape to. Engulfed in the midst of searing black flames, a

piercing shriek reminiscent of a banshee's cry shook the air. The shriek slowly dwindled before everything was reduced to silence.

It's finally over... Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

His physical body and Primordial Spirit had been tempered by heavenly flames, and his Spiritual Perception had grown sharp enough to notice any anomaly in his body. No matter how crafty the Innate Fetal Poison was, there was no way it would be able to escape from this.

Fearing that the Innate Fetal Poison would make a comeback, even after the piercing shriek faded, Zhang Xuan continued to channel black flames into his body to sear the Innate Fetal Poison. He continued the process for nearly ten minutes, stopping only when the dark clouds were beginning to dissipate.

Retracting the black flames, Zhang Xuan swiftly scanned the area where the Innate Fetal Poison had last appeared with his Spiritual Perception. His eyes widened at what he saw.

"This... What is this?" Zhang Xuan muttered in shock.

—

Starve's Discord: <https://discord.gg/ATHVehx>



# 1666 He's Smithing?

The Innate Fetal Poison which had plagued him for over a year had disappeared without a trace. However, remaining in its place was a ball of black smoke.

This bundle of black smoke wasn't too big, roughly the size of a fingernail. It sat quietly in the midst of his meridians, not moving at all.

I have no idea what it is, but it's unlikely to be anything good. Let me see if I can get rid of it!!

Zhang Xuan continued to channel the black flame into his body to burn the ball of black smoke, but it didn't seem to faze the ball of black smoke at all. Even the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, which boasted the ability to be able to burn anything down, was completely ineffective against it!

What in the world is this ball of black smoke?

Following which, Zhang Xuan tried to use his soul energy and zhenqi to expel the ball of black smoke out of his body, but to his astonishment, it seemed to have taken root in his body. No matter how he tugged and pulled, it refused to budge at all.

Could this be the 'problem' which Kong shi was referring to back then? Zhang Xuan thought with a frown.

After taming the Pavilion Master Token, he encountered Kong shi's will, and the latter told him that it wasn't too difficult to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison. What was troublesome was the problem that came after it...

He had successfully eradicated the Innate Fetal Poison, but in its place, this ball of black smoke appeared... There was no doubt the 'problem' which Kong shi was referring to was this!

Something which even Kong shi deemed to be 'a problem' was likely to be really difficult to deal with.

This ball of black smoke is residing in one of my smaller meridians, so my Primordial Spirit is unable to slip in.

Furthermore, it doesn't seem like my Library of Heaven's Path is working on it either... Zhang Xuan frowned in frustration.

He had used his Eye of Insight, Library of Heaven's Path, and everything at his disposal, but he was still unable to identify what the ball of black smoke was.

Forget it! Judging from its state, it doesn't seem to pose any harm to me for the time being. I guess I'll have to ask Kong shi about it the next time I meet him...

Zhang Xuan examined the ball of black smoke carefully, and it didn't seem to be poisonous. Deeming it unlikely to cause him any harm in the short run, he decided to put this matter aside for the time being.

While he was a little unnerved by its presence, it didn't seem like he was able to get rid of it at the moment.

In any case, he had finally managed to resolve the Innate Fetal Poison, and that was truly a huge load off his chest!

The tension which had been weighing him down over the past year vanished without a trace, and he suddenly felt light and free.

Huhu!

At the same time, the dark clouds in the sky were already halfway through their dissipation, and the heavenly flame tribulation was likely to flee very soon.

The current heavenly flame tribulation doesn't pose any threat to me anymore...

Even when the tribulation was at its full prowess, it was unable to bring him down. Given that it was already in the midst of dissipation, there was no way it would be able to hurt him anymore.

It would be a waste to allow the black flame to dissipate just like that though. Otherwise, who knows when I'll be able to encounter it once more? Zhang Xuan thought.

The corners of his lips crept up as he flicked his wrist and took out a three meters wide round platform.

## Golden Origin Spirit Stone!

This was the treasure which the Dragonbone Divine Spear had given him back at Ancient Sage Ran Qiu's ancient domain. However, as he had no suitable flame to process the material, he could only store it in his storage ring all this while. However, since there were remnants of the heavenly flame in the sky, and it happened that he had no other use for it at the moment, this was an ideal opportunity to reforge the Golden Origin Cauldron!

That fellow had been following him for a very long while now. However, as he had advanced his cultivation too quickly, it didn't take long before it was rendered redundant. Since he had some spare time at the moment, it would be a good chance to upgrade this loyal subordinate of his!

Hu!

As soon as the Golden Origin Spirit Stone came into contact with the black flame, the precious metal which even the most powerful earth flame would have difficulty processing began to soften. In less than ten breaths, the massive platform had already been reduced to a puddle of metallic fluid.

"Golden Origin Cauldron, come out!" Zhang Xuan flicked his wrist.

Hu!

The Golden Origin Cauldron materialized in the air. As soon as it appeared, it squealed out in delight, "Master, did you suddenly miss me? Did someone bully you again? Tell me who he is, and I'll have him reduced to..."

But before it could finish squealing, it swiftly realized that something was amiss. When it noticed the black flames wrapped around it, its voice quivered in horror, "M-master, what's that? Why is it so hot? Master, did I offend you somehow that you actually want to melt me down? Please, don't kill me! If you really want me to, I can even give my first time to you!"

"..." Black lines streaked across Zhang Xuan's face. "Shut up! I am trying to upgrade you right now. If you dare utter another

word of nonsense, I'll toss you into the black flames and burn you to death!"

"Ahhh... Yes, master!" Hearing that its master was actually intending to upgrade it instead, the Golden Origin cauldron heaved a sigh of relief.

Just as it was about to say something, intense heat from the black flames suddenly gushed in from the surroundings. Under the overwhelming heat, its body began to distort as it lost its structural rigidity. It was gradually starting to melt.

Zhang Xuan waved his hand, and the melted Golden Origin Spirit Stone swiftly flew over. He began to fuse it together with the Golden Origin Cauldron.

"No, this isn't right... The Golden Origin Spirit Stone is too high tiered! The smithing techniques that I have learned previously can't apply to it... How much of it do I need to fuse into the Golden Origin Cauldron in order to maximize its strength?" Zhang Xuan suddenly froze as a question popped up in his head.

His comprehension of smithing was only at 8-star pinnacle at the moment, and the knowledge he had was clearly insufficient to properly process the Golden Origin Spirit Stone!

A certain proportion had to be struck between various ores in order to maximize the resilience of the resulting alloy. The more precisely the resulting alloy stuck to the ratio, the more powerful it would be.

He had never worked with the Golden Origin Spirit Stone before—it was simply too rare! He had only heard of its name before, so there was no way he could have known at what ratio it should be fused with the other metals in order to create a perfect alloy.

"I was too reckless..." Zhang Xuan's face twitched awkwardly.

If the proportion of the alloy was wrong, no matter how much good stuff he packed into the forging process, the resultant artifact was unlikely to be too powerful.

His only thought then was to make full use of the black flame to reforge the Golden Origin Cauldron that he failed to think the matter through thoroughly. Considering that he had already started to fuse the Golden Origin Cauldron together with the Golden Origin Spirit Stone, it was already too late for him to turn back now.

“Forget it! The Golden Origin Spirit Stone is an exceptionally powerful material, so the more the merrier. In any case, the materials used to forge the Golden Origin Cauldron is too mediocre, so it would be good to replace them all at once...” Being an optimistic person, Zhang Xuan tossed those concerns to the back of his mind.

Even if the proportion was wrong, an artifact which had the Golden Origin Spirit Stone mixed into it couldn't possibly turn out to be weak. Since he had already gone wrong, he might as well add more of it! Perhaps, it might rectify his previous mistakes!

Tzzzzzzz!

As the Golden Origin Cauldron fused with the three meters wide round platform, it was swiftly reduced to a metallic lump.

Hu!

At this moment, the dark clouds seemed to have run out of power, and with a 'hu!', the black flames began extinguishing one after another.

“Crap, the black flames are vanishing too quickly. I haven't even started forging it yet!” Zhang Xuan's face twitched in horror.

He was supposed to be upgrading the Golden Origin Cauldron, not to disfigure it! If the black flames were to vanish altogether, the alloy would swiftly solidify, making it nigh impossible for him to reshape it back to the form of a cauldron!

Zhang Xuan quickly flicked his wrist and whipped out a hammer. He rushed forward and began hammering the metallic lump into shape with powerful strikes.

Ding dang ding dang! Ding dang ding dang!

The sound of hammering echoed loudly in the air.

...

Outside the Shrine of Kong shi...

Ren Qingyuan and the others were looking at the dark clouds above with worried looks.

“Even I would have to flee in the face of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame... Considering that Zhang shi has just achieved a breakthrough not too long ago, will he really be able to survive the cultivation ordeal?”

“I don’t know either, but... doesn’t he have the ability to control the lightning tribulation? Perhaps, he might be able to do the same with the heavenly flame tribulation too!”

“There’s a fundamental difference between lightning tribulations and heavenly flame tribulations... Look up there! He’s dashing into the midst of the dark clouds now!”

Seeing Zhang Xuan dash into the midst of the dark clouds, the crowd wasn’t reassured in the least. Instead, their worry only served to deepen.

“He might still be able to withstand the lightning energy in the storm clouds of lightning tribulations, but those dark clouds harness a massive inferno within them! How is he going to survive such intense heat?”

“Isn’t that sheer recklessness? We can only pray that he has a plan in mind...”

While the 9-star master teachers were still discussing amongst one another, the dark clouds began showing signs of dissipation.

“Oh? The heavenly flame tribulation is about to dissipate...”

“So quickly? It can’t be that some mishap has happened to him, can it?”

The crowd quickly turned their gazes to the sky, wanting to see if the legendary genius was able to beat the odds and survive against the devastating Empyrean Heavenly Flame.

However, they ended seeing something they didn't expect to see instead.

Amidst the dark clouds, they saw a human silhouette taking out a hammer, and he began hammering a lump floating in front of him.

Ding dang ding dang! Ding dang ding dang!

There was a rhythm to the hammering, which sounded surprisingly pleasurable to the ears.

“H-he is forging a weapon?”

Following that question, silence drifted amongst the master teachers.

# 1667 The Temple of Confucius Appears

There was no cultivator who would disagree that the heavenly flame tribulation was a perilous cultivation ordeal. Countless prodigies had lost their lives in the face of its devastating might.

Even in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, where the top geniuses of the Master Teacher Continent were gathered, most 9-star master teachers would spend from several dozens to over a hundred years to prepare themselves before daring to face the scorching trial of the heavenly flame tribulation...

It was not too long ago that Zhang Xuan was still at Saint 9-dan Macrocosm Ascendancy realm, but before they knew it, he had already summoned a heavenly flame tribulation. To make things worse, the heavenly flame tribulation he had summoned was no other than the most terrifying Empyrean Heavenly Flame...

It was no wonder why everyone was pessimistic about his survival! Was it really possible for a human to survive something of this level?

But contrary to their expectations, not only did the young man emerge perfectly fine from the tribulation, they found that he was even making use of the heavenly flame to forge an artifact...

Screw that!

Constipated looks appeared on the faces of the 9-star master teachers all around. They stared at one another with widened eyes, not knowing what they should make of the situation before them.

They had hypothesized many possibilities. Perhaps, the young man might have been burned to cinders, or maybe, he would be able to barely overcome it with grievous wounds... But the



thought that he would make use of the heavenly flame to forge an artifact had never crossed their minds. Not even once!

Had the world lost its mind?

It was one thing for him to be able to control the lightning tribulation, but to actually be using the heavenly flame to forge an artifact... Hell, that was sheer extravagance!

Bro, does your family own the heavens or something?

The heavenly flame tribulation should have been the heavens' punishment against you! It's not a lighter for you to borrow a flame from!

While their minds were struggling to come to terms with the freakish happenings unfolding before their eyes, Zhang Xuan suddenly turned his gaze in their direction and asked, "Does any of you have any Hibernial Spirit Essence? Lend me some for use. I need it to quench my artifact..."

"Hibernial Spirit Essence?" The abrupt request left Ren Qingyuan's face twitching in frenzy. Nevertheless, he quickly nodded his head and replied, "I have some here!"

He whipped out a jade bottle with a flick of his wrist before tossing it up into the sky.

"Thanks!" Zhang Xuan grabbed the jade bottle and crushed it open.

Hula!

The Hibernial Spirit Essence shot out from the jade bottle and scattered all over the Golden Origin Cauldron.

Tzzzzzzz!

White smoke shrouded the Golden Origin Cauldron, placing a veil of mystery over it.

Maintaining the right proportion between the various metals used in the alloy was important, but quenching played an even more crucial role in determining the final quality of the artifact.

The Hibernial Spirit Essence was the ultimate treasure for quenching artifacts, so most 9-star blacksmiths would usually

bring a bottle around with them. Considering how many 9-star master teachers there were around the area, it was almost certain that one of them would have it.

“He is... forging a weapon?”

It didn't take too long for the white smoke to dissipate, revealing the true form of the mysterious artifact that was extravagantly forged using heavenly flames. At the same time, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Ren Qingyuan and the other 9-star master teachers quickly turned their gazes over. What they saw left their lips twitching in horror, and they nearly keeled over.

They expected the weapon forged by Zhang Xuan using the heavenly flame to be mind-blowing! At the very least, it should be a magnificent Great Sage artifact on par with renowned legendary weapons in the world!

Can anyone tell us what the heck is that black lump over there?

It doesn't look like a cauldron, it doesn't look like a brick... Heck, it doesn't even qualify to be called a poop! After all the hammering using all those mystical forging techniques, this is all that you managed to smith?

A 9-star master teacher tilted his head uncertainly as he examined the mysterious artifact in the air, “It should be... a cauldron, right?”

“Doesn't look like it. To me, it seems more like a shoehorn!”

“I think you're right. A brick-like shoehorn...”

“...” Zhang Xuan

“Hahaha, I, the Golden Origin Cauldron, have finally been upgraded! Thank you, master!” As the quenching came to an end, an excited exclamation sounded in the air. But soon, a doubtful frown appeared on its distorted face as it asked, “Master, I don't feel right. Why does my head feel a little squarish? I seem to wobble quite a bit when I walk... Wait a minute, where are my legs?!”

“Your stubby legs have always been a major imperfection in your aesthetics, so I modified it a little for you,” Zhang Xuan replied without the slightest hint of redness on his face.

“You altered it? Then... where is my furnace?” The Golden Origin Cauldron examined its body carefully for a very long while but was unable to find its furnace, so it couldn’t help but ask.

“It made your figure a little bulky, so I filled it up with the Golden Origin Spirit Stone,” Zhang Xuan replied with a reassuring voice.

“How do I forge artifacts or pills without a furnace?”

“Those are just minor issues. You need to let go of some stuff in order to make space for better upgrades... Don’t you feel like your bottom has grown much bigger? I made it this way to complement your fighting style. With this, you can better crush your opponent with your bottom!” Zhang Xuan remarked earnestly. “Honestly speaking, I think you are much more dashing than before...”

“Am I? Haha, I guess I’m asking the obvious. Who else could be more good-looking than me, the Golden Origin Cauldron? I should be able to attract many female cauldrons in the future...” the Golden Origin Cauldron laughed heartily in satisfaction.

“...” Ren Qingyuan.

“...” The 9-star master teachers.

Did this pair of master and servant have some kind of misconception as to what was considered beautiful in this world?

Anyone with functioning eyes wouldn’t be able to tell that it was a cauldron at all... Was it really fine for them to be so delusional?

Oh well! Geniuses tended to have their own quirks...  
Whatever that pleased them!

Paying no heed to the stupefied crowd below, Zhang Xuan examined the Golden Origin Cauldron before him carefully.

Due to him adding too much Golden Origin Spirit Stone, it looked just nothing more than a lumpy mess. However, its prowess wasn't to be underestimated despite its misshapen exterior.

It might have been unbelievable to anyone just looking at its exterior, but the current Golden Origin Cauldron was actually a true Great Sage artifact!

Its weight had reached a level so frightening that even a Sempiternal realm primary stage cultivator would be crushed into minced meat should the Golden Origin Cauldron's bottom fall on him.

“Alright, you should try and comprehend your strength and bring up your cultivation as soon as possible!” Zhang Xuan instructed.

Placing the satisfied Golden Origin Cauldron back into the Myriad Anthive Nest, he began to observe the changes with his body through his Spiritual Perception.

After undergoing the tempering of the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, not only had his cultivation advanced to Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm, all of the impurities in his body had been cleaned out too. Every single one of his cells was pulsating with vitality comparable to a newborn.

“This is... Introspective Convalescence realm consummation?” Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in joy.

It would usually take many years for an Introspective Convalescence realm primary stage cultivator to refine his body and advance his cultivation. However, through the tempering of the heavenly flame, his cultivation actually surged all the way up to consummation stage!

Not only so, his physical body and zhenqi had also begun taking on a golden sheen.

From the looks of it, he only had to reinforce his cultivation for a bit before he was ready to push for a breakthrough to Aureate Body realm!

“With my current zhenqi cultivation and soul cultivation, along with the Golden Origin Cauldron and the Dragonbone

Divine Spear, I should be able to put up a fight even against Sempiternal realm pinnacle experts!” Zhang Xuan clenched his fist in agitation.

Beyond Great Sage, there was a huge gap between each cultivation stage, thus making it extremely arduous and time-consuming to advance one’s cultivation.

Yet, within a short span of a day, not only did he advance his Primordial Spirit to Aureate Body realm consummation, he had also managed to push his zhenqi cultivation up to Introspective Convalescence realm consummation... Even without relying on his overpowered artifacts, he was confident that he would be able to defeat the Xingmeng Sword Saints with ease!

It hadn’t been an easy day for him, but his efforts had truly paid off!

Previously, he was completely helpless against Sempiternal realm cultivators without igniting Kong shi’s blood droplet, so he had no choice but to flee from them. But with the current strength that he wielded, he could already put up a decent fight against them.

“However, I still need some time to get used to my powers before I can bring them out to their full potential!”

As he had advanced his zhenqi cultivation and soul cultivation separately, there were still some imperfections in wielding them simultaneously. However, that wasn’t a big problem. With a few days, he should be able to reconcile the differences between the two and heighten his fighting prowess.

After confirming the changes in his body, Zhang Xuan finally descended back to the ground.

He had been in the Shrine of Kong shi when he summoned the heavenly flame tribulation, but he had practically swallowed the black flames that descended to earth whole. As such, the buildings in the surroundings didn’t come to harm as a result of his cultivation ordeal.

Shortly after he landed on the ground, Luo Ruoxin walked out from the Shrine of Kong shi as well.

“Pavilion Master Ren, I am extremely grateful to you...”  
Zhang Xuan walked up to Ren Qingyuan and clasped his fist.

He was in the midst of thanking Ren Qingyuan for granting him access to the Shrine of Kong shi when the world around him suddenly tremored intensely.

Following which, another radiant sun rose from the horizons of the sky, cloaking the world in its blinding light.

Within the rising sun, one could vaguely see an enormous shrine embedded in its depths, resembling a resplendent sky palace.

“The Temple of Confucius...” Ren Qingyuan muttered beneath his breath with narrowed eyes.

# 1668 The History of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn

“That is the Temple of Confucius?”

Taken aback by Ren Qingyuan’s words, Zhang Xuan took a closer look at the newly risen sun and swiftly realized that the sun was located in a parallel dimension. Despite being within sight, it was actually an unimaginable distance away.

Or to be more exact, the distance wasn’t just limited to spatial displacement but temporal displacement as well. The newly risen sun seemed to exist within the flow of time, and special means were required in order to get to it.

As for the temple within the sun, it was obscured from sight by layers of shadow. Even with the Eye of Insight, Zhang Xuan found himself unable to catch a closer look at it.

“According to history, Kong shi was once trapped by the strongest Otherworldly Demon Emperor in Chen Cai. With his deep understanding of time, he created the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. When the artifact first came into existence, the seasons of the world were thrown into disarray by its prowess. Spring and autumn intersected one another, causing the plants to blossom at one moment and wilt in the next. Summer and winter clashed with one another, raising storms and tornados here and there. Bizarre phenomenons occurred in the places where the Great Codex of Spring Autumn shone upon. An infant aged into a middle-aged man in the blink of an eye, and an elderly awaiting his death reverted back into an infant in a heartbeat...” Recalling the content written in ancient texts, Ren Qingyuan said.

When the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn was first created, mankind was still struggling against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. In truth, the prowess of the Great Codex of

Spring and Autumn wasn't as great as what the legends put it out to be.

After Kong shi freed himself, he used the powers of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn to lay waste upon the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Before long, people came to revere the artifact, resulting in its widespread fame. There was no Otherworldly Demon who didn't fear the prowess of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn.

"The Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, the ability to manipulate the seasons... Did Kong shi comprehend the Time Quintessence as well?" Zhang Xuan asked.

This wasn't the first time he was hearing about the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, but he had never really understood what kind of capabilities it wielded. Judging by Ren Qingyuan's explanation, it seemed like it had the ability to manipulate time.

"Un, it should be the Time Quintessence... However, it's likely that what Kong shi has comprehended goes beyond just time acceleration. Based on the information we have in the records, it's likely that he has mastered time deceleration and time freeze too!" Ren Qingyuan said.

"Time deceleration and time freeze?" Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in astonishment.

Similar to how there were other Spatial Quintessences aside from the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, the same applied to Time Quintessences as well. The Time Quintessence comprehended by the Zhang Clan was the Time Quintessence of Acceleration, which allowed a cultivator to accelerate his own time.

Through accelerating one's time, a second of the opponent's time could translate into ten seconds of one's time, thus making it appear as if the movements of the other person had slowed instead.

But other than the Time Quintessence of Acceleration, there were also the Time Quintessence of Deceleration and the Time Quintessence of Freezing!



While the Time Quintessence of Deceleration might not appear to be of much use to most cultivators, it was, in fact, the greatest weapon that human Ancient Sages had at the moment. It was through hibernation in the state of time deceleration that human Ancient Sages were able to lengthen their lifespan and continue fighting for mankind.

On the other hand, the Time Quintessence of Freezing was known to be the most difficult temporal law to comprehend. In terms of prowess, it was even stronger than the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing.

The Spatial Quintessence of Sealing could immobilize a cultivator's physical body, but the cultivator would still retain his consciousness, allowing him to remain aware of the happenings around him. On the other hand, the Time Quintessence of Freezing would even put one's consciousness to a stall. If a cultivator were to be killed in such a state, he would be thoroughly dead. He wouldn't even have a chance to revive himself!

If Kong shi had comprehended the Time Quintessence of Freezing as well, just how powerful could he be?

No matter how powerful Vicious was, he couldn't possibly have been a match for Kong shi!

“Those are conjectures made by the later generation, so they might not be accurate. However, if one thing was for sure, Kong shi had indeed infused his knowledge of temporal laws into the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. If we could obtain the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn and acquire his heritage, that would indubitably be a huge boost to the forces of mankind! No matter how formidable the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe may be, we would be able to quell them with ease!” Ren Qingyuan said.

The power and influence commanded by the Master Teacher Pavilion were slowly accrued time. Back in the era shortly after Kong shi's departure, the Master Teacher Pavilion had only been founded not too long ago, and it was far from its current scale. While it had achieved a victory over the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, it didn't have the power or

resources to destroy them once and for all. The most it could have done then was to exile them in the otherworldly battlefield...

However, mankind had grown much stronger from back then. If they could just acquire the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, they might just be able to accomplish what the predecessors had failed at!

“Indeed!” Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

Mankind had grown collectively stronger since Kong shi’s era, but its number of top-notch experts was on the decline. No one had been able to reach Ancient Sage ever since ten thousand years ago. What mankind was severely lacking at the moment was fighting prowess in the top echelon.

If they could obtain the heritage of the World’s Teacher, they would be able to resolve this problem and turn the tables on the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!

“9-star master teachers of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, heed my orders! Other than those who are bound for the Subterranean Gallery, all of you are to head to Qufu right away! Since the Temple of Confucius has surfaced, it won’t be long before it opens completely!” Ren Qingyuan turned around and issued a command.

“Yes!”

The 9-star master teachers replied resoundingly before rushing off.

“Zhang shi. Since that the Temple of Confucius has surfaced, there’s no doubt that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe will soon make its move. Do you want to move together with our Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, or do you intend to move independently?” Ren Qingyuan asked.

“I...” Zhang Xuan was just about to give his reply when he saw Luo Ruoxin shaking her head lightly by the side. A perplexed frown surfaced on his forehead as he continued, “I’m thankful for your thought and concern, but I would like to move independently!”

“Alright!” Ren Qingyuan didn’t seem to be too surprised by Zhang Xuan’s decision. With a nod of his head, he said, “Let’s meet at Qufu then!”

After saying those words, Ren Qingyuan turned around and raised his hand. A large group of 9-star master teachers swiftly gathered around him. It seemed like they were going to discuss their plans to deal with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe after the opening of the Temple of Confucius.

“Let’s head back!” Zhang Xuan beckoned to Luo Ruoxin, and the two of them quickly made their leave.

In the blink of an eye, they were already out of the perimeter of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

Recalling Luo Ruoxin’s action earlier, Zhang Xuan turned to her and asked, “With the opening of the Temple of Confucius, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would surely make its move too. There’s no doubt that they would mobilize their Ancient Sages too... There might be some restrictions being with the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, but it would also be safer under their protection. I’m curious to know why you chose to advise me to turn down their offer.”

In truth, Zhang Xuan was also thinking of turning down the offer as well, but he didn’t expect Luo Ruoxin to advise him to do the same too. Thus, he was a little curious to hear her thoughts on the matter.

According to Yang shi, there was a restriction that prevented Ancient Sages from entering the heart of the Temple of Confucius to retrieve the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. However, make no mistake. The true fight would only begin once the codex was brought out of the Temple of Confucius. As soon as the new owner of the codex walked out of the premises, the different powers would surely make an attempt to snatch it over.

And without a doubt, Ancient Sages would be embroiled in the tussle as well!

It would seem that the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters only had Great Sages in their ranks, but that was only because

they hadn't brought out their trump cards yet.

Even the Zhang Clan had an Ancient Sage old ancestor still alive, so it would stand to reason that the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would have many more! Without a doubt, staying with the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would be a much safer option!

“There's still some time before the Temple of Confucius fully opens, so there's no point in sticking with them just yet. Furthermore, with the surfacing of the Temple of Confucius, we can expect countless experts to make their way to Qufu as well. Rushing there at this point would bring us no benefit; on the contrary, it would only embroil us in meaningless battles,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

“There's still some time before the Temple of Confucius fully opens?” Zhang Xuan repeated in confusion.

He thought that he would be able to enter the surfaced Temple of Confucius straight with the Prime Amulet in hand. He didn't think that there would still be some time before its complete opening.

“Wait, that's not right... Isn't it said that only those who possess the Celestial Amulets of Legacy are able to enter the Temple of Confucius? Even if the experts all over the world were to head here, they wouldn't be able to do anything at all!” Zhang Xuan asked as he recalled another matter.

Only those who possessed the Celestial Amulet of Legacy was able to enter the Temple of Confucius—this was a pre-established fact that no one disputed. Otherwise, the experts of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers wouldn't go so far as to challenge the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan.

If they couldn't even enter the Temple of Confucius, was there any meaning in them rushing over?

“It's true that the Celestial Amulets of Legacy are required to enter the Prime Hall and the Subordinate Halls of the Temple of Confucius, but what about the outer perimeter?” Luo Ruoxin remarked with a smile.

“The outer perimeter?”

“Let’s use the Qiu Wu Palace as an example. The Qiu Wu Palace itself is an individual entity which requires quite a bit of trouble to enter, but the outer perimeter around the Qiu Wu Palace is accessible to all cultivators,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

There were indeed quite a number of formations and obstacles on the outer perimeter of the Qiu Wu Palace. Without the map, it would be nigh impossible for most to reach the Qiu Wu Palace.

If that was the case, it would mean that the Temple of Confucius didn’t just consist of the Prime Hall and the six Subordinate Halls. It was an entire area consisting of an outer perimeter too, and it was likely that there would be formations and the sort on the outer perimeter.

“Kong shi has always believed in impartation without discrimination. Other than the Prime Hall and the Subordinate Halls, he has left many treasures and different heritages around the Temple of Confucius. Those who didn’t have the Celestial Amulets of Legacy would still be able to acquire those items, so it went without saying that they would have to make their way there too,” Luo Ruoxin said.

# 1669 The Subterranean Gallery of the Dracotiger Mountain

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

All along, he thought that the Temple of Confucius only contained the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn and Kong shi's heritage. However, from the looks of it now, it was likely to be similar to most ancient domains out there. There were many unexpected treasures and fortuitous encounters awaiting the cultivators there.

“Not only so, the Temple of Confucius harnesses the academic aura and academic fortune Kong shi has left behind. Even if a cultivator fails to acquire anything at all, he would still be able to make significant progress in his cultivation just by cultivating within. Furthermore, it's said that Kong shi's Impartation of Heaven's Will lingers in the Temple of Confucius. As long as one listens carefully, one will be able to overcome any bottleneck one is facing with ease,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

“The emergence of the Temple of Confucius is a major affair to all cultivators in the world. This is an opportunity that no one is willing to give up on, be it the human cultivators, the Otherworldly Demons, or the Beast Tribe... You must ensure that you are prepared if you wish to acquire anything from the Temple of Confucius. Advancing blindly in the Temple of Confucius isn't going to work out.”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan lowered his head solemnly.

The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe weren't lacking experts, and there were many formidable beasts in the world too.

Considering the allure of the Temple of Confucius, not even the Master Teacher Pavilion would dare to stop them carelessly.

The implications were simply great. Stopping them would mean robbing them of the countless possibilities of what they could become. In the worst-case scenario, it could even lead to a full-blown war there and then!

And if the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to make a move then, mankind would really be in trouble.

The best they could do at the moment was to acquire the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn as soon as possible and control the Temple of Confucius. This was the only way they could ensure that the situation wouldn't run amok.

Kong shi had forged six Subordinate Amulets and a Prime Amulet, which equated to a total of seven Celestial Amulets of Legacy. So far, it was known that the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, the Zhang Clan, and the Luo Clan possessed a Subordinate Amulet each. As for the remaining three Subordinate Amulets, their whereabouts were a mystery.

However, if Zhang Xuan had to fathom a guess, he felt that it was likely that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe and the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had a Subordinate Amulet in their possession too.

Furthermore, cultivators who possessed unique constitutions would be able to enter the Temple of Confucius as well. This meant that a considerable number of people would be able to enter the Temple of Confucius. It could really turn out to be dangerous if he didn't make ample preparations in advance.

Putting everything aside, the cultivators of the Hundred Schools of Philosophers had already shown that they had no lack of formidable artifacts. Even with the recent advancements in his cultivation, he would still have difficulties dealing with them.

He didn't think that he could be considered weak anymore, but he wasn't so arrogant as to think that he could easily tower over all of the experts in the world.

“Let's return to the Zhang Clan and see how their preparations are coming along!”

In truth, Zhang Xuan didn't know much about the Temple of Confucius and how the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn could be acquired. However, it was likely that the Zhang Clan had some exclusive intelligence and had been preparing for it since a long time ago.

With such thoughts in mind, Zhang Xuan and Luo Ruoxin quickly left the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters and returned to the Zhang Clan.

With the advancements in Zhang Xuan's cultivation, the spatial passageways he constructed through ripping open dimension rifts had become significantly stabler. It didn't take long before the massive Zhang Clan appeared before their sights.

As soon as he entered the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan could already sense that something was amiss.

The Zhang Clan always had huge crowds walking to and fro, but at this very moment, the entire place felt exceptionally empty. There was hardly anyone within sight.

It took quite a bit of searching around before Zhang Xuan finally found an elder. He asked anxiously, "What happened?"

"Nearly all of the cultivators of Saint realm and above in our Zhang Clan have made their way to the Subterranean Gallery to fend against the invasion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. The Xingmeng Sword Saints have already headed over too!" Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, the elder hurriedly greeted him with a bow before reporting the current circumstances.

"They have headed to the Subterranean Galleries?" Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

He had been too overwhelmed by the emergence of the Temple of Confucius that he had forgotten about the orders he had passed down earlier. Back when he was still at the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, he had instructed the Three Premier Clans to reinforce the Master Teacher Pavilion in fending against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

"Which Subterranean Gallery they head to? Bring me there!" Zhang Xuan instructed imposingly.



With the opening of the Temple of Confucius just around the corner, it was likely that the invasion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would further intensify. After all, there would not want to miss on this once in a lifetime opportunity.

This was truly a quandary. The Temple of Confucius was important, but even if they managed to acquire the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, it would be meaningless if losing the Master Teacher Continent was the price of it.

The Great Codex of Spring and Autumn could enhance a cultivator's prowess immensely. However, to fight a war of such scale, they would require the might of countless soldiers. It would be a catastrophe if the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to breach their defense at this point in time.

It was no wonder why the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters was in such a panic, even going to the extent of clearing his 9-star master teacher examination in such a slipshod manner.

Otherwise, if they were to go through formal procedures, just proving his philosophy of pedagogy was likely to take several years already.

“Even though there is unrest in all 108 Subterranean Galleries, our scouts found that most of the Subterranean Galleries are only facing minor skirmishes at the moment. The local Master Teacher Pavilions should be able to suppress them. The true threat lies in six of the Subterranean Galleries, namely the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters' Subterranean Gallery, the Dragon Gate Subterranean Gallery, the Icysea Subterranean Gallery, the Cloudsea Subterranean Gallery, the Zhang Clan's Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, and the Luo Clan's Starcluster Subterranean Gallery!

“There are many 9-star master teachers to deal with the Subterranean Gallery over at the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters' side, so they don't require any assistance at the moment.

“Over at the Dragon Gate Subterranean Gallery and the Cloudsea Subterranean Gallery, the Progeny of Combat, Zheng Yang, has officially assumed the title of the master of

the Combat Master Hall and led countless combat masters to quell the unrest in those two places.

“As for the Icysea Subterranean Gallery, the Glacier Plain Court, the Yuan Clan, the Sanctum of Sages, and the Spirit Awakener Guild have all liaised with one another and sent their forces over to stabilize the region.

“The other Sage Clans, occupation guilds, and powers are patrolling the other Subterranean Galleries to lend their aid wherever required.

“Last but not least, the Jiang Clan is moving alongside with both the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan to guard the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery and Starcluster Subterranean Gallery!

“The Otherworldly Demons are particularly rampant in the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery and the Starcluster Subterranean Gallery, and the seals which Ancient Sage Qiu Wu have left behind are having trouble fending them off. As such, all master teachers of 6-star and above in the Zhang Clan are all mobilized to the Subterranean Gallery to bolster the defenses!” the elder explained.

“I am left in charge of taking care of the clan while the others are away. Should the situation turn for the worse, I’m responsible for moving our clan members away so as to preserve the lineage of our Zhang Clan!”

“Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery? In other words, there is Subterranean Gallery is right beneath us?” Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up.

He knew that some of the regional Master Teacher Pavilion branches were responsible for suppressing the Subterranean Galleries across the continent, such as the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy... He should have guessed that it would have been the same for the Zhang Clan as well!

The Dracotiger Mountain was right next to the Zhang Clan, and since the Subterranean Gallery was named as such, it was likely to be in the vicinity.

“Un, the entrance is right beneath our Zhang Clan. If you wish to enter, I can bring you over right now!” the elder replied.

“Bring me over. I wish to take a look!” Zhang Xuan instructed.

Putting aside the fact that the Temple of Confucius wasn't open yet, even if it was, it still wouldn't be as important as quelling the invasion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!

“Clan head, please follow me!”

Without any hesitation, the elder led the way forward. Before long, they arrived at their destination.

“This is... the mausoleum of the Zhang Clan?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

“That's right. The Subterranean Gallery is located beneath our mausoleum!” the elder replied.

“Using heroic spirits of the Zhang Clan's predecessors to suppress the Subterranean Gallery...” Zhang Xuan murmured quietly.

This practice was similar to that of the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy. Each principal of the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy would deposit a sliver of their will at the entrance of the Subterranean Gallery so as to reinforce the seal, thus preventing the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe from stepping onto the Master Teacher Continent.

“Only the heroic spirits of our predecessors are able to suppress the Otherworldly Demons and prevent them from entering the Master Teacher Continent. Clan head, the Subterranean Gallery is right ahead. I still have some other matters to attend to, so I'll have to take my leave right now!” the elder bade his farewell before leaving the area.

If the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to breach the defenses set up by the Zhang Clan and the Jiang Clan, their very first point of contact with the Master Teacher Continent would be the Zhang Clan. Thus, they had to be prepared to move the members of the Zhang Clan at any moment.

Otherwise, if even the younger generation were to lose their lives in this war, mankind would have nothing to oppose the

Otherworldly Demonic Tribe anymore!

“Un!” Zhang Xuan nodded before making his way into the Zhang Clan Mausoleum together with Luo Ruoxin.

There were countless stone tablets lying all around. Taking a closer look, there was a name inscribed on each of the stone tablets. These were the strongest experts of the Zhang Clan in their era, but it was a pity that they were unable to escape the restraints of time. All that was left of them was a fistful of yellow dust.

No matter how talented a person was in his lifetime, in the passing of tens of thousands of years, all that would remain of them were just lonely names on blocks of stones.

With time, even history would forget who they were and what they did. All that would be left of them were their heroic spirits.

# 1670 Entering the Subterranean Gallery Once More

“It’s due to their sacrifice that mankind is able to enjoy the prosperity and stability it does at the moment. Without them, the world would have already been plunged in chaos...”

Zhang Xuan was never an emotional person. Ever since transcending over, due to his previous life, he had always viewed this world with nonchalance. However, when he saw the students of the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy charging fearlessly in the face of battle, and countless master teachers staking their life on the line in a Subterranean Gallery... To be honest, it had truly moved him.

His initial impression of the Zhang Clan was horrid, but when he saw the countless stone tablets lying around him, he couldn’t help but sigh sorrowfully.

It was not just due to its strength and accumulation that the Zhang Clan became the number one Sage Clan. More than that, it was about what they had done.

For tens of thousands of years, they had kept the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe suppressed in the Subterranean Galleries. It was due to their contribution and countless sacrifices that mankind enjoyed the current peace it did.

Without them, mankind would have never prospered and developed so far.

Boom!

While Zhang Xuan was deep in thought, he suddenly felt the ground beneath him shaking intensely. spurts of malevolent aura burst forth from beneath the ground.

Weng!

Barely after the spurts of malevolent aura reached the surface, the tombstones swiftly released a brilliant light reminiscent of the Night Illumination Pearls. Gradually, the malevolent aura dissipated silently.

The fact that the malevolent aura is able to reach here means that the seal beneath is swiftly approaching its limit. I should quickly take a look! Zhang Xuan thought.

Having been to the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy's Subterranean Gallery, he was familiar with this situation. Without any hesitation, he beckoned Luo Ruoxin and quickly advanced forward. Soon, they arrived before a massive sculpture.

It was a sculpture of the founder of the Zhang Clan.

Zhang Xuan placed his hand on it.

Weng!

With a brilliant burst of light, both he and Luo Ruoxin disappeared from the spot. In the next moment, they were already standing in the midst of darkness. Malevolent aura suffused the area, leaving one with a slight feeling of discomfort.

The two of them quickly headed forward. Soon, they arrived at a massive fortress.

This Subterranean Gallery was clearly much larger than the one beneath the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy. The fortress was formidable as well. There were all kinds of active formations shrouding it, keeping any enemy at bay.

Entering the fortress, Zhang Xuan immediately saw countless members of the Zhang Clan. They were standing in a neat formation, reminiscent of soldiers marching into war.

“Clan head!”

Upon seeing Zhang Xuan, the managing elder quickly rushed forward to greet him.

“What's the current situation?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“It doesn’t look too optimistic. The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has already launched ten attacks so far, and both sides have already sustained heavy losses. Due to the hindrance of the seal, the losses suffered by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe is considerably greater than ours. However, I fear that we won’t be able to last too long against their crazed attacks!” the elder said worriedly.

“How is the seal at the moment?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“I’m not too sure at the moment. Our men were still in control of the area a while ago, but they have been overrun by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. I fear that we are unable to approach the seal at the moment!” the elder replied.

“We have lost control over the seal? Isn’t that extremely disadvantageous to us? With the experts of our Zhang Clan, how did we lose control over the seal?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in disbelief.

The main reason why the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was unable to launch large-scale attacks previously was due to the obstruction of the spatial seals.

The spatial seals left behind by Ancient Sage Qiu Wu were incredibly powerful. Humans were able to pass through the seals freely, but not the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Thus, the defensive forces only had to camp outside the seal and slay any Otherworldly Demons who managed to slip past the seal by luck.

If the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to take control of the seal, wouldn’t they be able to squeeze as many people as they wanted into the Subterranean Gallery? This meant that their forces would grow swiftly with time!

The Zhang Clan was powerful, but it wasn’t strong enough to stand against the unhindered prowess of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe! They wouldn’t stand a chance at all!

“I was the one who ordered the members of the Zhang Clan to retreat!”

Before the elder could answer the question, another imposing voice had already echoed by the side.

Turning his head over, Zhang Xuan saw his parents, Sword Saint Xing and Sword Saint Meng, walking over with widened strides.

Hearing the words that had come from Sword Saint Xing, Zhang Xuan frowned.

“They have already completely breached the seal left behind by Ancient Sage Qiu Wu, so there isn’t any point guarding the area anymore. Rather than to expend our forces on a collapsed seal, it would be much better for us to guard this fortress instead. With the protection of the formations here, we will allow us to bring our losses down to the minimum!” Sword Saint Xing explained grimly.

“The seal has been breached?” Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly.

“Indeed. The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has truly resolved themselves this time around. They are determined to push their way into the Master Teacher Continent no matter how much losses they suffer!” Sword Saint Xing shook his head. He beckoned with his hand and said, “Follow me!”

They quickly made their ways to the fortress walls.

Gazing forward from the sentry tower, he swiftly noticed the billowing killing aura that had congregated in the distance. Countless Otherworldly Demons were standing in an orderly formation, reminiscent of an army.

Despite their stationary position, their very presence emanated great pressure on those in the fortress.

There were many tents and temporary structures erected around the army. From the looks of it, it seemed like the Otherworldly Demons also knew that it wouldn’t be easy for them to overrun the fortress.

“The seal has been breached, which means that the Otherworldly Demons can easily traverse into the Subterranean Gallery. There’s no doubt that they are biding their time so that more and more of their brethren could reinforce them. If this were to continue on, we might



potentially lose control of this Subterranean Gallery!” Zhang Xuan analyzed with a deep frown.

“I know this as well, but having fought with the Otherworldly Demons for innumerable years, we are well aware of the extent of their forces. Given that they are assaulting all 108 Subterranean Galleries simultaneously, the number of allies they will be able to gather here is going to be terribly limited. If they really wielded the strength to overrun all 108 Subterranean Galleries simultaneously, mankind would have already gone extinct many years ago!” Sword Saint Xing replied confidently.

There was an irreconcilable grudge between mankind and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

If the Otherworldly Demons were truly capable of bringing down all of the Subterranean Galleries simultaneously, they would have already done so a long time ago. There was no reason for them to contend with living in the barren otherworldly battlefield for so many years, suffering so many grievances!

“You are saying that... they are just putting on an act of bravado?” Zhang Xuan frowned doubtfully.

“I wouldn’t say that it’s just an act of bravado, but aside from waiting for the reinforcement from their allies, it’s likely that they are held back partially by fear too. They are observing the circumstances in the other Subterranean Galleries before deciding whether they should launch a decisive assault. If their forces were to be defeated in the other Subterranean Galleries, it would be meaningless even if they were to claim this one. Without reinforcement, it would only be a matter of time before we forced them back into the otherworldly battlefield. Naturally, it would be meaningless for them to incur disproportionate losses just to claim a plot of land temporarily. On the other hand, if the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were to successfully overrun the other Subterranean Galleries, we would be in grave danger too!” Sword Saint Xing said.

Zhang Xuan pondered over those words for a moment before nodding, “You’re right...”

Nevertheless, this was just a hypothesis on their part at the moment. Furthermore, even if just a single Subterranean Gallery were to be breached, mankind would surely sustain severe losses. Thus, it was of utmost importance for them to remain on their guard.

“Wait a moment. Could the same situation be happening in the other Subterranean Galleries? If that’s the case... could this be a diversion tactic?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in astonishment as a thought surfaced in his mind.

“A diversion tactic?” Sword Saint Xing, as well as the other elders of the Zhang Clan, frowned in confusion.

There didn’t seem to be anything more important than claiming the Subterranean Galleries that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had to divert their attention for.

“You have been in the Subterranean Gallery all this while, so it’s no wonder you haven’t heard of it yet. Just a moment ago, the Temple of Confucius has emerged. It’s likely that it’ll open very soon... For the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to invade all of the Subterranean Galleries at such a point in time and draw the experts of mankind here, could they be buying time? While acting as if they are waiting for reinforcements, are they just tying down our men here so that we won’t be able to focus our manpower on the Temple of Confucius?” Zhang Xuan revealed his thought.

Having crossed blows with mankind many times, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were definitely aware that they would sustain massive losses if they were to push ahead with their attacks on the Master Teacher Continent at this point in time. This was similar to the concept of ‘mutually assured destruction’ in his previous life. Even if the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had the power to claim the Master Teacher Continent, if they had to sustain heavy casualties in order to do so, was it really still meaningful for them to do so?

Was this a price they were willing to pay in exchange for defeating mankind?

And not to mention, mankind wasn’t the only major power on the Master Teacher Continent.

It was true that the Temple of Confucius and the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn were important, but was it so important that they had to sacrifice the lives of so many Otherworldly Demons to acquire it?

In other words, could the reason why they weren't in a rush to attack be because they had already achieved their motives? They had already stalled the most of the experts of mankind here, which meant that they would be in an advantageous position in the fight over the Temple of Confucius!

# 1671 Venturing Alone

“This...” Sword Saint Xing fell silent.

He found his son’s conjecture to be very plausible too.

If the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe truly wanted to take down mankind, there was no reason for them to disperse their forces across 108 Subterranean Galleries. The dispersion of forces would make it much more troublesome for mankind to cope with their assault, but it would hinder them from launching a decisive assault either.

It would have been much more efficient if they had just focused their forces on a couple of Subterranean Galleries. Had they resorted to concentrated, surprise attacks on a couple of the more loosely guarded Subterranean Galleries, their chances of success would have been much higher.

“Even if the Otherworldly Demons were to keep us preoccupied at the Subterranean Galleries, they wouldn’t be able to dominate the Temple of Confucius with just a small handful of experts. If what you said is true, it would mean that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has already snuck most of their experts over to the Master Teacher Continent!” Sword Saint Xing said gravely.

Tens of thousands of years of accumulation had filled the ranks of the Master Teacher Pavilion with countless experts. With the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn was at stake over here, there was no way the Master Teacher Pavilion was going to hold back. Without a doubt, the grand elders and old ancestors of the Master Teacher Pavilion were going to emerge from their seclusion as well.

It would seem to the common populace that they had already disappeared into the annals of history, but there was no way to tell for certain if they had truly passed away or not!

Some of them would have already passed away, but there was bound to be a handful who had chosen to go into hibernation,

just like the Ancient Sages. They were biding their time for the opportunity that would allow them to make a breakthrough in their cultivation.

It would appear on the surface that Yang Shi was the strongest expert beneath the Ancient Sages, but it would do to remember that he was only in his eight hundreds. Given how large the Master Teacher Continent was, there were bound to be seniors who had dominated the eras prior to him, especially since the lifespan of a Great Sage was 1500 years.

Even if some had passed away, there had to be some who were still living and kicking!

Had Temple of Confucius not opened, they might have still chosen to remain in seclusion. This way, they would be able to lessen the loss of their vitality and lengthen their lifespans as long as possible. However, with the opening of the Temple of Confucius just around the corner, they were bound to make a move.

If anything, it was likely that the key to achieving a breakthrough to Ancient Sage lay within the Temple of Confucius. Perhaps, they might even find treasures that would allow them to lengthen their lifespan... This was the very opportunity they were waiting for, so there was no way they would remain impassive before it!

And there was just no way the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would have failed to consider this in their plans.

Since they were willing to go to the extent of sacrificing a significant number of their brethren in order to stall the experts of the Master Teacher Pavilion and the major powers, there was no doubt that they were determined to claim the Temple of Confucius. Naturally, they would have to dispatch a sufficiently powerful force into the Master Teacher Continent in order to ensure that they would achieve their goal.

“I have encountered some Otherworldly Demons on the Master Teacher Continent not too long ago. Most of them were at Sempiternal realm, and there were even Ancient Sages amongst them!” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

Back when he was at the Harvest Valley City Seer Guild, he had slain five Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm Otherworldly Demons. The fighting prowess they commanded was noteworthy, possibly on par with the grand elders of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

Furthermore, he even met a living Ancient Sage there!

Given how even the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages were able to circumvent the detection of the Master Teacher Pavilion, he couldn't begin to imagine just how many Otherworldly Demons had successfully infiltrated the Master Teacher Continent!

Just the very thought of it sent shudders down his spine.

In the worst-case scenario, perhaps the forces before them were all ordinary soldiers bearing the mission to stall them here; in truth, the Great Sage Otherworldly Demons had already successfully infiltrated the Master Teacher Continent.

“Did you encounter any Great Sage Otherworldly Demons in the battle so far?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“While we were guarding the seal, your father and I encountered an expert and clashed with him. He was a fearsome foe. If not for our collaborative swordsmanship, we might not have been able to return alive. That being said, I still sustained some injuries in the fight,” Sword Saint Meng replied.

“You are injured?” Zhang Xuan quickly turned a worried look over.

“Don't worry, it's nothing major. I have already consumed a recovery pill!” Seeing that her son was worried about her, Sword Saint Meng replied with a reassuring smile.

“That's a relief...” Zhang Xuan nodded. “An opponent which requires your collaborative swordsmanship to deal with is bound to be at Sempiternal realm at the very minimum...”

The Xingmeng Sword Saints were at Great Sage 3-dan Intuitive Impulse realm consummation, but the prowess they were able to bring out through their collaborative

swordsmanship was beyond what an average Sempiternal realm cultivator would be able to deal with!

If Sword Saint Meng still ended up sustaining some injuries even after they had executed your collaborative swordsmanship, it would mean to say that the opponent they had faced was extremely powerful.

If the goal of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe was to claim dominance in the Temple of Confucius, they should have dispatched all of their top experts to the Master Teacher Continent. It was truly surprising to hear that there would still be a Sempiternal realm cultivator in the ranks of the enemy.

Of course, it was still too early to come to a conclusion at this point in time, but this did weaken the credibility of his argument.

“No matter what their motive is, I want to take a look at it personally to verify it. It won’t do for us to continue biding our time here blindly!” Unable to make sense out of the matter, Zhang Xuan raised his head and said.

At this rate, mankind would find itself losing a large group of experts for the Temple of Confucius. If the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe successfully amassed most of the treasures in the Temple of Confucius as a result of that, mankind would be placed in an even more disadvantageous position in the war.

However, with a massive army of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe standing right before them, they couldn’t afford to just leave their posts and reinforce the Temple of Confucius either.

If his conjecture was true, the ideal plan would be to assault the army before them right now and regain control over the seal as soon as possible before reinforcing the Temple of Confucius.

However, if his conjecture were to be false, they would be abandoning the protection of the formation, and this was an extremely risky move.

Thus, the only thing he could do at the moment was to scout the situation himself and uncover the true intentions of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

“You wish to take a look personally? That won’t do! You are the head of the Three Premier Clans and the Sanctum of Sages! If something were to happen to you, it would be a huge setback to mankind!” Sword Saint Xing immediately expressed his vehement opposition toward Zhang Xuan’s decision.

His son wielded massive influence in mankind, possibly even greater than Ren Qingyuan and Yang Shi. There was no doubt that he would play a crucial role in uniting the forces of mankind in the war against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

They couldn’t afford to allow him to take such a risk!

If he were to be caught by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe while scouting the situation, the chances of him returning alive were extremely slim. Even if they were to mobilize the full prowess of the Zhang Clan to rescue him, it was unlikely that the operation would be in their favor.

It was the greatest blessing of mankind for someone who wielded considerable influence in most major powers of the Master Teacher Continent to appear at this juncture. Such a figure could easily become a binding force in constructing an allied army of mankind. If he were to pass away, mankind would be scattered once more. It would be a huge setback in the war against the powerful Otherworldly Demons.

“You can’t go!” Sword Saint Meng exclaimed in fright too.

“I have comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. I understand that the spatial seal has been breached, and I believe that I might be able to mend it. If I were to succeed, the Otherworldly Demons wouldn’t be able to bring in their reinforcements easily, thus increasing our likelihood of a victory... Don’t worry, I have plenty of life preservation means up my sleeves. Besides, I’m just going to see what they are up to. It’s not as if I’m going to start a battle with them or anything. They won’t be able to find me easily!” Knowing their worries, Zhang Xuan reassured with a smile.

“But...” Sword Saint Meng was still extremely worried.



“This is something I have to do. I’ll just be scouting for intelligence, so the level of danger would be much lower. If you don’t believe me, you can ask Ruoxin!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Zhang Xuan will be fine if it’s just simple scouting,” Luo Ruoxin reassured with a nod.

Her disguise amulet was able to disguise even one’s bloodline, so he wouldn’t face any trouble disguising as an Otherworldly Demon. Besides, even if something were to happen, Zhang Xuan had the ability to get away as long as his opponent wasn’t an Ancient Sage. There was indeed nothing to worry about.

“Then... You must make sure to proceed with utmost caution. If you were to notice anything amiss, head back right away. Don’t push yourself, alright?” Seeing that even Luo Ruoxin had said such words, Sword Saint Meng hesitated for a moment before reluctantly nodding in agreement.

“I will!” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

Taking a deep breath, he leaped down from the city walls.

While descending down, his figure suddenly vanished without a trace before everyone’s eyes.

“This...”

“How did our clan head disappear?”

“I can’t sense him with my Spiritual Perception!”

The elders exclaimed with widened eyes.

“It’s a maneuver of the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing. Through sealing the space around his body, he is able to redirect light and Spiritual Perception away from him, thus making it nigh impossible to perceive his presence. Unless one’s soul cultivation or comprehension of space reaches a certain level, it would be impossible to find him,” Luo Ruoxin explained to the confused crowd.

Realization dawned upon the crowd.

They didn’t know that it was possible to manipulate space in such a manner to produce such mystical effects.

It was no wonder why the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing was the highest heritage of the Luo Clan. Its prowess truly didn't disappoint!

If they were able to conceal their figure through such a method as well, it would effectively mean that they could march right into the enemy camp openly without catching anyone's notice!

They were still a little worried over the safety of their clan head a moment ago, but after seeing what he was capable of, their hearts were put at ease.

With the ability to conceal himself and the ability to accelerate time, he would surely be able to overcome any danger and return safely!

# 1672 General Auer

Sou sou sou!

Using the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, Zhang Xuan concealed his figure and quickly advanced toward the encampment of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

It didn't take long for him to arrive before the enemy barracks and halted his footsteps.

'Cruck cruck cruck', his bones and muscles began warping, and his height by a chi. By the time he was done, he looked no different from any other Otherworldly Demons.

Of course, he didn't neglect to alter his aura either. This time around, however, he held himself back quite a bit such that the killing intent he emanated wasn't as pure as what it would ordinarily be. It was even beneath the level of Greenleaf King and the others, no different from an ordinary soldier in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

After completing his disguise, he descended onto the ground. He swiftly found a group of patrolling soldiers and discreetly crept up to the Otherworldly Demon soldier lagging behind at the back. Raising his finger, he tapped the back of the Otherworldly Demon soldier lightly.

Puhe!

It was a silent first blood. He hurriedly kept the corpse of the Otherworldly Demon soldier into his storage ring.

After cleaning up the scene, he quickly morphed his appearance into that of the Otherworldly Demon soldier. Of course, he wouldn't forget something as basic as to change his clothes as well.

So, when he revealed his figure once more, he was already wearing a heavy set of armor with a long spear in his hand. He broke free of the group he was following and marched his way into the main encampment.

The Otherworldly Demons were very particular with their defenses. It was apparent with a swift glance that the defensive formations they had set up were the work of an expert. It was fortunate that Sword Saint Xing had made the call to stand guard at the fortress. If they had really attempted to breach these formations, the Zhang Clan could very well lose half of its entire army.

These formations are slightly dissimilar to those of the Formation Master Guild. They are inscribed using the runes of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Those who step into these formations will be struck by a gush of killing intent, placing them in a state of disorientation... Zhang Xuan thought as he analyzed the formations carefully.

He had encountered similar formations when he descended into the Subterranean Gallery the first time around. However, the formations he had seen back then could only be said to be mediocre compared to those standing before him right now.

Even Saint 9-dan experts would suffer a bout of light-headedness if they were to barge into the formations carelessly, let alone weaker cultivators.

Of course, due to their unique constitution, these formations wouldn't affect Otherworldly Demons.

As Zhang Xuan proceeded ahead, he carefully analyzed the structure of the formations and deduced the locations of their cruxes. Following which, he discreetly infused his Heaven's Path zhenqi into those formations. However, he didn't rush into destroying them.

He was here to scout intelligence. If he were to destroy the formations right now, it would only expose the presence of a spy within the encampment, thus tightening the security of the base. That would only make it harder for him to do his job.

So far, the cultivation of the Otherworldly Demons he had encountered ranged from Saint 3-dan to Saint 9-dan. He hadn't encountered any Great Sage Otherworldly Demon yet, but they could just be located in the deeper parts of the encampment.

The Qingtian Lineage can't even begin to compare to this... Zhang Xuan couldn't help but shake his head.

The Otherworldly Demon Kings of the Qingtian Lineage had only barely reached Primordial Spirit realm, and even the Qingtian Emperor himself was only at Saint 6-dan Grand Dominion realm. That bit of fighting prowess was truly pathetic compared to the troops right before him.

From the looks of it, it seemed like there was a massive gap in abilities even amongst fellow 'Emperors'. Of course, it could also be possible that the Qingtian Lineage was an exception.

It was a pity that Vicious was still in a state of hibernation at the moment. Otherwise, Vicious would surely have regained another significant portion of his memories after fusing with his upper body. He would be able to ask the latter about the circumstances in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe and take precautions against them accordingly.

"You are supposed to patrol the area and check if there are any threats in the area. Why are you loitering around here?"

All of a sudden, Zhang Xuan heard a harsh voice sounding behind him. Turning his head around, he saw an Otherworldly Demon wearing a black helmet walking toward him with a displeased frown on his forehead.

The Otherworldly Demon was at Saint 8-dan. Judging from his tone, it seemed like he was a relatively high ranking officer in the army.

He spoke in the native tongue of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Fortunately, Zhang Xuan had already learned the language the first time he descended into a Subterranean Gallery. In fact, it was using the language that he managed to fool the Goldenleaf King and the Greenleaf King into killing one another.

"Someone has just switched places with me, so I came back to the encampment to rest a while!" Zhang Xuan quickly lowered his head and bowed.

Zhang Xuan noted that the Otherworldly Demon soldier had just switched shift with another group, and that was also the

primary reason why he chose to attack the latter. If the Otherworldly Demon soldier was still on his shift, it might have taken him a bit more trouble to switch positions with him.

“Follow me. There’s something I need you to do!” the black helmet Otherworldly Demon harrumphed coldly as he beckoned Zhang Xuan to follow him.

“Yes, sir!”

In order not to give himself away, Zhang Xuan obediently followed the black helmet Otherworldly Demon.

The black helmet Otherworldly Demon proceeded on to assemble ten other Otherworldly Demon soldiers. The soldiers that he had picked out were all the lowest Saint 3-dan soldiers, similar to the one which Zhang Xuan was disguised as.

“What does General Auer want us to do?”

Following obediently behind the black helmet Otherworldly Demon, one of the Otherworldly Demon soldiers asked the group discreetly.

“I’m not too sure either, but I guess it should be some kind of construction work!” the Otherworldly Demon beside shook his head and replied.

“Construction? Haven’t we completed the construction of the base already?”

“Don’t ask unnecessary questions. We just have to do whatever General Auer orders us to do. Poke your noses in where it doesn’t belong, and you won’t even know how you died!” one of the Otherworldly Demon soldiers harrumphed impatiently, and the crowd fell silent.

“That fellow is called General Auer?” Zhang Xuan took careful note of the name.

The black helmet Otherworldly Demon hadn’t executed any battle technique yet, so he had no way of knowing the other party’s identity. In any case, he should remember the name first so as to not mess up later on.

“Stop!”

After walking for a while, they stopped before a peculiarly designed building. The black helmet General Auer stepped forward, pushed open the door, and led the way in.

The interiors of the building appeared empty. There were only a couple of massive boxes placed within.

Each of these boxes was roughly a person tall, and they were placed in an orderly fashion, roughly ten meters apart from one another.

Sensing that something was amiss over here, Zhang Xuan took a closer look at the boxes. There was no pulsation of power coming from the boxes, which indicated that it wasn't inscribed with any formations or seals.

"I want you all to move the boxes over to the other side!" General Auer ordered.

He gathered us here just to move a couple of boxes? Zhang Xuan thought in bewilderment.

The other Otherworldly Demon soldiers were confused by the situation before them as well.

At their cultivation realm, they could easily use their Spiritual Perception to keep anything into their storage ring and place them elsewhere... Yet, they were all gathered here to accomplish something as easy as this?

"What are you all dawdling for? Hurry up!" Seeing that no one was moving at all, General Auer's face darkened. "You just have to do what is ordered of you. There's no need for you to know anything at all!"

"Yes, sir!"

Not daring to protest against their superior, they hurriedly carried the boxes and brought them out of the building.

These boxes weren't heavy at all. Zhang Xuan attempted to extend his Spiritual Perception through the box to take a peek at what was placed within, but as if there was a seal cast over its exterior, his Spiritual Perception was unable to seep in at all.

He tried using the Library of Heaven's Path as well, but he could only compile information on the box but not what was within it. Eventually, he could only give up on it and obediently follow the crowd out.

"Make sure the boxes are the same distances away from one another!" General Ayer ordered sternly.

As Saint 3-dan cultivators, each of the Otherworldly Demon soldiers possessed exceptional memory. They quickly got into the same formation as the boxes when they first saw them in the building.

"Good!" Seeing the formation put up by the crowd, General Ayer nodded in satisfaction before gesturing them to head forward.

Maintaining the same distance amongst one another, they began marching forward.

What is the purpose of maintaining the distances amongst the boxes? Zhang Xuan frowned in incomprehension.

If these boxes were parts of a formation or something, he could still understand the need to maintain their positions relative to one another. However, the fact that he couldn't feel any pulsations of energy from them showed that that wasn't the case. Thus, was there really a need to be so concerned with such a minor detail?

More importantly, why couldn't they move the boxes with their storage rings instead?

Hm?

Perplexed by the peculiar situation, Zhang Xuan activated his Eye of Insight and observed his surroundings carefully. With a look, his body stiffened in astonishment, This feeling... It's similar to how I felt whenever I enter a Seer Guild... They are trying to conceal something from the heavens?33.3cm



# 1673 Half-Ancient Sage Artifac

Affected by the notion that the boxes were positioned to create some sort of mysterious formation, his thoughts didn't wander in such a direction earlier. However, under the discerning gaze of the Eye of Insight, he swiftly noticed an anomaly.

There was nothing wrong with the boxes individually. But when they were placed in a specific formation, it created a feeling which was strikingly similar to the sensation he felt when he entered a Seer Guild.

It was possible to use Spiritual Perception and all other means on a Seer Guild, but it was impossible to use divination arts on the Seer Guild!

Of course, this didn't mean to say that seers were unable to divine from within the Seer Guild. It only meant that it was impossible to divine anyone and anything within the Seer Guild. In a sense, it was similar to a one-sided mirror, where those within the Seer Guild were able to divine what was outside, but those outside were unable to divine what was within the Seer Guild.

Upper Nine Paths, Middle Nine Paths, and Lower Nine Paths; the word 'nine' in each of these terms symbolized the idea of the extremities. It didn't mean that there were only nine occupations in each of these paths. In fact, there were way more than thirty recognized official occupations in the world.

There were numerous occupations which Zhang Xuan had never learned before. Nevertheless, with the books he had read over the past year, he was still able to participate in a conversation regarding their technicalities. But when it came to seer... he really didn't know a thing at all!

He had attempted to learn divination art within a Seer Guild before, but as soon as he attempted to read them, countless bolts of lightning fell from the heavens.

The Library of Heaven's Path in his mind represented the heavens, and the seers who sought to peer into the secrets of the heavens were no different than thieves to them. Naturally, the Library of Heaven's Path wouldn't allow for the existence of any divination arts in its line of sight, which effectively made it impossible for him to learn them too.

It was because of this that he had no choice but to give up on the notion of learning anything relating to divination.

Nevertheless, he could still distinctly recognize the sensation he felt within a Seer Guild, and it was identical to what he was feeling at the moment.

I thought that the entire Seer Guild had colluded with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to help them sneak onto the Master Teacher Continent, but that might not necessarily be the case! Zhang Xuan thought.

Ever since the theft of Vicious' upper body, he had been thinking that the entire Seer Guild had betrayed mankind. Otherwise, they should have divined the arrival of the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sages into the Master Teacher Continent and reported it to the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

But thinking about it again, they didn't need the cooperation of the entire Seer Guild for that. All they needed was a 9-star seer to collude with them in order to create such artifacts. With these anti-divination artifacts, they would be able to conceal the Ancient Sages from the heavens, thus bypassing the divination of the entire Seer Guild!

But why would these anti-divination artifacts be here? Unless it's a prolonged war, our seers are unlikely to pose much threat to the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe... Or could it be that they were planning to use it to assassinate the Xingmeng Sword Saints? Zhang Xuan's mind swiftly whirred into action.

With their ability to divine the future, seers were indeed troublesome individuals to deal with. However, they had their limitations too. They were only able to divine specific individuals or the general state of matters, so they wouldn't be of much help in uncovering crucial military intelligence such

as the enemy's strategies and plans. As a result of that, their utility in massive and chaotic battles was severely limited.

For this reason, the Zhang Clan didn't bring any of its seers to the battlefield either.

The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe should have known this too, so it was likely that these boxes weren't prepared in order to deal with the seers.

And putting aside the seers, the only ones who would be affected by the anti-divination artifacts were the Xingmeng Sword Saints instead.

The Xingmeng Sword Saints were at Great Sage 3-dan Intuitive Impulse realm, which allowed them to instinctively sense danger and take actions to avoid it. The boxes would seal that ability of theirs too, thus making it much easier for them to carry out an assassination.

It's one thing if I am unaware of it, but now that I have discovered such a matter, I won't stand on ceremony then... Zhang Xuan thought as his lips crept up.

Others might still have to resort to physical attacks in order to destroy these anti-divination artifacts, but he was different!

All he had to do was to tap into his Library of Heaven's Path, and he would be able to bring lightning upon them...

I shouldn't rush into it first. I have already promised Little Tribulation that I would offer him some pointers. If I were to summon him over, I should at least offer him some guidance so he would be able to grow stronger. If I could make him strong enough to destroy all of these Otherworldly Demons, that would be for the best... Zhang Xuan thought.

It wasn't too easy to summon a lightning tribulation in the Subterranean Gallery, but with the provocation from these blasphemous artifacts, the heavens would surely answer the calls of the Library of Heaven's Path and bring retribution down upon these heathens!

Just that... he had come encountered with the lightning tribulation that brought retribution to seers several times in the past, but unlike the wonderful indiscriminate area of effect

devastation typical to cultivation ordeals, this lightning tribulation only struck specific artifacts or individuals... What did he have to do in order to summon a sufficiently large lightning tribulation to kill all of these Otherworldly Demons?

These Otherworldly Demons wouldn't be as 'law-abiding' as the cultivators from the Glacier Plain Court and Sanctum of Sages. If a lightning tribulation were to appear above them right now, they would dispel it right away before it could even grow into anything.

Against an entire army, there was no way a lightning tribulation could stand a chance. Otherwise, they could simply dispatch a random chap on the verge of a breakthrough into the heart of the enemy base and call forth a lightning tribulation to annihilate the enemy.

Besides, ordinary lightning tribulation wouldn't pose much of a threat to cultivators beyond Aureate Body realm as long as they were prepared for it. At their level, only heavenly flames would be able to pose some danger to them.

The Otherworldly Demon who had fought the Xingmeng Sword Saints to a draw was likely to be at Sempiternal realm at the very minimum, so ordinary lightning tribulations were definitely not of much use against him.

If I want to do it, I'll have to summon a sufficiently powerful lightning tribulation right from the start. Otherwise, I'll only alarm them... Zhang Xuan thought as he suppressed his urge to use the Library of Heaven's Path.

"Halt!"

Even though Zhang Xuan's thoughts were flying around the place, he was still able to continue walking in file with the other Otherworldly Demon soldiers. They traveled for over several li before General Auer finally raised his hand and halted them.

Seeing that the crowd had stopped their footsteps, Zhang Xuan didn't dare to display any anomaly either

"Place the boxes down here, and you may return!"

"Yes, sir!"

The crowd nodded their heads hurriedly. They quickly put down the boxes down before leaving the area.

Zhang Xuan left along with the departing Otherworldly Demon soldiers as well, but after traveling some distance away, he discreetly cast a spatial seal over himself, thus concealing himself from view, before sneaking back.

Shortly after he returned to the area, he saw a huge Otherworldly Demon walking over.

The huge Otherworldly Demon emanated an aura far stronger than the others, giving rise to an incredibly intimidating presence. The powerful killing intent he harnessed produced an ink-like manifestation around him. Even a glance at him would cause the killing intent to intrude one's mind, stripping one of one's fighting prowess.

An Otherworldly Demon Emperor! Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

Just the sheer intensity of the killing intent emanated by the huge Otherworldly Demon had already surpassed that of the Qingtian Emperor. He had only felt something similar to this from Vicious and the Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage he had killed. Of course, the presence of the Otherworldly Demon before him was far weaker as compared to those two, but it was still plenty formidable...

Even if he wasn't an Otherworldly Demon Emperor, he was likely to be very close to becoming one.

"Paying respects to the Commander!" General Auer hurriedly clasped his fist and greeted the tall Otherworldly Demon.

"Un!" the Commander nodded. "You may take your leave now. I don't want anyone interrupting me."

"Yes, Commander!" General Auer nodded before swiftly leaving the area.

After ensuring that there was no one around, the Commander took a step toward the boxes. With a majestic wave of his hands, all of the boxes around him burst open, revealing the secrets hidden beneath them.

Within each of those boxes were stone platforms of equivalent height. A mirror was placed on top of each of these stone platforms.

These mirrors were veered at different angles. As light swiftly reflected off them, they swiftly formed a tortoiseshell-like hologram in the air.

The appearance of the hologram deepened the sensation Zhang Xuan felt. This was a sign that the concealment barrier against the heavens had grown even stronger. If he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, he would have never guessed that there were such artifacts hidden in the boxes.

“There's still another box there...”

At this point, Zhang Xuan couldn't help but notice that there was another box in the middle that remained unopened.

The Commander closed his eyes and felt the aura around him before walking up to the box in the middle. He gently placed his hand on upon the box.

Kacha!

The box burst open as well, revealing a blood crimson saber floating quietly in the air. The handle of the saber was an elongated skull with a vicious face, and the entire weapon seemed to command a sinister presence.

What a formidable saber... It isn't on par with the Dragonbone Divine Spear, but it's indubitably an extraordinary artifact... Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

The malevolent aura emanating from the saber was far stronger than the sword from Ancient Sage Zi Rong which Nangong Yuanfeng had given the Luo Clan!

“That is a Half-Ancient Sage artifact!” the voice of the Dragonbone Divine Spear sounded in Zhang Xuan's mind.

# 1674 On the Verge of Insanity

“A Half-Ancient Sage artifact?”

“Indeed. Between Great Sage and Ancient Sage, there’s still a Half-Ancient Sage tier. Cultivators wielding artifacts of such a tier would be able to slay even Sempiternal realm cultivators with ease. It’s still nowhere close to competing with a true Ancient Sage artifact like me though. As long as master reaches Ancient Sage, my seal will be released, and I’ll gain fighting prowess on par with Ancient Sage cultivators!” the Dragonbone Divine Spear explained.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan’s face turned grim.

If the Otherworldly Demon were to really use a weapon of such prowess to assault the Xingmeng Sword Saints, they might very well fall victim to it.

“Damn these scoundrels!” Zhang Xuan cursed beneath his breath.

He thought that the Otherworldly Demons were afraid to make a move, but who could have thought that they were actually preparing their trump card!

“I can’t let them succeed!”

Having lived as an orphan in his previous life, while he found it difficult to express his feelings, he did treasure the familial ties he had with the Xingmeng Sword Saints. Yet, the Otherworldly Demons actually wanted to assassinate them... Unforgivable!

There was no way he could allow them to succeed!

However... with his current strength, unless he were to use the Ancient Sage corpse, it would be impossible for him to defeat the Commander standing before him!

But if he were to use the Ancient Sage corpse right now, he would deplete his soul energy swiftly. Given that he was currently in the midst of the enemy's encampment, that was an extremely risky move to do.

Hu!

Just as Zhang Xuan was still pondering over how he should deal with the Commander, he saw the latter abruptly taking a breath. A burst of power flurried from the Commander. Gritting his teeth, the Commander stepped forward and grabbed the demonic saber.

Tzzzzzz!

A crimson glow flickered from the skeletal handle of the demonic saber. With an abrupt jolt, the demonic saber knocked the Commander away and assaulted him with a gush of malevolent aura.

The Commander's face darkened upon seeing this sight, and he hurriedly retreated two steps. It took a while before he managed to suppress the raging energies in his body.

He paused for a moment before speaking slowly, "I don't intend to tame you. I just need you to help me to slay two people!"

It went without saying that the Half-Ancient Sage artifact had a weapon spirit, so it was possible to negotiate with it.

Weng weng weng!

However, it didn't seem like the skull on the demonic saber was willing to listen to his words at all. It fell silent after jolting the Commander away, completely disregarding his words. It was as if it was telling the Commander that he would have to show ample strength to prove himself worthy of speaking to it first!

"Since you aren't willing to cooperate, don't blame me for taking extreme measures then..." Seeing how arrogant the demonic saber was, the Commander's complexion didn't look too good either.



Narrowing his eyes, light began gathering on the surface of his palm before eventually forming a transparent, thin film. Following which, he stepped forward and grabbed the demonic saber once more.

Tzzzzzz!

The demonic saber had no intentions to give in either. The two formidable forces collided with one another, causing dimension rifts to surface in the surroundings.

Due to the seer artifacts and the formation cast over the area, despite the powerful shockwaves diffusing into the surroundings as a result of their clashes, not the slightest hint of energy leaked out of the area.

That so-called Commander fellow hasn't tamed the demonic saber yet! Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

It seemed like the mirrors served two purposes. Firstly, it was to dull the Xingmeng Sword Saints instincts so as to enhance the chances of conducting a successful assassination. Secondly, it was to conceal the existence of this Half-Ancient Sage saber.

That would also explain why they had to move the boxes manually. If the saber had already been tamed, they might have been able to keep it into a storage ring. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case, so they had no choice but to go through the additional trouble.

Considering how powerful the Commander already was, if he were to successfully tame the demonic saber, even if his assassination were to fail in the end, his prowess was still beyond what the Xingmeng Sword Saints could deal with.

This is perfect! I'll just have to stop him from taming the demonic saber... Zhang Xuan was still wondering how he should stop the Commander, but since the latter hadn't tamed the demonic saber yet, this matter would be much easier to resolve.

While the Commander was devoting all of his strength into dealing with the saber, Zhang Xuan began to move his muscles and bones once more.

Geji! Geji!

In the blink of an eye, he had already assumed another identity.

...

In the midst of the formation of mirrors, the Commander eyed the demonic saber before him warily.

He knew how powerful the demonic saber was, so he didn't dare to hold back at all. He drove his zhenqi to the limits and sent a concentrated barrage of powerful attacks one after another against the demonic saber.

He could feel the winds of the battle gradually turning in his favor. This was the decisive moment, he couldn't allow his attention to wander at all. If he were to push his way through, he was confident he would be able to win the acknowledgement of the demonic saber.

But at this crucial moment, he heard flurried footsteps outside.

Following which, a figure came into sight. He was the person whom he had just dismissed a moment ago, General Auer. The latter walked right up to him, clasped his fist, and bowed, "Commander, I have already relayed your orders to the men. No one will interrupt you anymore. You can cultivate with a peace of mind!"

"..." The Commander's body twitched upon hearing those words.

Most Great Sage cultivators were strong enough to multitask, but dealing with the demonic saber left no room for his concentration to wander. Not only did he have to fend off its furious assault, more importantly, he had to keep the demonic saber's malevolent aura from corroding his mind too. At a time like this, silence was of utmost importance.

This was also the reason why the Commander had ordered General Auer to keep anyone from interrupting him... Yet, this fool actually barged in just to report to him that he had fulfilled the order...

Do you have any common sense?!

Isn't it obvious that my order includes you as well? How am I supposed to cultivate with a peace of mind with you around?

"You're dismissed!" Suppressing the urge to give General Auer a tight slap, the Commander bellowed with a wintry voice.

Huhu!

The sudden fluctuation in his emotions opened a gap for the malevolent aura of the demonic saber to seep into his mind, causing his consciousness to blur a little. As a result of that, his movements grew a little sluggish.

"Yes, Commander!" General Auer replied resoundingly before taking a step back, seemingly about to leave the room. However, just as he was about to step out of the door, he abruptly halted his footsteps, as if having recalled something. He turned around and asked, "Commander, it's going to be lunchtime very soon. Do you want to have beef brisket noodles or omelette du fromage? I'll get the kitchen to prepare one portion specially for you!"

"Beef brisket noodles? Omelette du fromage?" the Commander was startled by those words.

Do we have such food over here?

As long as there was ample spiritual energy, cultivators at their level could easily fast for over ten years... Given that they were in the midst of the war, who would be in a mood to eat beef brisket noodles or omelette du fromage, whatever that was!

"Scram!"

He was in a crucial period of the taming process, and he needed absolute silence at this moment. Yet, that fellow just had to prattle on and on by the side. If the Commander had hypertension, his veins would have already popped from sheer anger!

That momentary distraction from General Auer allowed the demonic saber, which had just been forced into a disadvantageous position, to make a comeback. It sent a gush of malevolent aura toward the Commander, further blurring

his consciousness. The splitting headache caused by the malevolent aura caused cold sweat to trickle down the Commander's head.

“Ah? You don't seem to be in too good of a mood... Do you want some iced water to cool yourself down?” General Auer asked with a concerned tone. “Look how much you are sweating! Are you feeling unwell?”

“...” the Commander.

Screw you screw you screw you! Why have I never noticed that this idiot has such an irritating mouth before?

You are a general, not a chef or an attendant! Furthermore, isn't it plain to see that I'm busy at the moment? Just why are you so determined to trouble me at this moment?

“I told you to scram! Scram!!!” Unable to take it any longer, the Commander howled with a mixture of fury and desperation in his voice.

However, it didn't seem like his intimidation was working very well as the other party's voice soon sounded once more, “Wow, there's no need to get so touchy. You could have told me that you weren't thirsty... What about soup then? I heard that the kitchen has just boiled an amazing pork bone soup. Shall I serve a bowl to you too?”

PUUUU!

Something within the Commander snapped at the moment. In the next, however, the malevolent aura successfully breached the mental defenses of the Commander, causing his face to pale and fresh blood to spew from his mouth.

Freak you! Are you done or not?

Are you really blind? Can't you see that I'm in the midst of taming the demonic saber?

Get some common sense, you jackass!

Suppressing the boiling rage within him, the Commander took deep breaths, and with forced composure, he spat through gritted teeth, “I don't want food, I don't want water, and I

don't want soup too. Now, get out of this room and stop bothering me!"

"Commander, you don't have to worry! I have relayed strict orders to the men, so you can be certain that no one would dare to bother you! Only fools seeking death would dare to oppose your orders. Even if you don't say a word, I would slay that dimwit with my own hands!" General Auer waved his hand grandly and spoke with an imposing demeanor.

The Commander felt a stabbing pain in his chest.

Is there a screw loose in your mind? What makes you think that I am referring to others? The one who is bothering me is you!

Just as the Commander was about to hurl expletives at that dense subordinate of his, General Auer turned his earnest gaze to him once more and asked, "Commander, isn't it a little too boring to be idling around here without doing anything? Shall we sing together? If you are too shy, I don't mind singing for you either!"

"Pu!" the Commander spurted another mouthful of blood.

# 1675 Taming the Demonic Saber

This was the first time the Commander came to know what being on the verge of insanity felt like. He felt like he could suffer a mental breakdown there and then!

Sing sing sing, sing your head!

I am a member of Otherworldly Demon royalty, a Sempiternal realm expert. Yet, you want me to sing with you?

Did your head get crushed under a boulder?

A highly capable and tactful subordinate General Auer was, the Commander had always regarded him highly and treated him as his confidant. The latter was extremely good at reading the atmosphere and would never do anything that overstepped his boundary. Why would he suddenly become such a pain in the ass to deal with today?

I told you clearly not to disturb me, but you seem to be finding all sorts of nonsense to bug me. Are you doing this purposely?

A thought suddenly came to the Commander's mind, and he hurriedly took a closer look at General Auer. However, the appearance, the soul aura, the killing intent, and the intonation when he spoke, they were all identical to the General Auer he knew...

If he really had to point out a difference, it would be the helmet...

Wait, the helmet was different?

Could it be that this fellow wasn't General Auer but another person in disguise? But he had never heard of anyone in the world who was able to put up such a convincing disguise which even he was unable to see through!

While he was still deep in thought, General Auer took in a deep breath and said, "Very well, I'll go first then... Kong shi

had a little lamb, little lamb, little lamb...”

“Pu!” The Commander spurted yet another mouthful of blood. With his eyes reddened with rage, he hollered, “I’ll kill you first!”

Unable to stand this nonsense any longer, he decisively retracted his palm from the demonic saber and thrust it toward General Auer instead.

General Auer’s constant harassment had already placed him in a bad position against the demonic saber, and abruptly releasing his grasp from it only served to worsen his situation. A surge of malevolent aura overran his body, leaving him light-headed.

This single move had already inflicted severe damage to his Primordial Spirit. He knew that it would take him at least half a year to make a full recovery. However... he couldn’t take it anymore!

Not even his mother was as naggy as this!

If he didn’t kill this bastard right now, his heart might just explode from all the rage he had accumulated within!

Boom!

The might of his palm poured forth like a ferocious dragon, surging forward with unstoppable momentum. In an instant, it had already arrived right before General Auer.

Horrified, General Auer hurriedly hid behind one of the stone platforms as he cried out indignantly, “Commander, I am your beloved Auer!”

An anti-divination mirror was placed on top of the stone platform. If the Commander were to push forward with his attack, there was no doubt that he would damage the mirror, and that could potentially reveal the existence of the demonic saber.

Left with no choice, he could only retract his palm strike hurriedly.

An instant after he retracted his palm strike, General Auer’s anxious voice sounded in his ears, “Commander, be careful!

Someone is attacking you from above!”

The Commander hurriedly raised his head, but other than a thick layer of mist above, there wasn't anyone in sight.

Hu!

Realizing that he had been tricked, the Commander quickly lowered his gaze, only to see a spear piercing straight for his chest.

Caught off guard by the extraordinary strength and speed coming from General Auer's attack, the Commander's face darkened. He quickly tilted his body in order to evade the pierce.

Puhe!

But even so, the spear still tore a deep laceration across his chest, causing his blood to flow profusely.

“A Great Sage artifact?”

The Commander narrowed his eyes in shock.

His physical body had been tempered by the heavenly flame tribulation, so ordinary weapons couldn't even hope to hurt him. To inflict a glaring laceration on his Aureate Body, there was no doubt that the spear was a Great Sage artifact!

This realization also made him acutely aware that the person standing him was definitely not General Auer, no matter how alike the two of them were!

Putting aside the fact that General Auer wasn't qualified to possess such a weapon, even if he did have one in his possession, there was no way he could bring out its strength with his Saint 8-dan cultivation!

“Who in the world are you?” the Commander growled menacingly.

Including the Xingmeng Sword Saints, most members of the Zhang Clan were sword users due to the nature of their heritage. There shouldn't have been any proficient spear users amongst the enemy!



The emergence of these doubts in the Commander's mind didn't dull his movements in the least. Instead, the realization of the threat before him made him sharpen his movements. After dodging the spear pierce, he bolted forward to counterattack with a palm thrust.

He had devoted his full strength as a Sempiternal realm expert into the attack this time around. The devastating might of his attack caused dimension rifts to open all around the area. Even the surrounding air groaned in protest against the immense strain it was placed under.

But before the palm thrust landed, once again, General Auer exclaimed anxiously, "Danger! Commander, look up!"

Out of sheer instinct, the Commander immediately released his Spiritual Perception, but the area directly above him was still as empty as ever. Realizing that he had been tricked once more, he roared with a voice quivering with rage, "Be prepared to meet your maker!"

His zhenqi surged wildly, further augmenting the might of his destructive palm strike.

Hu!

In the face of such a powerful attack, the fellow before him fled frantically behind another one of the stone platforms.

"You bastard!" With another mirror standing in the way of his attack, the Commander had no choice but to forcefully retract his palm strike once more. "Why don't you stop being a coward and face me like a man?"

The very fact that the other party was able to injure him meant that the other party wielded strength close to a Sempiternal realm cultivator, if not equal. Those who had reached such a height would value their dignity and reputation a lot, sometimes even going to great lengths to protect them.

But the fellow before him simply kept hiding behind the mirrors, not daring to face his attacks directly at all. Was this the kind of etiquette an expert should have?

Shameless! Cowardly!

Don't you think it's unseemly for someone as powerful as you to be resorting to such despicable tactics?

He had also clashed with master teachers before. They were dignified and righteous individuals who would rather lose their lives than to have their dignity sullied... As if it wasn't enough for the other party to disguise himself as Auer and intentionally disturb him in the midst of his cultivation, the other party was even spouting lies as if they didn't cost anything and kept darting behind the mirrors around...

Stop being a shameless bastard and face me head-on! If you have the guts to do what you did, surely you should have the guts to face my wrath too!

With an enraged roar, the Commander charged forward to tear the other party apart when the other party abruptly pointed to the sky once more and exclaimed, "Watch out! Danger!"

"Danger your head!" Knowing that it was just another distraction tactic by the other party, the Commander chose to pay no heed to those words and continued with his charge.

But before his palm could land on his target, goosebumps suddenly rose up all over his body. He could sense a hulking force was falling toward him from the sky. It was beyond the range of his Spiritual Perception to perceive exactly what it was, but with the speed it was traveling at, there was no way he would be able to dodge it in the midst of his charge.

Padah!

The Commander was smashed into the ground in a '大' shape. In an instant, he had sustained innumerable fractures all over his body, and crimson blood spouted from his mouth as if a fountain.

"Hahaha! I, Ding Ding, have finally made a comeback! The world shall shudder beneath my bottom!" an excited voice sounded right above the Commander.

A massive brick-like bottom twisted around on top of the Commander, producing crisp sounds reminiscent of snapped twigs. With each twist, another mouthful of blood would be ejected from the Commander's body.

“ ... ”

The Commander really wanted to bawl at this very moment!

It was no easy feat to acquire a Great Sage artifact. They were extremely difficult to create, which made them rare and invaluable entities. Even a Great Sage cultivator would be the envy of his peers if he were to have a Great Sage artifact in his possession! Yet, the spear and the brick that fellow had in his possession were actually both Great Sage artifacts...

Where the flying cow did this monster come from?

“I warned you. I told you to watch out, but you simply wouldn’t heed my warnings...” Zhang Xuan shook his head in disappointment, as if admonishing an obstinate child who simply wouldn’t listen to the advice of his elders.

With a sigh of lamentation, he walked up to the Commander and took the storage ring right off his finger.

“...” the Commander.

I am not dead yet!

“I’ll leave this fellow to you!” After taking away the storage ring, Zhang Xuan waved his hand casually before turning his attention away from the Commander.

The Dragonbone Divine Spear and the Golden Origin Cauldron were delighted to receive such an order. It had been long since they had any showtime. Thus, one did its best to twist and turn its bottom to squeeze the last bit of juice from the poor man below it while the other pierced him relentlessly with its tip...

Entrusting the Commander to his two artifacts, Zhang Xuan turned his attention to the demonic saber.

This demonic saber was even stronger than the Golden Origin Cauldron. The malevolent aura that it emanated was an extremely powerful soul offense which could faze even Otherworldly Demons. If he had such a weapon in his grasp, he would surely have been able to defeat the Commander much more easily.

All he would have to do was to toss it out along with the Dragonbone Divine Spear and the Golden Origin Cauldron, and the three of them would be able to put an end to the Commander by themselves without him lifting a finger.

“Let me give it a try!”

Emulating what the Commander did earlier, he reached out and grasped the handle of the demonic saber.

Boom!

A burst of killing intent surged right into his body, piercing right for his Primordial Spirit.

Weng!

His Primordial Spirit emanated a golden glow and warded off the killing intent.

“What a formidable attack...”

Despite having successfully withstood the attack, Zhang Xuan was still forced to retreat a step under the powerful burst of killing intent.

Had he not tempered his Primordial Spirit with the Empyrean Heavenly Flame previously, that attack would have inflicted severe damage on him in an instant!

“Let’s see if your killing intent is more formidable than mine!”

Since you wish to put your killing intent against me, I shan’t stand on ceremony either then!

Zhang Xuan drove his Heaven’s Path zhenqi, and in the next moment, a torrent of killing intent came crashing down on the demonic saber. This killing intent was raw and unrefined, but its sheer purity would cause even one’s blood to freeze over.

Unexpectedly, before the killing intent could even reach the arrogant demonic saber... Putong! The demonic saber fell to the ground and lowered itself subserviently, as if paying respects to its new master. Its body trembled uncontrollably, hinting at the deep fear it carried for the person standing before it.

“ ... ”

Seeing such a sight through his swollen eyes, tears streamed freely down the Commander's face.

Aren't you supposed to be a proud and lofty weapon?

Why are you submitting to him so quickly? Where did all your pride and dignity go to?

# 1676 Killing the Commander

The Commander was so traumatized that he looked as if he had lost his soul.

It was with high expectations that he led his army into the Subterranean Gallery, intending to push his forces into the Master Teacher Continent. If he succeeded, his name would ripple throughout the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, and his standing would swiftly rise through the ranks. But before he could even launch a proper invasion, he was already violated by a brick and a spear...

Moreover, the demonic saber which he had specially brought out of his clan for this special occasion actually submitted to the other party...

Where in the world did the prideful attitude you have shown me earlier go to?

Why in the name of the heavens are you groveling on the ground right now?

I see! This fellow submits to those who possess purer killing intent than it does. The killing intent I am able to emanate through my Heaven's Path zhenqi is at least comparable to Vicious, so it's no wonder why it submitted to me so quickly... Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

While the Commander was likely to be an Otherworldly Demon Emperor as well, judging from the Qingtian Emperor's standards, his killing intent still came nowhere on par with his Heaven's Path zhenqi.

With a light tap of his finger, he flicked a droplet of blood over to fuse with the demonic saber.

Soon after, he felt a will surging into his mind.

Infernal Blacksaber!

That was the name of the demonic saber lying before him.

Just like what the Dragonbone Divine Spear had said, the Infernal Blacksaber was indeed a Half-Ancient Sage artifact. However, that was not all that was to it...

It was actually an upgradable artifact!

The upgradable artifacts of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were fundamentally different from that of mankind.

The Golden Origin Cauldron was one of the rare upgradable artifacts in the world, but in order to raise its tier, it had to be reforged with other precious ores. On the other hand, the upgradable artifacts of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe only demanded sufficient fresh blood or souls for their tier to be raised.

In other words, he didn't have to reforge the Inferno Blacksaber and risk messing it up. All he had to do was to slay more experts in order for it to grow stronger!

It was precisely due to this nature of it that the demonic saber emanated such an intense malevolent aura.

“In other words, this means that you can be upgraded into an Ancient Sage artifact?” Upon learning of this matter, Zhang Xuan asked the Infernal Blacksaber with excitement gleaming in his eyes.

One must know that Ancient Sage artifacts wielded the prowess to slay Ancient Sages! If the Infernal Blacksaber could be upgraded, he would really have no fear for cultivators beneath Ancient Sage!

“I can be upgraded, but I'll need to devour the fresh blood of an Ancient Sage for it...” the Infernal Blacksaber replied courteously.

“You'll require the fresh blood of an Ancient Sage in order to be upgraded? Forget it...” Zhang Xuan's lips twitched upon hearing those words.

This was ridiculous! If he was strong enough to hunt down an Ancient Sage and feed the Infernal Blacksaber the latter's blood, what need would he have for it?

“If you really aren’t able to find any Ancient Sages, I can also be upgraded through devouring the blood and souls of Sempiternal realm or Half-Ancient Sage cultivators. However, the process would be much slower...” As if seeing through the thoughts of its master, the Infernal Blacksaber quickly added.

“The blood of Sempiternal realm cultivators works for you too? What about that fellow over there?” Zhang Xuan asked as he pointed a finger at the Commander.

“Even though his fighting prowess is subpar, he’s still a core member of the Otherworldly Demon royalty. If I could consume him, I should be able to advance my cultivation to the forefront of Half-Ancient Sage artifacts!” the Infernal Blacksaber replied with a nod.

“Good, I’ll leave him to you then!” Zhang Xuan replied

In the first place, he didn’t harbor the slightest sliver of goodwill for the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Furthermore, the other party was even planning on assassinating his parents, and that was something he couldn’t accept.

“Thank you, master!” Hearing those words, the Infernal Blacksaber rushed over delightfully and sunk its blade into the Commander’s flesh.

It didn’t take long for the Commander to be reduced to a withered corpse, his soul and blood sapped dry.

After being nourished with the Commander’s blood and soul, the Infernal Blacksaber looked even more demonic than before. Its strength had advanced considerably, to the level where even the Golden Origin Cauldron would take a detour just to avoid it.

“Not bad!” Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction.

At this rate, it shouldn’t be long before he successfully upgraded the Infernal Blacksaber into an Ancient Sage artifact. That would truly be a huge boost to his fighting prowess!

“Alright, you should return to my storage ring for the time being!”



Having settled the matter here, Zhang Xuan kept the three artifacts back into his storage ring before heaving a sigh of relief.

Having dealt with the Infernal Blacksaber and the Commander, it was unlikely that the remaining Otherworldly Demons would pose much of a threat to him anymore. Nevertheless, the power of the mass shouldn't be underestimated. To be safe, he should still tread carefully.

If he could find a way to massacre all of the Otherworldly Demons at once, that would be for the best.

Otherwise, even if their Commander had been killed, it was only a matter of time before a new commander took over and dispatch these Otherworldly Demons against them. If a battle were to break out, who knew how many offspring of the Zhang Clan would lose their lives?

Zhang Xuan stroked his lower jaw contemplatively.

Considering how there was a Sempiternal realm Commander in this Otherworldly Demon encampment, it was likely that there would be other Great Sage military officers as well too. It would be too naive to think that the Otherworldly Demon army would collapse by itself just because it had lost its Commander.

It was unlikely that he would face an opponent as powerful as the Commander within the encampment anymore, but he didn't have the strength to eradicate a well-trained army on his own either, even with the assistance of his three artifacts!

He had to think things through and formulate a feasible plan before making his move.

The earlier battle with the Commander has caused quite a huge commotion, but fortunately, due to the mirrors and formations cast around the area, no one has realized the happenings over here yet. In other words, the soldiers are still oblivious of the demise of their Commander. I might be able to pull something off if I could successfully impersonate him... Zhang Xuan thought.

In order to hide the existence of the Infernal Blacksaber, the Commander had gone to great lengths to isolate this room, such that not even the slightest aura of shockwave would be able to escape from this room. It was ironic, but it was precisely due to the arrangements made by the Commander that no one realized that he had already been killed.

Since Zhang Xuan was able to disguise himself impeccably as General Auer, there was no reason why he couldn't pass himself off as the Commander too.

He took off the helmet from the corpse and quickly wore it. At the same time, he began to shift his muscles and bones, slowly morphing into the appearance of the Commander.

Let me check how many Great Sage cultivators are there in this encampment...

Leaving the stone platforms and mirrors behind, Zhang Xuan departed from the area and headed straight for the main tent located at the center of the base.

Since the Commander was at Sempiternal realm, it was unlikely that his Vice Commanders would be too weak. First and foremost, he would have to check how many Great Sage cultivators there were in this camp and deal with them promptly. Once all of the Great Sage cultivators were gone, the remaining soldiers wouldn't be able to pose much of a threat to him anymore!

Having assumed the appearance of the Commander, there was no guard or soldier who dared to halt Zhang Xuan's footsteps as he strutted through the camp with widened strides. Soon enough, he arrived at the main tent.

"Commander!"

The Otherworldly Demon soldiers guarding the main tent quickly clasped their fist and greeted him.

"Un!" Zhang Xuan nodded casually as he walked into the tent.

Within the tent, he saw seven figures seated all around with grim looks on their faces.

“Commander, you... have succeeded?” Upon seeing the return of the Commander, fervent joy spread across their faces.

It seemed like these figures were also aware that the Commander was planning to assassinate the Xingmeng Sword Saints, and they were waiting for the results here.

“I haven’t done it yet. There’s an urgent matter that we need to discuss, and I need you all to offer some constructive advice!” Zhang Xuan said authoritatively.

Due to the presence of seer artifacts, he dared not to use the Library of Heaven’s Path lightly. Otherwise, he could risk bringing the lightning tribulation upon the base before resolving the major threats.

He wasn’t too sure what was the situation concerning the Commander, but through his rich experience of disguising himself, as well as the prowess of Luo Ruoxin’s disguise amulet, the seven people in the room didn’t notice any anomaly.

“Commander, feel free to order us as you deem fit!”

The crowd quickly clasped their fists and replied.

“Un!” Zhang Xuan said as he nodded contemplatively. In truth, he had discreetly activated his Eye of Insight and was examining the crowd before him.

Just like what he had guessed, these seven fellows were all Great Sages. Two of them were at Intuitive Impulse realm, three were at Aureate Body realm, and the last two were at Introspective Convalescence realm.

It was fortunate he didn’t rush into making a move earlier, or else if these seven people were to collaborate against him, it would have truly been a tough battle.

Not to mention, with the sheer number of soldiers they had, if the Otherworldly Demon army were to form a collaborative formation, even Sempiternal realm cultivators would have trouble escaping!

Zhang Xuan pondered deeply for a moment before beckoning one of the Intuitive Impulse realm Otherworldly Demon out

and said, “You, follow me for a moment. I need to delegate some tasks to you privately...”

“Yes, Commander!” Without the slightest hint of doubt, the Otherworldly Demon pointed out followed him out of the main tent.

# 1677 Queue Up and Hold Each Other's Hands

After leaving the barracks, Zhang Xuan swiftly led the Otherworldly Demon toward the room with the mirrors.

“Commander, what’s wrong?” Seeing how careful the Commander was being, sealing the entire area completely such that not even the slightest aura could leak out, a serious look appeared on the face of the Otherworldly Demon.

“It’s like this...”

Stroking his lower jaw, Zhang Xuan casually walked up to the Otherworldly Demon when all of a sudden, a demonic blade materialized in his hand and sliced right for the Otherworldly Demon’s neck.

“ ... ”

Not expecting the Commander to make a move on him suddenly, the Otherworldly Demon swiftly backed away. No matter what, he was still a Great 3-dan Intuitive Impulse cultivator and had been through many battles. Despite being caught off guard, he did not become flustered.

Padah!

However, barely after taking two steps back, a massive brick crashed down on his head and reduced him to a flat pancake.

Given how even the Sempiternal realm Commander had been rendered completely helpless under the crushing might of the Golden Origin Cauldron, how could this Intuitive Impulse realm Otherworldly Demon stand a chance? It was a one-hit KO.

Puhe!

The Infernal Blacksaber swiftly flew forth and devoured the Otherworldly Demon’s blood and soul.

Without much hesitation, Zhang Xuan returned to the main tent and beckoned the other Intuitive Impulse realm Otherworldly Demon out. “You, come out for a moment!”

Five minutes later, he stepped into the main tent once more and said, “The three of you, follow me!”

The three Aureate Body realm Otherworldly Demons followed the Commander out, leaving the two Introspective Convalescence realm fellows staring at one another blankly.

Aren’t we supposed to be discussing a matter of some sort?

Why are we being called out one after another?

Their doubt did not last too long. The Commander walked back into the main tent with a satisfied look on his face. As soon as he entered, he set up an isolation barrier around the tent and said, “I had some missions to delegate to them, so I had to meet them privately. It’s finally your turn...”

The two Introspective Convalescence fellows immediately got to their feet, fearing that they would miss a single word about this highly secretive mission.

Hu!

Before they could react, a cold glint sliced through the air, and two heads fell to the ground.

Till their final breaths, they could not understand why the Commander would make a move on them.

Zhang Xuan might still have some problems trying to deal with Sempiternal realm cultivators, but Introspective Convalescence realm cultivators were already a ‘one shot, one kill’ to him.

After dealing with the seven of them and disposing of their corpses, Zhang Xuan beckoned a guard stationed outside to come in.

“Gather all of the Great Sage experts in our camp for a meeting!” Zhang Xuan ordered.

“Commander, there are only seven Great Sage Vice Commanders in our camp. You called out five of them earlier,

and the remaining two... were in this tent,” the guard replied with a doubtful frown.

Earlier, he had seen the Commander calling out five of the Vice Commanders one after another, so there should still have been two more Vice Commanders in the main tent. Why would they suddenly disappear without a trace?

The guard was only at Saint 7-dan. Considering how even the Great Sage 3-dan Intuitive Impulse realm Vice Commanders were unable to see through his disguise, there was no way that the guard could have done so.

It was unthinkable to him that their Commander would have already been killed.

“Good!” Zhang Xuan had just been verifying the matter to be safe. Since it was confirmed that there were only seven Great Sages in the camp, he was saved a great ton of trouble. He stood up and instructed, “Inform all of the soldiers to gather before the main tent!”

“All of the soldiers?”

“That’s right, everyone. This includes those who are resting, patrolling, and on sentry. Get all of them here!” Zhang Xuan waved his hand grandly.

“Yes, Commander!”

The guard quickly left the area and sounded the assembly horn.

Ten minutes later, when Zhang Xuan walked out of the main tent, he saw countless Otherworldly Demons standing neatly in a formation.

With just one glance, Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows had already shot up in astonishment.

There had to be over ten thousand Otherworldly Demons before him.

It was fortunate that he had not made a move recklessly earlier. Otherwise, a collaborative formation consisting of over ten thousand Saint 3-dan Otherworldly Demons would have

been more than enough to render a Half-Ancient Sage powerless.

It was truly a wise decision from Sword Saint Xing to retreat. The Zhang Clan was not weak, but against such a huge army, they would still lose at least half of their entire force even if lady luck was shining on them.

Suppressing his shock, Zhang Xuan bellowed, “General Auer!”

“Yes, Commander!” General Auer stepped out of the formation and clasped his fist.

“Get your men to bring the item that I just set up over here!” Zhang Xuan waved his hand.

“Yes, Commander!” General Auer had no idea why the Commander had issued such a command, but it would be insubordination to oppose an order from a person of a higher rank.

Thus, he quickly led a group of people and left the area.

Several minutes later, the stone platforms and mirrors were moved over.

“Divide yourself into groups of a thousand, and each group will take one of these artifacts. I want the members of each group to get into a line and hold hands with one another. The person at the front is to place their hand on the mirror!” Zhang Xuan commanded.

“Groups of a thousand?”

“Get into a line and hold hands with one another?”

All of the soldiers were confused.

Were they going to practice some kind of new formation or something?

But... why did it sound so shady?

They had never heard of any formations that required cultivators to hold hands with one another!



Unable to take it any longer, another Otherworldly Demon wearing a black helmet similar to that of General Auer stepped forward and said, “Commander, the Zhang Clan has been eyeing us warily all this time. If they launch an attack while everyone is here holding hands with one another, it could end in a catastrophe!”

The other soldiers also turned intrigued gazes over.

“You fool!” Zhang Xuan’s face darkened as he roared in fury. “This is the battle plan that I have just designed with the other Vice Commanders. Do you all know what these mirrors are?”

“No, Commander!”

“These mirrors do look a little extraordinary, but I can’t figure out what they are used for...”

The crowd shook their heads in response.

If not for the fact that Zhang Xuan had come into close contact with seers in the past, he would not have been able to deduce the purpose of these mirrors. Considering that these soldiers and officers were unlikely to have ever met human seers before, there was no way that they would be able to recognize these mirrors.

“These mirrors are the treasures of the human’s Seer Guild! They are able to provide concealment from the heavens, hindering even Intuitive Impulse cultivators from discerning your presence. The reason I want you to stand in a file and hold hands with one another is to conceal your killing intent and auras so that we can sneak into the fortress of those pesky humans and catch them off guard! Does everything make sense to you now?” Zhang Xuan said with an authoritative wave of his hand.

“Sneak into the fortress of those pesky humans? Does our Commander intend to launch a surprise assault?”

“It’s able to conceal our killing intent and auras? That’s incredible!”

“If we could successfully pull off this surprise assault, we will become celebrated heroes of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!”

Hearing the effects of the mirrors, the faces of the Otherworldly Demons flushed crimson as they trembled in agitation

They also knew that a direct confrontation with the Zhang Clan would result in heavy casualties. If they could pull off a surprise assault, their chances of survival would be much higher. Perhaps, they might even accrue significant military contributions as a result of the operation and be handsomely rewarded for their effort!

“If you get what I’m saying, hurry up and do it! Ensure that there aren’t any artifacts in between that would terminate the connection. If anyone reveals our location to the master teachers because they aren’t holding the hand of the person next to them tightly enough, they’ll be the sinner of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. That person will be executed on the spot!” Zhang Xuan commanded authoritatively.

“We’ll be putting everything into this surprise assault. This operation must end in a success; no failure is permitted. Understood?”

“Yes, Commander!” The Otherworldly Demon soldiers nodded with looks of agitation on their faces.

“Very well!” Seeing that his soldiers had received his orders, Zhang Xuan waved his hands grandly and said, “Prepare the formation!”

Hualala!

The massive army immediately divided themselves into groups of a thousand, and the strongest soldiers of the group stood at the front of each file, placing their hands in direct contact with the mirror. The others held hands with one another with iron-tight grips, and the file extended for several hundred meters.

“Good!” Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction.

He was just about to give a motivational speech when he suddenly heard a gale sounding above. Raising his head, he saw a figure appearing right before him.

“Commander Heng Jiang, what are you doing?”

# 1678 Cheese!

“Commander Heng Jiang?”

It was an unfamiliar name, but considering that the figure was looking right at him, it was obvious that the other party was addressing him.

So, the name of the Commander that he was disguised as was Heng Jiang! It was not a bad name.

Taking a closer look at the figure before him, he saw that the other party was wearing a helmet identical to his. His aura felt dense and expansive—he was actually a Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm cultivator too!

Weren't there only seven Great Sages in this encampment?

Where did this one pop out from?

“The seal...” Zhang Xuan heart skipped a beat as realization struck him.

If he was not mistaken, the other party was the backup coming from beyond the breached seal!

Of all the times, the other party just had to arrive before he made a move... Was this not too much of a coincidence?

However, even if the other party was a Sempiternal realm cultivator, it would not be easy for him to see through his disguise.

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan did not panic in the least. Instead, his eyebrows shot up coldly as he remarked, “Am I obligated to report my actions to you?”

“You!” Hearing those words, the black armored Otherworldly Demon harrumphed coldly. Flinging his hand back coldly, he took out a golden edict and said, “Under the orders of Sovereign Chen Yong, you are to halt your attack and retreat immediately!”

“Retreat immediately?” Zhang Xuan was slightly taken aback.

The ‘Sovereign Chen Yong’ whom the other party spoke of was likely to be one of the highest-ranked Otherworldly Demon Emperors... but this did not make any sense at all! After all of the sacrifices made to breach the spatial seal, he was being ordered to retreat?

“That’s right. What are you waiting for? Hurry up and reorganize your army to retreat!” the black armored Otherworldly Demon berated as he tossed the golden edict over.

Zhang Xuan caught the golden edict and read through it. The words were written in the language of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, and it was indeed a command for his army to retreat.

“This...” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment as he placed the edict into his storage ring. “Before that, I have something to show you.”

“Hmm?” the eyebrows of the black armored Otherworldly Demon shot up.

“I have found another use for the artifacts of the human seers. Once activated, it wields incomparable prowess, such that even Half-Ancient Sages will be destroyed in an instant. There’s no better tool than this to deal with those humans!” Zhang Xuan spoke with unwavering confidence.

“Even Half-Ancient Sages will be destroyed in an instant?” the black armored Otherworldly Demon questioned with a skeptical tone.

Ordinary soldiers might not have been able to recognize these mirrors, but he did. They were the artifacts of the human seers, and they could only be used to conceal one’s aura.

Furthermore, they had to be arranged in a specific position in order to do so. There was no way that these mirrors could wield the prowess to kill a Half-Ancient Sage cultivator!

“If you don’t believe my words, why don’t you can give it a try yourself? After that, I’ll get my soldiers to retreat!” Zhang Xuan nodded earnestly.

“Very well. Let me see what in the world are you up to!” The black armored Otherworldly Demon nodded doubtfully.

He was there to relay the orders, and as long as the other party was willing to abide by the commands, he did not mind playing along with him. If there was truly an extraordinary use for the mirrors, that would be even for the better.

Given that there were so many Otherworldly Demon soldiers around, and the fact that the person that he was facing was a Commander, it was unlikely that the other party would dare pull anything on him.

“It’s very simple. Pick any one of these mirrors and place your hand on it,” Zhang Xuan instructed affirmatively.

The black armored Otherworldly Demon gazed into Zhang Xuan’s eyes for a while, and seeing that the other party was not messing with him, he eventually nodded in agreement. He walked up to one of the mirrors and placed his hand on it.

It was not that he was a fool. It was just that he could not possibly have imagined that the person before him was not Heng Jiang but someone else.

Besides, seers were known not to be a battle-oriented occupation. Their artifacts mainly dealt with divination and anti-divination means. Even if it was a trap, he was confident that he would be able to deal with it with his strength.

“Since everyone is ready, let’s begin!”

Seeing that this newly-arrived expert had placed his hand on the mirror as well, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

But just as he was about to activate the Library of Heaven’s Path on the mirror, he heard the sharp whistle of a gale sounding above. Another figure was flying over.

“Heng Jiang, receive your orders! Sovereign Chen Ling has decreed that you shall launch an attack this instant!”

While in the air, the figure had already unrolled a golden edict and issued the order.

It was another Sempiternal realm cultivator!

“This...” Zhang Xuan blinked blankly.

It was just a moment that he received an order to retreat, and all of a sudden, he received another order to launch an assault right away... Are you all toying with me?

Wait a moment... The person who issued the order to retreat seemed to be Sovereign Chen Yong whereas the person asking me to attack is Sovereign Chen Ling. Their names sound similar, but they aren't the same person... Could there be some discord among the Sovereigns?

If the Sovereigns were close with one another, there was no way that they would issue such contradicting orders. If there was truly disharmony among the Sovereigns, this could spell an opportunity for him...

“Mou Wu, what do you mean by this? Sovereign Chen Yong has already ordered for the troops here to retreat!” the black armored Otherworldly Demon remarked with an awful look on his face.

It was just a moment after he had issued his order when Mou Wu came here with a contradicting order. This was blatant disrespect toward him and Sovereign Chen Yong!

“I don't mean anything at all. If you were a bit smarter, it should be apparent to you that I'm just following orders. Heng Jiang, what are waiting for? Hurry up and receive the edict!” the Otherworldly Demon named Mou Wu replied coldly as he tossed the golden edict over toward Zhang Xuan.

Catching the edict, Zhang Xuan swiftly read through its contents. Written in the language of the Otherworldly Demons as well, the edict contained a command for him to launch an attack against the Zhang Clan right away.

“This...” A look of dilemma surfaced on Zhang Xuan's face as he stared the edict before him.

Seeing the conflicted look on Zhang Xuan's face, the black armored Otherworldly Demon bellowed furiously, “Heng Jiang, ignore that fellow's words and get your men to retreat. As the direct subordinate of the Spirit God, Sovereign Chen Yong is the highest Otherworldly Demon Emperor of our

Otherworldly Demon Tribe. Unless you want to be beheaded, you should know what you must do!”

“Sovereign Chen Yong might be the highest Otherworldly Demon Emperor, but times are different now. The Temple of Confucius is on the verge of opening, and after all the effort we have put into breaking open the spatial seal, how can we retreat like this? Think of the men who have sacrificed themselves for this cause!” Mou Wu roared vehemently.

“Sovereign Chen Yong’s words are the very words of the Spirit God. Do you intend to oppose the will of the Spirit God?”

“I dare not oppose the will of the Spirit God, but this matter is of the utmost importance to our Otherworldly Demonic Tribe! There’s something amiss about the order issued by Sovereign Chen Yong, so I would rather listen to Sovereign Chen Ling’s words!” Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click [www.webnovel.com](http://www.webnovel.com) for visiting.

The two envoys began bickering with one another.

“Alright, alright! There’s no need to bicker over this matter...” Seeing that the two Otherworldly Demons were on the verge of clashing with one another, Zhang Xuan stepped forward and mediated the situation.

“If you may listen to my humble words, why don’t we not rush into executing the orders of Sovereign Chen Yong and Sovereign Chen Ling for the moment? Regardless of whose command it is, the wills of the Sovereigns are not something that we can simply disregard!

“Why don’t we do this instead? I won’t withdraw my soldiers, but I won’t rush into an attack either. Let’s clarify the situation before coming to a judgement. For the time being, why don’t I show you two the recent research breakthrough I have made?”

“Research breakthrough?” Mou Wu frowned doubtfully.

“Indeed. I have found a way to utilize the artifacts of the human seers that produces devastating power that is sufficient to destroy even an entire city! Brother Mou Wu, if you are

interested, why don't you place your hand on one of the mirrors, just like what my soldiers are doing? I'll show you the results of my research!" Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

"You want me to touch the mirror?" Mou Wu asked with a doubtful frown.

He turned his gaze to the Otherworldly Demon soldiers around him, and only at that moment did he realize that they were holding hands tightly together with the person at the forefront of the file touching the mirror.

Even the black armored Otherworldly Demon was standing before a mirror with his hand resting lightly on its surface.

"Indeed! I believe that this could be a revolutionary discovery. If we could use this discovery to eradicate the humans once and for all, we'll become heroes of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe! The Sovereigns will surely reward us handsomely for our immense contribution!" Zhang Xuan spoke with his voice quivering in excitement.

"Very well then!"

Seeing that everyone was already in position, Mou Wu swiftly nodded in agreement. He walked up to a mirror and placed his hand on it.

"Great! Is everyone ready? Put on a bright smile, alright? Three. Two. One..."

Zhang Xuan threw his hands in the air and exclaimed, "Cheese!"

Kacha!

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

In an instant, Mou Wu, the black armored Otherworldly Demon, and all of the soldiers were assaulted by a barrage of lightning bolts. Their hair rose into the air, and white smoke drifted from their bodies.



# 1679 Will You Believe Me?

“You...”

Not expecting the mirror to actually be able to summon lightning bolts, the faces of Mou Wu and the black armored Otherworldly Demon were ravaged with frenzy. The both of them released a resounding roar at the same time.

The Otherworldly Demon soldiers were also devastated by the lightning bolts. It was just a short instant, but they had already sustained severe internal injuries.

They had abided by the Commander’s orders expecting something good, but who would have thought that this would happen instead? They wanted to release their hands, but the electrocution from the lightning bolts had affected their nerves, not allowing them to move as they liked. To make matters worse, they had held hands tightly together in order to prevent their auras from leaking out...

At the forefront of the group, Commander Heng Jiang waved his hand apologetically and said, “My bad, my bad! I don’t think I operated the artifact properly. Continue holding your hands firmly on the mirrors, alright? I guarantee that it’ll be different this time around!”

But before he could even finish his words, more streaks of lightning had already descended from the sky.

Kacha! Kacha!

It was as if the Armageddon had arrived! The crackling of the lightning simply echoed ceaselessly in the air. All of the Otherworldly Demon soldiers were frenzied.

It’s indeed different this time around... But what the heck? The lightning is even more fearsome than before! My gosh!

Are you intending to send us to our graves?

The Otherworldly Demon soldiers tried their hardest to retract their hands from one another, but their bodies were far too

paralyzed for them to be able to do anything other than spasm.

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One after another, white foam dribbled from the corner of their mouths as their consciousness gradually faded away.

Even as they gradually came to their last breath, they could not believe that they would die from a mistake by their Commander.

To actually do in his own men as well... How in the world did this fellow manage to become a Commander?

Most of these soldiers were only at Saint 3-dan and Saint 4-dan—they had not even gone through their first Leaving Aperture Ordeal yet! How could they possibly survive such a vicious onslaught of lightning bolts?

All it took was a couple of bolts for nearly all of them to be wiped out.

Even Mou Wu and the black armored Otherworldly Demon were spasming from being electrocuted!

Typically speaking, as Sempiternal realm cultivators, they should have been able to overcome lightning bolts of such scale with ease. However, the very fact that the mirrors were mere seer artifacts made them lower their guard. They had not put up any defensive measures at all, and the lightning bolts had come too quickly for them to put up anything.

As a result, while the barrage of lightning bolts was not enough to claim their lives, it blurred their consciousness and rendered them powerless.

“Phew, it seems like everything worked out well!” Seeing that the ten thousand or so Otherworldly Demon soldiers had been completely annihilated by the lightning bolts, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

As tools used against the heavens, seer artifacts were susceptible to heavenly retribution. All Zhang Xuan had to do

was activate his Library of Heaven's Path, and the heavens would do their job.

He had come up with this plan on the spur of the moment, and to be honest, he had thought that it was a rather ridiculous plan. Yet, who could have thought that he would actually be able to pull it off impeccably!

The only imperfection in his plan was probably the sudden emergence of the two envoys from Sovereign Chen Yong and Sovereign Chen Ling. However, it was fortunate that the two of them had not expected to fall for such an unconventional attack.

While the heavenly retribution toward seer artifacts was limited in terms of prowess, its greatest advantage lay in the fact that it was instantaneous. As such, it was actually able to get to the two Sempiternal realm cultivators before they could even react.

“Dragonbone Divine Spear, scout the area and kill any surviving soldiers around. Ding Ding, Infernal Blacksaber, the two of you deal with Mou Wu!”

He knew that he had only succeeded because his luck was good. The other party had been caught off guard. However, once the two Sempiternal realm cultivators recovered, he would be in a terrible position.

Knowing that time was not on his side, Zhang Xuan immediately dashed for the black armored Otherworldly Demon.

He had left Mou Wu to the Golden Origin cauldron and the Infernal Blacksaber while he dealt with the black armored Otherworldly Demon singlehandedly.

“You aren't Heng Jiang! Who are you?”

Seeing the huge massacre before him, there was no way that the black armored Otherworldly Demon could still remain oblivious to the truth. The person before him was not Heng Jiang at all!

Overwhelmed with rage, he flicked his wrist, whipped out a sword, and brandished it toward Zhang Xuan.

Weng!

However, before his sword could even come close to Zhang Xuan, he suddenly felt a will surging right into him, befuddling his mind. He nearly lost his balance and fell down due to that.

“Soul offense?” The black armored Otherworldly Demon narrowed his eyes.

It was apparent that the other party was skilled at soul offense. To think that even a Sempiternal realm cultivator like him would be unable to guard his mind against the other party!

Huala!

While the black armored Otherworldly Demon was still plagued with dizziness, he suddenly saw the fake Heng Jiang appearing right before him. A powerful punch harnessing unbelievable might was already heading right for his head.

“Bloodline Ignition!”

Knowing that he would lose his life if the punch really landed on him, the black armored Otherworldly Demon activated his bloodline without any hesitation. In an instant, incredible power surged through his body.

“Bloodline Ignition won’t help you either!” Zhang Xuan scoffed coldly.

With the tremendous surge of strength from the Bloodline Ignition, the black armored Otherworldly Demon was just about to counterattack when the fellow right before him suddenly whipped out a small inkstone and pounded it down on his head.

Kacha!

It was the sound of a certain Otherworldly Demon’s skull being split apart.

As a Sempiternal realm cultivator, his body had reached a level where it was impervious to most attacks. Even if he allowed an Aureate Body realm cultivator to attack him freely, the latter might not have been able to breach his defenses. Yet,

the other party was actually able to split his skull apart with just an inkstone...

Just what tier was that inkstone at?

Bro, where in the world did you come from?

That skeleton dragon, the brick, and the demonic saber... I thought that it's already astounding that you could have three artifacts that are so powerful, but to think that you even have an inkstone on top of that...

Peng peng peng peng!

This was clearly not the time for thought as the other party continued smashing the inkstone down on his head. Gradually, his consciousness drifted away.

He was probably the only Sempiternal realm cultivator to die such a miserable death. He was first electrocuted before being smashed to death by a puny-looking inkstone. He never would have thought that such a fate would befall him.

"It's indeed not so easy to use this inkstone. It isn't intended for offense after all..." Zhang Xuan shook his head as he returned the bloodstained inkstone to his storage ring.

This was the artifact that he had obtained from Tantai Zhenqing. It was one of the personal possessions of Ancient Sage Zi Yu, and it went without saying that it was a formidable artifact. However, it was not as handy when used as a weapon.

If Tantai Zhenqing knew that Zhang Xuan had used this invaluable treasure from his ancestor as a weapon to smash an enemy's head, he would probably lose his mind and faint on the spot.

The inkstone was a family heirloom passed down from generation to generation within the Tantai Clan! If one used the ink ground by the inkstone to calligraph, the Golden Warriors of Mentor's Calligraph produced would be much more powerful. Yet, that fellow actually used this inkstone as a mere bat...

How in the world did such a refined tool end up being used for such a barbaric purpose?

After slaying the black armored Otherworldly Demon, Zhang Xuan turned his head around to look at Mou Wu. The latter's head was currently pressed under the Golden Origin Cauldron's bottom, and there was a despaired look on his face.

Without looking on, it was apparent that the fellow was doomed too.

The fighting prowess of weapons was significantly reduced without a skilled user to control them. However, both the Golden Origin Cauldron and the Infernal Black Saber possessed greater strength than Mou Wu, and they had moved in unison to deal with him.

Furthermore, Mou Wu had yet to recover from the side effects from the electrocution, so there was no way he could be a match for him.

At this moment, the Dragonbone Divine Spear had finished its clean up and returned as well.

The relentless bolts of lightning earlier had pretty much zapped the ten thousand or so Otherworldly Soldiers into their graves. There were very few survivors, so it did not take the Dragonbone Divine Spear to finish its job.

To be honest, the Dragonbone Divine Spear was truly impressed with the means of its master.

That was an army of over ten thousand Otherworldly Demons! Before Ancient Sage Ran Qiu made his breakthrough to Ancient Sage, he would have had to flee as far as he could from such a lineup. Yet, his master single-handedly annihilated the entire army and left not a single survivor at all. What was even more ridiculous was that he did not suffer the slightest injury in the midst of doing so!

This was a feat that would go down in legends and recounted as an epic.

To singlehandedly clear a Subterranean Gallery, this was truly inconceivable!

Just as the Dragonbone Divine Spear's thoughts were wandering, another gale sounded from the distance, and yet

another black armored Otherworldly Demon appeared in the area.

“Commander Heng Jiang, receive your orders! Sovereign Chen Xing commands you to keep your army on standby. You are not to attack or retreat recklessly...”

As the black armored Otherworldly Demon spoke, he flicked his wrist and took out a golden edict. At this moment, however, he caught sight of the countless corpses beneath including Mou Wu, who was crushed under a brick. His eyebrows shot up in astonishment as he exclaimed, “Heng Jiang, what’s going on here?”

On the ground, Commander Heng Jiang scratched his head awkwardly and said, “Will you believe me if I say that they are all sleeping?”

# 1680 Repairing the Seal

What do you mean by sleeping?

How in the world do they look like they are sleeping to you?

The black armored Otherworldly Demon who had just arrived clutched his hair in frenzy.

Do you think I'm a fool who can't differentiate between the dead and the living?

"There's nothing I can do if you don't believe me..." Knowing that the other party would not believe him no matter what he said, Zhang Xuan waved his hand helplessly. "Get him!"

He had already killed three Sempiternal realm Otherworldly Demons here. He did not mind adding one more to his record.

Boom!

The combined prowess of Zhang Xuan and his three artifacts truly could not be underestimated. Before the black armored Otherworldly Demon could get away, he was encircled and slaughtered.

After absorbing the blood and souls of four Sempiternal realm Otherworldly Demons, the Infernal Blacksaber had become even more demonic, making it difficult for one to look at directly.

After taking all of the resources and storage rings scattered around, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. Following which, he began making his way toward the spatial seal.

He was not too sure what had happened at the seal, but the fact that Otherworldly Demons were coming one after another was a sign that it had indeed been breached. He really had to find a way to repair it as soon as possible.

Otherwise, there would really be no end to them!

After flying for a while, the spatial seal finally came into his sight. At the very center of the spatial seal was a massive hole.



It looked as if someone had forcefully ripped it apart.

There was little doubt that Mou Wu and the others had come in through here.

“It’s fortunate that it hasn’t been completely destroyed. Otherwise, there’s no way I could have constructed another spatial seal of this scale...” Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Even though he had comprehended the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing, his cultivation was simply too weak. Mending it was already the limits of his ability. For him to set up a brand-new spatial seal that could ward off Ancient Sages was clearly daydreaming!

Heading up to the seal, Zhang Xuan immediately got to mending it. In the midst of his work, he could not help falling into thought. The otherworldly battlefield is right on the other side... Should I go over to take a look?

The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe often sent their men over to wreak havoc, so why should he not do the same to them?

Furthermore, while he had managed to resolve the crisis in this Subterranean Gallery for the time being, it would be naive to think that this would be the end. This was likely to just be a small proportion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe’s armies.

The 108 Subterranean Galleries had all come under the simultaneous assault of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, and the Master Teacher Pavilion, the Luo Clan, and the Jiang Clan had been forced to head over to defend against them.

If he could cause some chaos over in the otherworldly battlefield, it might alleviate the stress in the other Subterranean Galleries.

I’ll think more about it after I fix the seal... Zhang Xuan thought as he hastened his speed.

...

“It has already been so long. Why isn’t Xuan-er back yet?”

Sword Saint Meng paced around the room in vexation.

Her son had said that he was just going to scout the situation, but two hours had already passed, and there was still nothing at all. She could not help but worry about his safety.

“He might have just met with some small hiccups. Don’t worry, our Xuan-er has many means up his sleeves. Nothing will happen to him!” Sword Saint Xing patted his wife’s back and consoled her.

“But that’s the army of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe that we’re talking about! There were at least ten thousand soldiers in the previous clash with them! Even Yang shi wouldn’t stand a chance against them... How can our Xuan-er withstand something like that?” Sword Saint Meng exclaimed anxiously.

With the opponent being ten thousand well-trained Otherworldly Demons of Saint 3-dan and above, there was no one who could possibly not worry!

“I hate to admit this, but there’s nothing we can do but trust our son. We don’t have the same concealment technique that he has, and if we are caught while attempting to check on his condition, we will just put him in a worse position,” Sword Saint Xing said.

He was worried about his son too, but it was clear that there was nothing that they could do to help him.

Sword Saint Xing turned to Luo Ruoxin and asked, “Ruoxin, what do you think of the matter?”

The young lady before him had been perfectly calm all this while, as if she was not worried about Zhang Xuan at all. This had left him rather perplexed.

“Zhang Xuan will be fine,” Luo Ruoxin replied with composure.

Putting aside the fact that he had comprehended three Quintessences and possessed nearly impeccable disguise means, just his current prowess paired with the Dragonbone Divine Spear would already be a huge headache for anyone to deal with. Unless an Ancient Sage appeared, it would be impossible for the Otherworldly Demons to get him!

Since that was the case, there was nothing for her to worry about.

“But...” Seeing how confident Luo Ruoxin was, Sword Saint Meng could not help but frown.

She was just about to ask the reason behind Luo Ruoxin’s unwavering confidence in Zhang Xuan when an elder suddenly rushed into the room.

“Old clan head...”

“Is Xuan-er back yet?” Sword Saint Xing immediately stood up in agitation.

The elder who had just entered was in charge of intelligence gathering in the Zhang Clan. The fact that he had come over in such hurry meant that he had some important news to report.

“That’s not it... The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has just blown a horn to gather all of their soldiers. I fear that they might be launching another attack very soon!” the elder said grimly.

“An attack?” Sword Saint Xing’s face immediately turned severe. “What happened? Tell me the details!”

“I sent some scouts to the Otherworldly Demon’s encampment, but their defense was simply too tight. My men could only skirt the perimeters, unable to get too close. However, an hour ago, a horn suddenly sounded, and following which, the Otherworldly Demon soldiers began to retreat back into the camp. Even those who are responsible for upholding the defensive formations, keeping a lookout, and even the patrols left their positions!

“Fearing that it might be a trap, our men didn’t dare get too close initially. However, there was still no movement after waiting for fifteen minutes, so they slowly advanced deeper into the camp to scout the situation. They found that the Otherworldly Demons were divided into ten huge groups in order to practice some kind of unique formation. Furthermore, the Commander whom you clashed with previously said that he wanted to try a new collaborative formation and was going to launch a surprise assault with it!

“Hearing up to that point, our scouts dared not waste any time. They immediately rushed back here to report the matter to me as soon as possible!”

“It’s fortunate that your scouts delivered the intelligence back in time. Otherwise, if their surprise assault were to succeed, our Zhang Clan would have sustained heavy losses...” Sword Saint Xing heaved a sigh of relief.

This piece of intelligence was simply too important. If they had really been caught off guard, it could have ended disastrously for the Zhang Clan.

Taking a deep breath, Sword Saint Xing’s voice reverberated across the entire fortress, “Offspring of the Zhang Clan, heed my orders. The Otherworldly Demons are preparing to launch a surprise assault. All of you are to stand on level one wariness right now!”

“Yes, old clan head!”

Hearing the orders, the members of the Zhang Clan swiftly got into their positions to ready themselves for the impending battle. In an instant, the atmosphere turned incomparably solemn.

After issuing the instructions to the members of the Zhang Clan, Sword Saint Xing turned to the crowd around him and said, “Elders, follow me out of the city to meet the Otherworldly Demons. Since they are going to launch a surprise assault, we might just be able to take advantage of that catch them off guard!”

“Very well!”

The elders nodded, and the crowd swiftly flew out of the city.

The outskirts of the fortress were cloaked with a thick layer of mist, making it difficult to see too far ahead. Peering into the depths of the mist, and a knit suddenly appeared between Luo Ruoxin’s eyebrows. Without any hesitation, she quickly flew ahead.

“Ruoxin...” Not expecting the young lady to be so reckless, the Xingmeng Sword Saints frowned.

“The rest of you stand guard over here. We’ll head over to take a look!” Knowing that they would lose Ruoxin if they didn’t follow her right now, Sword Saint Xing swiftly issued some instructions to the elders before departing with Sword Saint Meng to chase after Ruoxin.

...

“Why is there no one at all?”

The further the Xingmeng Sword Saints flew, the more perplexed they were by the situation.

Logically speaking, given how far they had traveled, they should have encountered some Otherworldly Demons by now. Yet, why was there not a single person in sight?

Regardless of whether they were going to launch a surprise assault or not, surely they should at least upkeep their basic defenses?

If the Otherworldly Demons were truly so careless, there was no way they would have been able to stand against the Master Teacher Pavilion for so many years.

“Look, in front!”

Just as Sword Saint Xing was still pondering over the matter, Sword Saint Meng’s voice suddenly sounded. He quickly raised his head and saw row after row of Otherworldly Demons lying motionlessly on the ground.

Their hair was raised high in the air, and their faces were charred black. White foam flooded the corners of their mouth.

They were all dead!

Luo Ruoxin was kneeling in the midst of these corpses with a frown between her eyebrows, seemingly trying to examine for something.

# 1681 Crossing the Spatial Seal

“This... What happened?”

Seeing the Otherworldly Demons who had left them in a fluster lying dead on the ground, the Xingmeng Sword Saints were utterly stunned.

“They were killed by Zhang Xuan,” Luo Ruoxin said as she rose to her feet.

“They were killed by Xuan-er? How could that be? Unless one’s an Ancient Sage, there is no way any cultivator could eradicate an entire army of Otherworldly Demons!” Sword Saint Xing could hardly believe what he was hearing.

It was not that he did not trust his son, but the enemy consisted of ten thousand Otherworldly Demons at Saint 3-dan and above! Furthermore, there were also a few Great Sages in their ranks. Even with his son’s prowess, it was impossible for him to kill all of them singlehandedly!

“He used the power of lightning against them. These Otherworldly Demons were caught off guard and electrocuted. Most of them died in the electrocution, but those who survived were paralyzed by the lightning and killed nevertheless,” Luo Ruoxin analyzed.

“Lightning?”

The Xingmeng Sword Saints quickly turned their gazes to the corpses on the ground, and indeed, there were burn marks on their bodies.

At this moment, they could not help but remember that their son had the ability to summon lightning tribulation.

To actually defeat an army of ten thousand singlehandedly... even when they were seeing the results with their own eyes, they still felt like they were dreaming.

“Since these people are already dead, where is Xuan-er?”  
Sword Saint Meng quickly searched around the area.

No matter how many means her son had, he was bound to be in a bad condition after facing so many enemies at once. No matter what, she would not feel reassured until she saw how he was doing and whether he was injured or not...

“He has probably gone to the seal...” Luo Ruoxin stood up and continued venturing forward.

Considering how the threat was already resolved, the chances were that he had gone to repair the spatial seal. It was not too difficult to deduce this much.

The group quickly advanced ahead, and it did not take long for them to arrive before the spatial seal.

At this very moment, the spatial seal was already completely mended. The energy pulses within the spatial seal were a sign that the repairs had just been completed.

“It’s Xuan-er’s zhenqi, but... where is he?”

Sword Saint Meng could tell that the barrier had been mended using Zhang Xuan’s zhenqi. The fact that he could still repair the spatial seal meant that he was likely fine. However... where did he disappear to?

She had her Spiritual Perception cast as wide as possible for fear that she would miss her son. If her son was truly still around, she should have already found him by now.

“It looks like he has traversed across the seal to head to the otherworldly battlefield!” Luo Ruoxin frowned.

“He went over to the other side? How can he be so reckless?”  
Sword Saint Meng nearly fainted from shock upon hearing those words. “This won’t do. I must save him...”

Sword Saint Meng was hot-tempered, but she was rarely reckless. In fact, she was an extremely rational person, knowing clearly what she could and could not do. However, whenever it came to matters concerning her son, she seemed to swiftly lose her rationality.

“Allow me to go over instead. If the two of you head over, it’s likely that you’ll meet with danger before meeting Zhang Xuan...” Luo Ruoxin suddenly interjected.

The Xingmeng Sword Saints were powerful, but fighting in the otherworldly battlefield was a different matter from fighting in the Subterranean Gallery. The killing intent in the otherworldly battlefield was so great that it would suppress their fighting prowess considerably. On top of that, their auras would stand out like a lighthouse in the night, making them easy targets.

If they entered, it was likely that they would be captured and killed by the Otherworldly Demons before even finding Zhang Xuan.

“You?” Sword Saint Meng frowned. “It’s too dangerous to venture beyond the venture seal! Your current strength...”

It was not that she did not believe Luo Ruoxin, but the latter had never revealed her cultivation before. Back at the Luo Clan, it was her subordinate, Wu Chen, and not her who battled with the elders.

They had guessed that she was likely a formidable expert, but it was just a deduction on their part.

“Don’t worry!” Knowing that the other party was worried about her, Luo Ruoxin chuckled softly. “You should return to the city and inform the others of this news. Get them to clear the Otherworldly Demon corpses and move the defense line up to the spatial seal. As for the rest, leave it to me.”

After saying those words, she pushed her hand toward them lightly.

Hu!

The Xingmeng Sword Saints suddenly found their surroundings blurring before their eyes. The sight before them distorted, and all of a sudden, they found that they were already back in the main hall of the fortress.

“This...”

The two of them widened their eyes in astonishment.



To be able to bring them accurately back to the main hall with just a push... just how deep was her comprehension of spatial laws?

Not even Yang Shi was capable of a feat like that!

“Could she be... an Ancient Sage?” Sword Saint Meng uttered with an incredulous look on her face.

She knew that the woman whom her son loved possessed extraordinary strength, possibly stronger than them even. However, she did not think that the latter would actually be so formidable!

They could even put up a fight against Sempiternal realm cultivators if they collaborated with one another, and yet, the other party was able to teleport them back without them knowing... If she diverted her abilities to offense, her fighting prowess was bound to be formidable.

“Ancient Sage? How could there be such a young Ancient Sage on the Master Teacher Continent?” Sword Saint Xing shook his head and refuted Sword Saint Meng’s guess.

He pondered for a moment, but he was unable to fathom how powerful Luo Ruoxin was. Thus, he could only shake his head and say, “Alright, let’s not think too much into it for the time being. In any case, I think we should be able to entrust Xuan-er in her hands!”

After saying those words, he flew toward the aerial space of the fortress and commanded, “Offspring of the Zhang Clan, hear my command! Set forth right away to collect our spoils of war!”

“Collect our spoils of war?”

The elders guarding outside the city were surprised to hear such an announcement and bewildered to see the person who had made the announcement. They had seen their clan head advancing deeper into the Otherworldly Demon encampment, but before they knew it, their clan head was suddenly behind them. This was a truly perplexing sight to them.

“Clan Head Zhang Xuan has infiltrated the Otherworldly Demon encampment and slain the ten thousand Otherworldly

Demons that we are at war with. With this, the crisis at the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery has been resolved!” Seeing the looks of bewilderment below, Sword Saint Xing explained the situation with hearty laughter.

“Our clan head killed ten thousand Otherworldly Demons singlehandedly?”

“The Otherworldly Demon army that we were helpless against was annihilated by our clan head alone?”

“This... Am I hearing things?”

...

In an instant, everyone in the Zhang Clan froze on the spot. They were all shocked silly.

They had heard stories of heroes charging into the midst of an army to decapitate the enemy commander’s head, and they had also heard of experts valiantly fighting against hundreds simultaneously... But for a single man to destroy an entire army, what in the world was happening?

...

Oblivious to the happenings in the Zhang Clan, Zhang Xuan was swiftly advancing ahead in the otherworldly battlefield.

A world as vast as the Master Teacher Continent, the horizon was nowhere in sight. There was no sun in the world, just a crimson moon hanging above, bringing an air of desolation to the world beneath.

The killing intent of this world seemed to be concentrated on the crimson moon, as if the unique zhenqi of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had originated from there.

Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up. This place truly feels like a living hell. It’s no wonder the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe want to conquer the Master Teacher Continent...

Even though his Heaven’s Path zhenqi granted him protection against killing intent, he felt that his mind would slowly become warped and violent if he stayed there for a prolonged period of time. Slowly but surely, he would start to desire bloodshed.

This world truly was not a hospitable place.

If he had been an Otherworldly Demon, he would have barged over to the Master Teacher Continent as well.

I don't think I'll be able to find my way around without a map. Should I return first and wait for Vicious to awaken before coming back?

In truth, it was mostly out of curiosity that he had gone over to the otherworldly battlefield. Realizing that he would not be able to navigate his way around efficiently, he felt that it would be better for him to return for the time being.

Otherwise, it would be really disastrous if he lost his sense of direction.

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to turn back, he heard a gale sounding not too far away. Following which, the voice of an Otherworldly Demon cultivator was heard. "Hurry up!"

Zhang Xuan swiftly used the Spatial Quintessence of Sealing to conceal his figure before heading in the direction that the voice had originated from.

# 1682 Army of a Hundred Thousand

It did not take long for him to arrive at the foot of a mountain, where he found four Otherworldly Demons loitering. Spiritual energy was surging in from the surroundings. It seemed like the Otherworldly Demons were trying to drive some kind of formation.

Of the four Otherworldly Demons, the stronger one was at Sempiternal realm, wielding strength comparable to Mou Wu. The remaining three were only at Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm.

Right in front of them was a Teleportation Formation. However, gauging from the formation flags around, the formation seemed to be really old. As such, it would take some difficulty to reactivate it.

The strongest Otherworldly Demon was glaring at the other three with a furious gaze. The one who had hollered earlier was him as well.

“Lord Mo Ye, I am already trying my best, but this formation is simply too old... There’s nothing I can do either...” one of the Otherworldly Demons driving the formation protested timidly.

“Cut the cr\*p and get to work. If this doesn’t work out, you and I, our heads will roll!” Mo Ye waved his hand coldly.

“Yes!”

Not daring to protest anymore, the Otherworldly Demon drove his zhenqi furiously into the formation. The rate at which spiritual energy was gathering in the area hastened, and the ancient formation began to flicker. It seemed as if it would come to life at any moment.

However, the face of the Otherworldly Demon driving the formation was swiftly paling as well. He seemed to be

reaching the limits of his stamina.

“Hurry up and help me!” the Otherworldly Demon exclaimed to the remaining two.

The other two Introspective Convalescence realm Otherworldly Demons unhesitatingly bit their fingers and offered their blood to the Teleportation Formation.

Weng!

In an instant, the spiritual energy in the surroundings grew so dense that it almost felt tangible. A brilliant light shone off from the Teleportation Formation.

“Good!” Seeing that the Teleportation Formation had been activated, Mo Ye harrumphed coldly before stepping into it.

Hu!

Enveloped by the light, a dimension rift appeared before Mo Ye. He stepped in and swiftly disappeared from sight.

Padah!

As soon as Mo Ye left, the remaining three Introspective Convalescence realm cultivators slumped onto the ground.

It seemed like activating the formation had sapped their strength dry.

“It’s fortunate that we managed to pull it off, or else our heads would have been lopped off...” Despite their exhaustion, the trio had relieved smiles on their faces.

If the formation had not been activated, they would have lost their lives!

While they were in the midst of celebrating their small success, a towering Otherworldly Demon suddenly walked up to them.

“Lord Mou Wu!”

Upon seeing the towering Otherworldly Demon, the trio hurriedly got to their feet and greeted him.

“Un. Drive the formation. I want to go to where Mo Ye just went!” Mou Wu waved his hand imposingly.

It went without saying that this Mou Wu was an impersonation from Zhang Xuan.

Considering how Mo Ye was in such a rush to leave via a Teleportation Formation, there was no doubt that he had something urgent to attend to. Since he had seen it, it went without saying that he had to stop the other party. At the same time, this was a good opportunity for him to learn about what was going on in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

“Lord Mou Wu, you wish to head to the Thousandleaf Sea, too?”

The Otherworldly Demons who had activated the formation nearly burst into tears.

They had nearly exhausted themselves to death activating the Teleportation Formation once. If they had to do it once more, they might just lose their lives!

One of the Otherworldly Demons gritted his teeth and said, “Lord Mou Wu, pardon me for asking this, but weren’t you heading to Riverstar under Sovereign Chen Ling’s orders?”

Picking up on the phrase ‘Riverstar’, Zhang Xuan pondered silently for a moment.

Considering that Mou Wu had gone to the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery earlier with Sovereign Chen Ling’s edict in hand, it was likely that the ‘Riverstar’ mentioned by the Otherworldly Demon referred to that. It seemed like the names that humans and Otherworldly Demons had for certain locations differed from one another.

“I have already resolved the matter at Riverstar. Sovereign Chen Ling has just instructed me to make my way over to the Thousandleaf Sea in order to meet up with Mo Ye... Do you need me to report all of my actions to you?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes as killing intent burst forth from his body.

Power began billowing beneath his thick armor, and it seemed like he would make a move at any moment.

Mou Wu’s armor was identical to Heng Jiang’s, so he only had to alter his appearance a little in order to personate the other party.

“I dare not question Lord Mou Wu’s movements!” The Otherworldly Demons immediately paled in fright. He hurriedly turned his attention to the Teleportation Formation and began infusing his zhenqi.

However, as he had just exerted himself too much, his stamina was already at its limits.

The other two Otherworldly Demon knew that they would be punished if they could not activate the Teleportation Formation for Mou Wu as well, so they quickly rushed over to aid their companion.

“I have just finished dealing with the matters at Riverstar and am still unaware of the situation over at the Thousandleaf Sea. Tell me, what’s the progress there?” Watching as the Otherworldly Demons squeezed every last drop of their zhenqi into the Teleportation Formation, Zhang Xuan dropped such a question leisurely.

Since Riverstar referred to the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, it was likely that the Thousandleaf Sea was the name of another Subterranean Gallery. In fact, if his guess was correct, it was likely one of the six Subterranean Galleries that the Otherworldly Demons were focusing their manpower on.

It would be good if he could head over there and resolve the crisis there. This would alleviate the pressure the others were facing.

“Reporting to Lord Mou Wu, we aren’t privy to such information, so we aren’t too sure either... However, Lord Mo Ye mentioned earlier that both Sovereign Chen Xing and Sovereign Chen Ling have issued an order in unison for the reserve army stationed at the Thousandleaf Sea to launch an attack on the humans right away!” one of the Otherworldly Demons replied hurriedly.

“Reserve army? Launch an attack right away?” Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up.

Back at the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, Sword Saint Xing noticed that the Otherworldly Demons were in no

rush to attack the Zhang Clan and wondered if they might be waiting for reinforcements. An army of ten thousand was already a handful to deal with. If they had to deal with reinforcements, it would really be a nightmare for the Zhang Clan!

Deducing based on the information that he had received so far, it seemed like the Thousandleaf Sea was not a Subterranean Gallery but a military barrack where the ‘reinforcements’ were all stationed.

This was not good news. Without a doubt, the master teachers stationed in the Subterranean Gallery where the reserve army was mobilized to would definitely face great danger.

Furthermore, this was an order that Sovereign Chen Xing and Sovereign Chen Ling had ordered in unison!

The orders that Heng Jiang had received from Sovereign Chen Ling and Sovereign Chen Xing earlier had been conflicting; the former had commanded him to launch an attack right away whereas Sovereign Chen Xing had commanded him to remain on standby. In other words, it seemed like there was some disharmony among the Sovereigns. Yet, the two of them actually made a call in unison to launch an attack...

“How many soldiers are there at the Thousandleaf Sea? Is it possible to divert some men over to reinforce Riverstar?” Zhang Xuan continued asking casually.

“The soldiers at the Thousandleaf Sea are the strongest soldiers of our Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, the elites under Sovereign Chen Ling and Sovereign Chen Xing’s command. They number over a hundred thousand!” the Otherworldly Demon replied proudly.

“Hundred thousand?” Zhang Xuan nearly stumbled upon hearing that number.

Ten thousand Otherworldly Demon soldiers was already enough to force the Zhang Clan to mobilize all of its forces and descend to the Subterranean Gallery to fight a desperate battle. If a hundred thousand Otherworldly Demon soldiers



were mobilized simultaneously, not even the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would be able to suppress them!

Who could have thought that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would actually have an army of such a scale?

Would they still be able to protect the Master Teacher Pavilion against such a powerful foe?

“That’s right!” the Otherworldly Demon seemed to know quite a bit about this matter. “This is the first time that the two Sovereigns have worked with one another. They have gathered all of the experts of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe together in order to push open a path to the Master Teacher Continent. Most of the soldiers from the other Subterranean Galleries have already headed over to the Thousandleaf Sea. The only reason Riverstar didn’t receive the order is because it’s too far away!”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan discreetly heaved a sigh of relief.

He had thought that the Otherworldly Demons were assaulting all 108 Subterranean Galleries simultaneously and still had a reserve army of a hundred thousand strong to reinforce them wherever required. If that was the case, that would really have been frightening!

Fortunately, that was not so.

It seemed like Sovereign Chen Ling and Sovereign Chen Xing had issued orders to have the soldiers from the different Subterranean Galleries regroup at the Thousandleaf Sea. Afterward, they would focus their fighting power on breaching a single Subterranean Gallery.

Another thing that he noted from the Otherworldly Demon’s words was that this was the first time that Sovereign Chen Ling and Sovereign Chen Xing had worked together. This further verified his deduction that the three Sovereigns of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were not on good terms.

In fact, it was likely that they were apprehensive of one another, and there was a little bit of infighting going on. That had probably hindered them from cooperating with one

another, thus preventing the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe from launching a decisive assault all this while.

All of a sudden, the Otherworldly Demon noticed that something was amiss and exclaimed, “That’s not right... Lord Mou Wu, you are a commander of our Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. How can you not know all this?”

The other two Otherworldly Demons widened their eyes as realization dawned on them, and they swiftly directed menacing gazes toward Zhang Xuan.

# 1683 High Commander

“You’re right. I suppose Lord Mou Wu should have known all this...” Seeing that he had been exposed, Zhang Xuan could not be bothered to keep up with his disguise anymore and chuckled softly.

“He isn’t Lord Mou Wu! Attack!”

The three Otherworldly Demons narrowed their eyes menacingly as they prepared to leap at the person before them. However, before they could do so, a massive silhouette in the sky was already falling swiftly on them.

Padah!

The Otherworldly Demon driving the formation was crushed into minced meat.

Following which, a skeletal dragon surged forward and bit off the head of another Otherworldly Demon. At the same time, a demonic saber easily severed the last Otherworldly Demon in half.

Those three Otherworldly Demons were only in the Introspective Convalescence realm. Since they had seen through his disguise, all he had to do was silence them.

After cleaning up the corpses, Zhang Xuan infused his zhenqi into the old Teleportation Formation before him, and amid shimmering light, he vanished on the spot.

With his expertise as a formation master and his comprehension of space, activating the formation was a walk in the park to him.

With a jolt, he appeared at the other end of the Teleportation Formation. With a sweeping gaze of his surroundings, he found that he was standing amid a massive valley. Mountains of different heights meandered through the area, obscuring the area from public view.

“Paying respects to the Commander!”

Barely after stabilizing his posture, he heard voices sounding by the side.

They were the soldiers tasked with the responsibility of standing guard over the Teleportation Formation. They did not seem to be too highly ranked. Most likely, they had only recognized him from the helmet and armor that he was wearing.

“Un.” Zhang Xuan nodded perfunctorily as he stepped forward with widened strides.

A crimson moon hung above a distant mountain, and a slight layer of mist drifted amid the mountain range. Despite the sinister air lingering in the area, Zhang Xuan had to admit that the scenery was breathtaking, almost like a still painting.

There were countless soldiers standing in neat formations throughout the massive valley. Their movements were extremely organized, and there was not the slightest dissonant sound to be heard. Just from the discipline alone, it was apparent that the soldiers were well-trained.

As the reserve army consisted of soldiers from many different Subterranean Galleries, while Mou Wu’s face appeared a little foreign to most, no one doubted his identity. The further he advanced, the more shocked Zhang Xuan became.

Just like the Otherworldly Demon soldiers dispatched to the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, even the weakest of the soldiers standing in this very valley was at Saint 3-dan!

If this army of a hundred thousand made a move simultaneously, even Ancient Sages would have to back down in the face of their might!

I have to stop them, or else many lives will be lost! Zhang Xuan thought with a frown.

After tens of thousands of years of development, the Master Teacher Pavilion was indeed capable of rallying a hundred thousand cultivators of Saint 3-dan and above. However, it would take time to do so. Furthermore, due to the Otherworldly Demons invading all 108 Subterranean Galleries

simultaneously, the human cultivators had been forced to scatter all over the Master Teacher Continent to fend them off.

If this army launched an assault right now, there was no way that the Master Teacher Pavilion would be able to put up a sufficient defense in time to stop it. And once the Otherworldly Demons started pouring into the Master Teacher Continent, many innocent civilians would be massacred!

He had to stop this army by hook or by crook!

But... how was he supposed to go about doing so?

Even Ancient Sages would not dare confront an army of such scale easily, let alone him!

If he showed the slightest anomaly in his actions, he would be deader than a doornail before he knew it!

He could consider using the Heaven's Path zhenqi to poison the soldiers, but even if he depleted every last drop of his zhenqi, it was unlikely that it would be sufficient to stop the army in its tracks.

The lightning method did work earlier, but he did not have any seer artifacts to work with at the moment. Besides, he would require the soldiers to heed his command first!

Let me see if I can find their highest commander... If I can kill him and take control of the army, I might just be able to pull something off...

To deal with an army, the most effective method was to first nab its commander.

He could not think of a feasible plan that would allow him to incapacitate the entire army at once, so the best thing that he could do at the moment was claim the initiative. If he could assume the highest role in the army, he would be in a better position to do something about the matter.

Thus, Zhang Xuan activated his Eye of Insight and began scanning his surroundings.

It did not take long for a huge tent with a group of soldiers standing guard outside to come into his sight. Knowing that it

was likely the commander's tent, he began making his way over.

While strutting over to the tent, he passed by a remote area. With a swift flick of his finger, he warped the space around him and disappeared from sight.

After concealing himself, he began flitting toward the huge tent, and it did not take long before he was standing before it.

Sha sha!

After waiting outside for a while, a person dressed in a black helmet and armor, presumably a commander like Heng Jiang and Mou Wu, pried open the tent flap and walked in. Zhang Xuan casually entered right behind him as well.

There was a fire stove within the room that kept the tent slightly warm. Gazing across the tent, Zhang Xuan saw eighteen other Otherworldly Demons seated within. They were dressed in black helmets and armor, which indicated that they were commanders as well.

“They are all Sempiternal realm cultivators?” Zhang Xuan's eyebrows leaped up in astonishment.

To his astonishment, they were all Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm cultivators, wielding strength comparable to Mou Wu! This was especially so for the middle-aged man seated at the very center with a golden saber in his grip. Zhang Xuan could vaguely sense that his strength was on par with Yang Shi's!

In an instant, Zhang Xuan's body stiffened on the spot. He dared not even twitch for fear of catching their attention.

It was fortunate that he did not barge in recklessly but followed behind another commander. Otherwise, even with his spatial seal, his abrupt intrusion would likely have made the experts gathered here notice an anomaly.

He had made huge advancements in his cultivation during this period of time, but he was not so naive as to think that he would be able to get away unscathed from the clutches of so many Sempiternal realm experts.

“Reporting to the High Commander, Bei Xin refuses to comply with our demands!” The commander who had just entered the room clasped his fist and gave his report.

“He refuses to comply?” the middle-aged man seated at the center replied impassively.

“He said that their resources are limited too, so they can’t afford to share anything with us. He suggests that we should just keep our inventories separate so as to avoid getting into meaningless squabbles over this matter!” the commander said.

“Meaningless squabbles? He sure has everything planned out well. He expects us to take the vanguard, but he isn’t even willing to lend us a single set of armor... It’s clear that he regards us as nothing more than stepping stones to achieve his aims!”

“Sovereign Chen Xing has always been known to be a greedy person, but who could have thought that Bei Xin would be so cunning too? We have already agreed to collaborate with one another on this attack, but he wants to get away with contributing nothing at all? He’s daydreaming!”

...

Upon hearing the words of the arriving commander, a huge uproar broke out within the room.

The middle-aged man raised his hand to gesture for the crowd to quiet down. “Tell them that it’s fine if they don’t want to contribute any resources. However, their side must send an army in as well, and we’ll advance alongside them. Otherwise, they’ll have to give us the Celestial Armors forged by Sovereign Chen Xing. I won’t ask for too much, just one hundred sets. Otherwise, we’ll just have to settle it with a fight! If he wins, I’ll abide by his arrangements. But if I win, he’ll have to cut this nonsense and heed my words!”

“Yes, High Commander!” The commander quickly nodded and backed out of the room.

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment, but eventually, he chose to leave the room together with the commander. Following

behind the latter, he soon noticed another huge tent in the distance.

From their conversation, it seems like even though the reserve army numbers up to a hulking hundred thousand, they are divided into two factions. One is sided toward Sovereign Chen Xing whereas the other is under Sovereign Chen Ling! Zhang Xuan swiftly sorted through the information that he had acquired so far.

He had no idea whom the two Sovereigns were, but it was apparent that even though they had decided to work with one another, there was still some strife between the two factions.

The more friction there is between them, the better. If I could just spark the friction into raging flames and make them fall out with one another, I might just be able to resolve the crisis, Zhang Xuan thought with brightly lit eyes.

If the hundred thousand soldiers united together as one, there would really be nothing that he could do. He would just have to swiftly return to the Subterranean Gallery and inform the Master Teacher Pavilion and the various major powers of the matter through his Communication Jade Token so that they could make preparations in advance. However, since there was some disharmony between the two factions... it seemed like this was an opportunity that he could exploit!

Thus, Zhang Xuan swiftly altered his appearance before tearing away the spatial barrier around him, revealing himself.

“Cough!” Zhang Xuan intentionally released a cough to catch the commander’s attention.

“Who is it?”

The commander was in the midst of heading over to the opposite tent when he heard the cough. He quickly turned around, and upon seeing the person standing before him, he jolted in shock. He bowed in a fluster and greeted him. “High Commander! D-do you... have any other orders for me?”

The person whom Zhang Xuan was impersonating was the middle-aged man seated in the center of the room earlier, the High Commander!



# 1684 Sowing Discord

Imitating the High Commander's voice and enunciation, Zhang Xuan looked at the commander and said, "There's something that I want you to relay to Bei Xin for me!"

"High Commander, feel free to relay your orders!"

"Come closer. This matter mustn't be made known to anyone else..." Zhang Xuan said gravely.

"Yes, High Commander..."

The commander was perplexed as to why Zhang Xuan could not use zhenqi telepathy to talk to him discreetly, but he still chose to lean his head closer in anyway. As a show of deference to the High Commander, he kept his head lowered respectfully.

They were in the depths of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe's main camp. The thought that anyone would be so audacious as to impersonate the High Commander was so ludicrous that it did not even cross his mind.

"It's like this..." With a suppressed voice, Zhang Xuan began speaking.

But on the third word, a cold flash of light sliced through the air.

The commander instantaneously sensed danger, but before he could do anything, the world was already spinning around him. His head had been lopped off his neck.

It was a completely unexpected strike, and the killing blow was made using the Half-Ancient Sage Infernal Blacksaber. Even though the commander was at the Sempiternal realm, he still ended up falling victim to Zhang Xuan.

Of course, part of the reason was that the commander was only at Sempiternal realm primary stage. If he had been any more powerful, things would not have been so simple.

Zhang Xuan swiftly threw the commander's corpse into his storage ring and erased all traces of the assassination. Following which, he warped his muscles and bones to assume the appearance of the dead commander.

The assassination had occurred in the middle of the camp, where there were many Otherworldly Demon soldiers running about. However, as Zhang Xuan had made sure to seal the surrounding space before making a move, the act did not catch anyone's attention.

After putting on the commander's armor and helmet, he began striding over to the huge tent before him.

Just as he reached the entrance, two guards raised their spears and blocked his passageway.

"Audacious! I have come here in representation of our High Commander! Go and report my arrival!" Zhang Xuan placed his hands behind his back and spoke authoritatively.

One of the guards hesitated for a moment before turning around to enter the tent. A moment later, he beckoned with his hand. "Please enter!"

With a haughty harrumph, Zhang Xuan strutted into the tent.

Similar to the tent that he was in before, there were over a dozen Sempiternal realm cultivators sitting all around. The Otherworldly Demon sitting at the center had an aura that did not pale in comparison to the High Commander in the other tent. Most likely, he was the High Commander of Sovereign Chen Xing's faction, Bei Xin.

Noticing Zhang Xuan's arrival, Bei Xin shot a glance over and asked coldly, "Has Wu Shu agreed to my terms?"

"Our High Commander has agreed to the terms. However, there are several details that he hopes to discuss with you!" Zhang Xuan nodded in response.

"A wise decision from your High Commander! It seems like Wu Shu isn't as obstinate as the others make him out to be!" Bei Xin did not think that the other party had acceded to his demands, and he burst into hearty laughter. "Where does he want to discuss the matter?"

“As this matter concerns the alliance of both of our factions, there’s a need to take things carefully. Thus, he suggests the meeting to be at the narrow valley in between the two tents. If you don’t have any objections to the matter, please head there an hour from now. Our High Commander will be waiting for you there!” Zhang Xuan reported.

While he was making his way over earlier, he had noticed that there was a narrow valley around.

“Alright. Tell Wu Shu that I’ll be there!” Bei Xin nodded.

“Farewell!” Zhang Xuan lowered his head and backed out of the room.

As soon as Zhang Xuan left, the commanders in the tent anxiously got to their feet and clasped their fists.

“High Commander, Wu Shu is known to be a scheming fellow. I fear that he might be up to no good!”

“Indeed. I find it hard to believe that he would accept our terms. Most likely, he’s intending to ambush us to force us to comply with their terms!”

The commanders exclaimed worriedly.

“If they think that such trivial schemes will work against me, they are too naive! Besides, this is the will of the two Sovereigns, and all of you will be in the vicinity too. He won’t do anything that would compromise the success of the alliance!” Bei Xin harrumphed coldly.

He whipped out a spear and brandished it forcefully, tearing open a dimension rift in its trajectory.

“However, we should still be prepared in case they attempt to pull anything funny. Later on, I want you all to scout the area around the valley. If you notice any anomalies, report them to me immediately!” Bei Xin said.

“Yes, High Commander!” the crowd replied resoundingly.

...

After leaving Bei Xin’s tent, Zhang Xuan returned in the direction that he had come from, and it did not take long for

him to arrive at the other huge tent.

“Reporting to the High Commander, I have just relayed your words to Bei Xin, but he...” With an awkward look on his face, Zhang Xuan lowered his gaze with a conflicted look on his face, seemingly unsure whether he should continue or not.

“Speak!” High Commander Wu Shu ordered.

“He said that... you aren’t worthy of being his opponent at all. If you dare challenge him to a duel, he’ll have you pummeled till you are on your knees, begging for mercy!” Zhang Xuan lowered his head fearfully as he spoke with a quivering tone.

“He thinks that I’ll beg him for mercy? That arrogant b\*stard! Very well, let’s see how powerful he is to dare utter such words!”

Huala!

Wu Shu slammed his fist on the table and rose to his feet. As if a manifestation of his rage, a devastating hurricane seemed to be brewing around him.

An inferno of fury could be seen burning in the depths of his eyes.

“He says that if you have guts, he will face you in the narrow valley in between the two tents an hour from now...” Zhang Xuan continued speaking fearfully.

“Hah! It seems like there’s no end to Bei Xin’s arrogance. Let’s see if he has the strength to back up his words then!” Wu Shu flicked the golden saber in his grasp, and a choking sound echoed from the surrounding air.

A commander in the tent stood up and exclaimed, “High Commander! I fear that Bei Xin might have some ploy in mind to utter such arrogant words!”

“I concur, High Commander. I think that there’s a good chance that it’s a trap!” Another commander stood up and remarked in agitation.

“Un. I have challenged that fellow to a fight before, but he ended up backing down at the last moment. It’s unlikely that he has the guts to challenge me to a proper duel. Most likely,

he's up to something. He Mu and Gui Li, I want the two of you to keep a close watch over the valley. If you notice anything, report it to me right away!" Wu Shu commanded.

"Yes!"

"Yes!"

Two commanders stood up and left the tent.

"I am familiar with the area around the valley. Allow me to accompany them for the scouting mission!" Zhang Xuan clasped his fist.

"Go on!" Wu Shu waved his hand.

Zhang Xuan quickly turned around, left the tent, and shouted to the two commanders who had just left, "Wait for me. I am familiar with the terrain around the valley, so allow me to bring you over!"

The two commanders nodded. The three of them swiftly concealed their auras and headed forward.

It did not take them long to arrive at a valley.

"I think it would be best for us to split up and cover an area each. This way, we'll be able to cover each other's blind spots and alarm one another as soon as something happens!" Zhang Xuan suggested.

Feeling that what Zhang Xuan said made sense, they swiftly scattered to find a hiding spot each. However, before they could even find a place to conceal themselves, their bodies suddenly jolted before slumping lifelessly to the ground.

One had the Dragonbone Divine Spear pierced through his heart while the head of the other had been severed by the Infernal Blacksaber.

After slaying the duo, Zhang Xuan swiftly took their corpses and cleaned up the area. After which, he morphed into Bei Xin's appearance and dashed right toward High Commander Wu Shu's tent.

Before arriving in the tent, he suddenly began laughing maniacally.

“Wu Shu, just say if you are afraid to face me. Don’t you think it’s cowardly of you to plant your men in the area to assault me?”

Hula!

After saying those words, he tossed the three corpses toward the tent before turning around and fleeing as fast as he could.

By the time Wu Shu rushed out of the tent, Zhang Xuan had already fled to a remote corner and hidden within a spatial barrier. Wu Shu looked at the three corpses dumped before his tent—they were Su Mu, Gui Li, and Li Jia, the three commanders whom he had just dispatched to scout the valley. Immediately realizing what had happened, he nearly exploded on the spot.

They had already formed an alliance with one another, but Bei Xin still dared to kill his subordinate so blatantly. This was intolerable!

“Bei Xin! If I don’t kill you, I shan’t be known as Wu Shu!” With a furious roar, Wu Shu dashed right for Bei Xin’s tent.

At the same time, the commanders behind him were also burning with rage after witnessing the deaths of their comrades. They quickly followed behind Wu Shu.

In the opposite tent, Bei Xin and his commanders were still trying to figure out the motive behind Wu Shu’s offer to talk when a heavy pressure suddenly descended upon them from above. Following which, an overwhelming saber qi sliced through the air and split the tent in two.

Hu hu hu!

Bei Xin swiftly flew into the air to get a closer look at the assailant when he saw Wu Shu with his golden saber. His eyebrows shot up, and he roared furiously, “Wu Shu, have you gone mad? What are you trying to pull here?”

Did the other party not agree to his terms? Why would the other party suddenly rush over with a look that seemed as if he was going to murder someone?

“Stop putting on an act! You sure are formidable, aren’t you? Why don’t you prove your worth to me once and for all?” Wu Shu could not even be bothered to waste his time with words anymore.

He raised his golden saber and sent another barrage of saber qi toward Bei Xin.

# 1685 Complete Chaos!

Si la!

The barrage of saber qi ravaged the surroundings, tearing open countless dimension rifts in the area. An astonishing concentration of killing intent gathered in the area, corroding the souls of those present.

“You are seeking death!”

Seeing how Wu Shu was aiming to claim his life without any hesitation as if a madman, Bei Xin’s eyebrows twitched in anger. He flicked his spear upward to fend against Wu Shu’s attack.

Ding ding ding!

As the two weapons collided with one another, a brilliant flash of light erupted in the sky.

The two of them were Sempiternal realm consummation experts, invincible among those beneath Ancient Sage. As they crossed blows with one another, the shockwaves of their attacks tore apart the heavens and the earth. Even the light of the crimson moon was overshadowed by their might.

“Is that fellow insane?”

The more he fought, the more stifled Bei Xin became.

It was just a moment ago that the other party had dispatched an envoy to agree to his demands and request further negotiations. He had already prepared what to say during the negotiation, but who could have thought that before an hour was up, the other party would suddenly charge over and put his life on the line against him?

What in the world was he up to?

Did he eat gunpowder or something?

“Wu Shu, can I view your actions to be a desire for the dissolution of our alliance? You should know that if this



alliance breaks down, I have no qualms with reporting you to Sovereign Chen Ling!” Bei Xin bellowed coldly.

“You wish to report me to Sovereign Chen Ling? Do it then! If you have the guts to kill my subordinates blatantly, what else do I have to lose?” Wu Shu bellowed furiously as he brandished his saber furiously toward the other party.

“I killed your subordinates? What the hell are you saying?” Bei Xin roared back. “Don’t malign me for something I didn’t do!”

“Su Mu, Gui Li, and Li Jia... The three of them would be able to equal even a Sempiternal realm consummation cultivator in battle! Who else could be the culprit if you not?” Wu Shu spat through gritted teeth.

Even though his three subordinates were only at Sempiternal realm primary stage, their fighting prowess was still relatively formidable. Other than Bei Xin, there was no one else in the entire camp who had the ability to kill them so discreetly!

Moreover... that fellow had even dumped the corpses at the entrance of his tent, and there were many eye-witnesses who could bear testimony to that!

“You are saying that I killed Su Mu, Gui Li, and Li Jia?” Seeing the fury in Wu Shu’s eyes, Bei Xin was startled. A contemplative frown surfaced on his forehead as he opened his mouth to explain himself.

However, before he could say a word, a fiery inferno suddenly rose from his tent. Someone had set fire to his tent!

Following which, a voice sounded from the crowd. “Sovereign Chen Ling never intended to work together with us. They have planted their men around the valley in order to ambush us! Look, even High Commander Wu Mu has brought his men here to wreak havoc...”

That voice sounded extremely clearly within the silent camp. It was as if a boulder had been tossed into calm waters.

The next moment, a huge uproar broke out.

Many soldiers had witnessed the furious fight between Wu Shu and Bei Xin in the air, and every single move that they made was deadly, seeking to claim the other's life. They were still wondering what was going on when they heard those words, and realization dawned upon them. Rage swiftly crashed down upon them.

“Slaughter those traitors!”

“They are just looking for an excuse to attack our men! Those shameless scoundrels!”

“Brothers, charge! We are the proud soldiers of Sovereign Chen Xing. We mustn't allow others to underestimate us!”

“I have long thought that they were an eyesore. Let's kill them all!”

...

Such battle cries could be heard all around. It was as if someone had set their fighting spirits alight. However, as well-trained elites, as furious as they were, they did not make a move. It was insubordination to engage in battle without the command of a superior.

At this moment, an Otherworldly Demon dressed in black helmet and armor flew in the air and roared, “What are you waiting for? Those scoundrels have already climbed over our heads! Get back at them!”

It was a direct command from one of their commanders. With this, the very last hurdle holding them back was torn down. Thus, they began charging toward the other faction with furious war cries.

“...”

Wu Shu and Bei Xin, who were fighting in the air a moment ago, fell into a daze. They did not expect such a situation to happen at all.

“Something is wrong...” Wu Shu's eyebrows shot up.

As furious as he was, as someone who had risen to the position of High Commander, he was not a reckless individual. The earlier shouting had come at too coincidental a moment. It

effectively ignited the emotions of all soldiers. It was hard to believe that such a matter was not pre-planned.

Quickly turning to his subordinate, Wu Shu commanded, “He Lin, Chun Mu, and Bei Ye, try and calm down the situation below. We can’t afford to have infighting happening at such a moment!”

They had allied with one another not too long ago, and they had not even fought the Master Teacher Pavilion yet! If they started fighting right from the start, he would not be able to explain matters to Sovereign Chen Ling!

As the leader of an entire army, he could not allow himself to be controlled by his emotions.

“Yes!”

The group of three quickly descended among the crowd to stop them. However, not too long later, the commander named He Lin returned and exclaimed, “High Commander, bad news! Their men began to attack our men without giving us a chance to explain ourselves. Chun Mu and Bai Ye attempted to reason to them to stop the attack, but they ended up being killed too!”

As he said those words, He Lin flicked his wrist, and a couple of corpses appeared by his side.

Looking at the corpses, Wu Shu’s eyes turned so red that it seemed as if blood would drop from them.

“Bei Xin, I have tolerated you again and again, but you are really testing the limits of my patience...”

Seeing how five of his commanders had been killed one after another, Wu Shu could not hold back his rage any longer. He brandished his saber and slashed it down upon Bei Xin.

“Brother Wu Shu, this matter isn’t as simple as it seems! My men would never dare make a move on your commanders...”

Bei Xin hurriedly tried to explain himself.

But before he could finish speaking, another Otherworldly Demon dressed in a black helmet and armor rushed up to Bei Xin and reported, “High Commander, bad news! Six of our commanders have just been assassinated!”

Following which, the Otherworldly Demon flicked his hand, and six corpses materialized on the ground.

Facing such a situation, Bei Xin slowly turned his head over and spat through gritted teeth, “Wu Shu, what did you just say?”

“Well killed!” Wu Shu roared heartily.

He had thought that his faction had been taken advantage of all this while, but his subordinates were proving to be no pushovers either. They had already slain six of Bei Xin’s commanders!

“It seems like you are for real this time. Since that’s the case, I’ll give you what we want!” Hearing Wu Shu’s words, Bei Xin could not hold himself back anymore.

He raised his spear and thrust it forward.

Huala!

His spear qi gushed forth with ferocious might. From the tremendous prowess of his spear, it was apparent that he had already comprehended a kind of Spear Quintessence.

Wu Shu did not pale in comparison either. From the sheer might of his saber qi, it was also very clear that he had grasped a type of Saber Quintessence.

In the blink of an eye, the two of them were already locked in an intense fight.

“Let utter chaos descend here!”

Amid the crowd, the lips of an Otherworldly Demon crept up as he watched the upheaval before him.

He was Zhang Xuan.

He was the commanders who had reported to Wu Shu and Bei Xin.

If those commanders were to group together with one another, he would have had difficulty trying to assassinate them. However, when they split up from one another, it became much easier for him to kill them, especially since he was able

to disguise himself and catch them off guard. In just ten minutes, he had already slain more than ten commanders.

Through these corpses and his ability to disguise himself impeccably, even figures as intelligent as Wu Shu and Bei Xin ended up losing themselves to their emotions and were unconsciously being dragged into his scheme.

They never could have thought that someone was able to disguise himself impeccably as their subordinates.

“Commander Mo Qin, what are you doing here? They have already started fighting over there...”

While Zhang Xuan was still watching the commotion, an Otherworldly Demon wearing a black helmet and armor came over and raised his saber.

Kacha!

The next instant, the head of the Otherworldly Demon fell to the ground.

After beheading the other party, Zhang Xuan swiftly altered his appearance to the opposite commander and exclaimed.

“Commander Ji Mo has been killed. Everyone, you must exact vengeance for him!”

His voice sounded clearly even among all of the ruckus.

Since it was already an upheaval, there was no harm stoking the flames of madness further!

# 1686 Killing the High Commander

Zhang Xuan flitted around the battlefield with his clone, the Golden Origin Cauldron, the Infernal Blacksaber, and the Dragonbone Divine Spear. They would usually hide themselves amid the crowd, and as soon as an opportunity to strike surfaced, they would swiftly make their move.

In less than ten minutes, the number of Otherworldly Demons above Saint 9-dan who had fallen to him already numbered several hundred.

All of the commanders are already dead...

Zhang Xuan swiftly combed the battlefield and found that all of the black armored commanders and generals had been killed, and he heaved a sigh of relief.

Having cultivated the Saint Ascension Decipher and successfully achieved a breakthrough using Kong shi's superior breakthrough method, his zhenqi could be said to be boundless. Furthermore, the incredible chaos happening around him served as the perfect cover to conceal his tracks. With his disguise ability, no one was able to see through him at all.

Basically, the fate of any Otherworldly Demon whom he set his eyes upon would immediately be sealed.

In fact, he had singlehandedly killed more than two-thirds of the commanders and generals!

Now, this is what I call utter chaos!

Without any commanders and generals to control the crowd, the order that was still barely maintained among the soldiers fell through completely. On a battlefield of a hundred thousand soldiers, at least a couple of Otherworldly Demon died every single second.

Even by conservative estimates, at least twenty thousand Otherworldly Demons had already died amid the chaos.

Now, the key lies in the two High Commanders above. As long as they survive, it's only a matter of time before they recover from their irrationality and exert control over their soldiers, thus calming the situation down... Zhang Xuan thought as he turned his gaze toward the sky.

At this moment, Wu Shu and Bei Xin were still locked in an intense fight with one another. Their attacks bore a striking resemblance with one another, and it seemed like they were familiar with each other's moves as well. Thus, while they had sustained some injuries in their prolonged fight, there was still no decisive outcome to their battle.

As long as these two men remained standing, they would be able to swiftly bring order back to the army.

As High Commanders, they were definitely no fools. It was true that they had let anger get the better of them for a moment, but they would surely calm down after fighting for a moment and notice that something was amiss.

This would be especially so after they realized that all of their commanders and generals had been assassinated. No matter how foolish they could be, it would be obvious that they had fallen into someone else's trap.

I need to kill at least one of them before they come back to their senses...

A sharp glint flashed across Zhang Xuan's eyes as he racked his brain for a solution.

At this moment, however, Wu Shu deflected Bei Xin's spear with a powerful brandish of his saber before retreating a few steps. Following which, he declared in a cold voice, "Bei Xin, we won't be able to determine a victor today. Let's just leave it like this for the time being. However, let it be known that I won't let this matter slide!"

"Rest assured that I'll never forget this matter either," Bei Xin spat coldly.

As they possessed near equal fighting prowess with one another, they did not have the spare attention to keep track of their surroundings. They knew that chaos had broken out amid the army, but they thought that their commanders and generals would be able to keep the situation under control and limit the casualties. They could not have imagined that so many soldiers would have died within such a short span of time.

If they knew, they would have spurted blood on the spot.

Before Bei Xin could finish his words, he saw one of his subordinates thrusting his spear right for Wu Shu. “We can’t let this matter slide like this, High Commander. We should kill him right now. How else can we face the brothers whom his subordinates have slaughtered in cold blood?”

Recognizing the person assailing Wu Shu as one of his subordinates, a Sempiternal realm primary stage cultivator, Bei Xin roared furiously. “Hua Muzhe, what the hell are you doing? Stand down!”

The gap between Hua Muzhe and Wu Shu was too great! Such an action was tantamount to suicide!

“Pardon me for disobeying your commands, but he killed too many of our brothers. Even if I lose my life today, I can’t let the deaths of our brothers go to waste!” Hua Muzhe bellowed with a hint of madness in his voice as he drove his spear forward furiously.

Facing Hua Muzhe’s attacks, Wu Shu was on the verge of going insane.

The other party spoke of dying at his hands, but the truth was that he was the one having difficulties coping with the other party’s offense!

He had heard of Hua Muzhe’s name before, and he was known to be a rather average commander in Bei Xin’s faction. When did the other party grow so formidable to be able to pose a threat to him?

Huhuhu!

Hua Muzhe’s spear grew faster and faster, forcing Wu Shu to retreat in a fluster. At the same time, he bellowed to Bei Xin



behind him, “High Commander, let’s kill him together!”

“This...” At this moment, Bei Xin hesitated.

It was true that he was infuriated after seeing his subordinates dying right before his eyes, but he had never truly intended to claim Wu Shu’s life. Wu Shu was Sovereign Chen Ling’s subordinate, and if he died there, the alliance would surely fall through.

“Hua Muzhe, I understand your feelings, but I need you to stand down right now. We’ll talk about killing Wu Shu later on...” Bei Xin attempted to diffuse the situation.

However, before he could finish his words, he suddenly saw Hua Muzhe’s figure accelerating abruptly. With a speed almost on the level of teleportation, he charged right up to Wu Shu. At the same time, the space around Wu Shu suddenly froze, rendering the latter incapable of moving.

Bei Xin immediately realized that something was amiss, and he exclaimed in horror, “You... You aren’t Hua Muzhe!”

Boom!

Along with the horrified exclamation, Bei Xin immediately dashed forward with his spear and deflected Hua Muzhe’s spear with a powerful pierce.

Peng!

As the two spears collided with one another, a huge shock rippled into the surroundings. Hua Muzhe’s spear swiftly disintegrated into dust.

Deng deng deng deng!

At the same time, Wu Shu managed to break out of his sealed space, and he hurriedly retreated multiple steps. Cold sweat poured down from his forehead.

If not for Bei Xin’s timely assistance, Hua Muzhe’s spear would have pierced right through his throat, bringing him instant death.

“Who in the world are you? Are you the one who killed our commanders earlier too?”

After knocking back Hua Muzhe, Bei Xin pointed his spear menacingly at his ‘subordinate’ as he questioned him with a wintry tone.

He knew full well how powerful the real Hua Muzhe was, but the person before him was actually able to execute three different Quintessences simultaneously. This was a feat that even he, a High Commander, was incapable of!

He would have to be a real fool not to know that Hua Muzhe had been replaced at this point in time!

At the same time, all of the suspicions that had drifted through his mind earlier swiftly clicked together, forming a nearly complete picture in his mind.

Who would have thought that both he and Wu Shu, two of the strongest High Commanders of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, had actually been played like fools?

“Hahaha! I guess I have been exposed... Yes, you are right. I was the one who killed your subordinates!” Seeing that his identity had been compromised, Hua Muzhe burst into laughter before transforming into the appearance of a young man.

He was none other than Zhang Xuan.

He had been thinking that as long as he could kill one of the High Commanders, everything else would be simple. Who would have thought that he would end up giving himself away instead?

In truth, if he had used the Dragonbone Divine Spear earlier, even if Bei Xin had noticed that he was an impersonator, it would have been too late. However, in order not to expose his own identity, he had no choice but to use Hua Muzhe’s weapon. Due to the lacking resilience of the weapon, Bei Xin had been able to easily deflect his attack, thus saving Wu Shu’s life.

“Die!” Realizing that he had been played for a fool, Bei Xin flew into a rage and thrust his spear furiously toward Zhang Xuan.

“You b\*stard!” Wu Shu also swiftly realized what was going on, and he could not accept the fact that he had been toyed with. Recalling the demise of his subordinates, he furiously hacked his saber down upon Zhang Xuan as well.

Tzzzzz!

Even though Bei Xin and Wu Shu had never practiced their coordination before, they were well-versed in the collaboration formations of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Their spear and saber moved together with impeccable timing to corner Zhang Xuan, forcing the young man to retreat time and time again.

Zhang Xuan swiftly whipped out the Dragonbone Divine Spear to retaliate.

While the two High Commanders had sustained some damage and had exhausted themselves considerably in the previous battle, they were still Sempiternal realm consummation cultivators. Having to face two of such experts simultaneously, Zhang Xuan swiftly found himself being overwhelmed under their offense.

With the pressure on him weighing greater and greater, Zhang Xuan thought bitterly, It seems like I have underestimated them...

He had thought that the crisis could be resolved with him slaying one of the High Commanders, but the situation was starting to turn against him.

At this rate, the soldiers would also swiftly notice that something was amiss and halt their attacks. That would render his plan to eradicate this threat once and for all futile.

After retreating another eight steps, Zhang Xuan was still trying to figure out a way to turn the tables around when Wu Shu and Bei Xin’s heads suddenly exploded with a burst of blood. As their blood descended to the ground, a figure appeared before him.

“I told you that we should have just killed them with a punch instead of going through so much trouble, but you just

wouldn't listen!" Zhang Xuan's clone remarked disdainfully as he placed his hands behind his back.

# 1687 Complete Victory

With a sweep of his hand, Zhang Xuan swiftly stowed the two plummeting corpses into his storage ring.

When he revealed his true identity earlier, he had made sure to seal the space beneath him so as to not catch the attention of the soldiers below. Otherwise, if they had realized that someone was making a move on their High Commanders, he would have been knocked out of the sky before he could do anything at all.

Zhang Xuan swiftly scanned the area beneath him, and after confirming that he had not given himself away yet, he heaved a sigh of relief. After which, he turned his sights to his clone, and his lips twitched a little.

He had known that there was a chance that his plan to assassinate Wu Shu could fall through, and it would be difficult for him to deal with the two High Commanders simultaneously. Thus, he had made his clone lie in wait within a sealed space, prepared to ambush the two High Commanders should his initial plan fall through. Fortunately, while his initial plan did not go as smoothly as he had thought it would, his backup plan worked without a hitch.

But still... No matter what, Wu Shu and Bei Xin were still Great Sage 4-dan consummation experts. He had thought that even if his clone caught them off guard, he would only be able to distract them momentarily and keep them tied down. Yet, who would have thought that his clone would actually be able to burst their heads with two punches?

Could it be that... this fellow's strength had grown even stronger than before?

Zhang Xuan had thought that he would be able to teach his clone a lesson after his recent breakthrough, but it seemed like he was thinking too much.

If he tried it, he would surely end up with a bruised face once more.

“You should go down and find an opportune moment to make an appearance later on!” Knowing that he would surely be traumatized if he spoke to his clone for too long, Zhang Xuan issued an instruction as he descended to the battlefield beneath.

By the time he appeared before the sights of the Otherworldly Demon soldiers below, he had already morphed himself to assume Wu Shu’s appearance.

“I have already slain Bei Xin! Soldiers of Sovereign Chen Ling, hear my words! Charge and slaughter those traitors!”

Even amid the deafening metallic reverberations and war cries on the battlefield, those words resounded in the ears of every soldier present loud and clear.

“Kill those b\*stards!”

“Let them know our prowess!”

Hearing the commands from their own High Commander, the morale of the soldiers from Sovereign Chen Ling’s faction rose to a new high.

On the other hand, the soldiers from Sovereign Chen Xing’s faction plummeted to rock bottom.

The two factions had initially been equally matched with one another, but it did not take long for the scales to lose balance.

As the casualties on Sovereign Chen Xing’s faction started to pile up, the soldiers were starting to show signs of flight.

However, just when the forces on Sovereign Chen Xing’s faction were about to fall through, a bloodied figure suddenly descended from the sky and punched Wu Shu into the ground.

“Hahaha, how could I, Bei Xin, fall so easily? I only feigned death in order to deceive this fool. Brothers, now that I have killed Wu Shu, it’s time for us to make a comeback! We are from Sovereign Chen Xing’s faction, we can’t possibly fall to these weaklings!” the bloodied figure declared passionately.

Those words injected fighting will into the subdued soldiers of Sovereign Chen Xing's faction, driving them to straighten their slumped backs, raise their arms, and roar ferociously once more.

Since our High Commander is still with us, how can we possibly let him down?

We have to kill them and let them know that we are no pushovers!

As the morale of Sovereign Chen Xing's faction was pushed to a new high, miserable cries rang out from the soldiers of Sovereign Chen Ling's faction.

With their High Commander emerging victorious in the battle among the top echelon, they had thought that their victory was assured. Yet, who would have thought that Bei Xin would make such a comeback!

With the disappearance of their High Commander, their backbone, the soldiers swiftly flew into a fluster.

It did not take long for the tables to turn.

The momentum of Sovereign Chen Xing's faction swiftly built up, and before long, the soldiers of Sovereign Chen Ling's faction were starting to flee frightfully.

However, right before the complete defeat of Sovereign Chen Ling's faction, another figure emerged from the ground and knocked Bei Xin flying.

“Do you think that you are the only one who knows how to play dead? I, Wu Shu, can do the same! In the end, I am still the one who has the last laugh! Soldiers, I have slain Bei Xin. Raise your weapons and show the enemy the might of those who serve Sovereign Chen Ling!”

Hearing those words, the crowd turned their sights upward and saw that Wu Shu, who should have died earlier, was gazing down upon the battlefield with an imposing air.

The soldiers from both factions were stunned.

While we are pitting our lives on the line, our High Commanders are continuously feigning their deaths...

Is this really fine?

Why does it feel like they are treating this intense war as nothing more than a child's play?

More importantly...

Brother, can you at least give a clear signal as to who is alive and who is dead?

Don't you know that you are making us really flustered like that?

Seeing that the soldiers were stunned still, Wu Shu bellowed furiously from the sky, "What are you waiting for? Bei Xin has already been killed by me! Hurry up and attack the enemies! Otherwise, I'll have you all executed under the crimes of war treason!"

"Kill!"

Hearing that the High Commander had passed the order, the soldiers of Sovereign Chen Ling's faction roared ferociously and charged over.

It was yet another intense slaughter, and just when victory was in sight...

"Hahaha! Wu Shu, you never would have thought that I was playing dead once more, right? You should feel proud that you have died under my blade! Men, hear my instructions! We shall launch a counterattack and ensure that none of those dogs of Sovereign Chen Ling's faction will return alive from here!"

Yet again, Bei Xin's figure appeared from the horizon and smashed Wu Shu flying.

The soldiers were completely frenzied.

Can one of you two High Commanders really just drop dead so that we can have some closure?

To die and come back to life again and again... What are we supposed to make of this situation?

Don't you know how exhausted you are making us?



For the first time, all of the soldiers found themselves wishing that their High Commander would die for real instead of playing dead. It was like a roller coaster ride of highs and lows; their hearts really could not take such excitement!

“Alright, it’s about time...”

Disregarding the soldiers, who were already on the verge of mental breakdown, Zhang Xuan saw that less than ten thousand soldiers were left of the initial hundred thousand strong army, and he heaved a sigh of relief.

Most of these ten thousand men were severely wounded. Judging from their states, they should not be able to form a collaborative formation strong enough to pose a threat to him anymore.

Nevertheless, there was no telling if the Otherworldly Demons still had some other trump cards in hand. Thus, he had the soldiers continue fighting with one another for roughly another hour. By the end of the hour, more than half of the ten thousand ‘fortunate’ survivors had been wiped out, leaving less than five thousand remaining.

At this moment, Zhang Xuan finally raised his hand, and his clone, the Golden Origin Cauldron, Infernal Blacksaber, and Dragonbone Divine Spear charged forth simultaneously.

These soldiers were only around Saint 3-dan to Saint 4-dan, and most of them were severely wounded. How could they possibly withstand the onslaught of these experts comparable to Sempiternal realm cultivators? In less than ten minutes, they were completely wiped out.

Looking at the corpses sprawled all over the ground, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. As the tension left his body, he felt a feeling of exhaustion consuming his body, and his head started to feel a little light.

Throughout the battle, he had put his entire effort into disguising himself so as to ensure that his disguise would not be seen through, and this was rather taxing on him.

At this point, his soul energy had nearly been completely depleted.

It was fortunate that he had succeeded in the very end.

Otherwise, if anyone had noticed that it was a ploy on his part, even with just ten thousand Otherworldly Demon soldiers remaining, the tables could possibly have turned on him. The power that could be amassed by ten thousand Saint 3-dan cultivators should never be underestimated!

Zhang Xuan entered the Myriad Anthive Nest, sat down in an empty clearing, and took out energy replenishing treasures. After absorbing furiously for an entire hour, he finally felt himself recovering a bit.

“Let me see how many treasures I have gathered this time around...”

It was a huge contribution for him to slaughter the hundred thousand strong army of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, thus foiling their plan to invade the Master Teacher Continent. However, what he was more concerned about at the moment was the spoils of war that he had earned from the battle.

Putting aside the personal possessions of the hundred thousand strong army, just the wealth of the two High Commanders and dozens of Sempiternal realm cultivators had already far exceeded what the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan had amassed over the past ten thousand years.

“This golden saber is comparable to the Infernal Blacksaber... This spear here is likely a Half-Ancient Sage treasure too...”  
Zhang Xuan analyzed as his eyes lit up in excitement.

Wu Shu’s golden saber and Bei Xin’s saber were actually comparable to Heng Jiang’s Infernal Blacksaber. Of course, this was to be expected. Even though they had been done in by Zhang Xuan in the end, they were still the people in charge of the hundred thousand strong army.

Zhang Xuan drove his Heaven’s Path zhenqi and converted it to the Zhenqi of Slaughter. It did not take him long to win the acknowledgement of the two artifacts.

“Soulslaying Blacksaber, Cloudpiercing Spear... I have another two weapons in my possession!

“Let’s see if I can find any suitable cultivation techniques for me. While there are no standard cultivation techniques beyond Great Sage, it would still be good for me to take a look at the cultivation techniques of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Perhaps, I might be able to gather some inspiration from their cultivation techniques!”

Zhang Xuan continued searching through the storage rings, but he was not able to find any better weapons. Thus, he decided to turn his attention to the other items in there.

# 1688 Meridian Altering

At the moment, Zhang Xuan's zhenqi cultivation had already reached Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm consummation. He had already browsed through the books filled with the insights of the predecessors regarding their breakthroughs in the Great Sage realm from the Zhang Clan and the Luo Clan. However, the path that each cultivator had to take would eventually diverge, so naturally, the method through which each of them achieved a breakthrough was different.

He could use their insights as a reference to give him some direction, but he could not blindly copy from them.

For this reason, even though he had already browsed through many books, he was still unable to find an appropriate method for him to further advance his cultivation.

Having slain dozens of Sempiternal realm experts, there was a sizeable collection of cultivation technique manuals and books detailing the insights that they had regarding their breakthrough. Even though their cultivation techniques and breakthrough methods were significantly different from those of humans, considering how a breakthrough to Great Sage had resulted in his meridian network assuming a form similar to that of the Otherworldly Demons... Could their cultivation techniques be effective on him too?

After all, Otherworldly Demons were a higher level of existence than humans. There could be some benefits to emulating their cultivation techniques.

Zhang Xuan took out all of the books in the storage rings, and all in all, they numbered several thousand. With a quick glance, he collected all of them into the Library of Heaven's Path.

“Compile!”

He swiftly fused them together with the books that he had collected back the Jiang Clan, the Luo Clan, and so on.

Weng!

A brand-new book materialized in the Library of Heaven's Path.

With a tap, the knowledge within the book flowed in Zhang Xuan's mind, and he slowly closed his eyes.

The method used by the Otherworldly Demons to achieve a breakthrough to Aureate Body realm was much more complex than that of humans. It demanded the Otherworldly Demons to tap into the power of the crimson moon to augment their Zhenqi of Slaughter so as to temper their body. Essentially, it was not a method that humans could use at all. The cultivation technique that he had compiled was not usable.

In other words, his previous assumptions did not hold.

Nevertheless, even though a Heaven's Path Divine Art manual was not formed, it did give him some inspiration as to how he could further advance his cultivation.

“By purifying their bloodlines, those of the Beast Tribe are able to raise their cultivation further. After humans achieve a breakthrough to Great Sage, their meridians start to develop in a manner that bears some resemblance to that of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe... In essence, advancing one's cultivation could be said to be raising one's level of existence!

“My body has already been tempered by the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, resulting in my body being far stronger than normal Aureate Body realm cultivators. So, the bottleneck is lies not in my physical body but my meridians. As long as I improve my meridians a little more, I should be able to achieve a breakthrough!” Zhang Xuan mumbled as a glint flashed across his eyes.

With his body and Primordial Spirit tempered by the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, he was much more formidable than the ordinary Aureate Body realm cultivators. Since that was the case, there was unlikely to be much for him to improve in his physical body and Primordial Spirit anymore.

In other words, as long as he improved his meridian network and raised his level of existence, he should be able to easily advance his cultivation to higher realms!

He did not need any cultivation techniques at all!

Let me give it a try! Zhang Xuan thought as he sat down on the floor.

Absorbing the spiritual energy from the cultivation resources he had collected, he circulated his zhenqi throughout his body three times and raised his condition to the peak.

Back then, in order to reconstruct Zhao Ya's meridians, he had derived a new and improved meridian network. Swiftly going through the new meridian network in his mind, he began to slowly reshape the meridians in his body accordingly.

Meridians were the very foundations of a cultivator. He dared not alter those that were connected to his dantian and organs in case something went wrong, so he started out by altering those linked to his limbs.

Even if ordinary cultivators knew that altering their meridians would allow them to advance their cultivation, they would still be unable to do it. This was because their meridians were a natural part of their body, and the process of altering them could easily lead to unexpected complications.

However, having cultivated Kong shi's superior breakthrough method, Zhang Xuan's body had been tempered by the Empyrean Heavenly Flame, thus raising the resilience of his body far beyond that of his peers. This allowed him to endure the strain of moving his meridians.

Using the same method as before, he began moving his meridians slowly.

...

After some time...

Hong long!

A burst of killing intent burst forth from the depths of his body, and in an instant, it seemed as if he had become an Otherworldly Demon himself.

This phenomenon was similar to what happened when he reconstructed Zhao Ya's meridians. He did not intentionally alter the attribute of the latter's zhenqi. Instead, the emanation of the Otherworldly Demons' killing intent seemed to be a natural process of evolution.

At this moment, even if he did not rely on the disguise amulet, Wu Shu and the others would still have been unable to discern him apart from other Otherworldly Demons.

It works...

If one compared meridians to a watercourse, he would just be an ordinary stream at the moment. If he wanted to become a true raging river, the riverbed had to be deepened, the width of the water channel had to be widened, and the meanders along the watercourse had to be reduced. Only then would water be able to flow efficiently through the watercourse.

The more Zhang Xuan altered his meridians, the greater the strength within his body became. His aura swiftly grew stronger and stronger.

The Aureate Body realm seemed out of touch to him a moment ago, but right now, it was already something completely within reach.

It did not take long for him to finish altering the meridians in his limbs.

After that was done, Zhang Xuan did not rush into the next step. Instead, he chose to take a rest so as to replenish his depleted zhenqi and condition his state back to the peak before continuing.

At this moment, his meridians had become much wider, allowing zhenqi to flow unobstructed through them. If he attempted to channel his zhenqi with all his might, it would form a raging current reminiscent of the charge of thousands of cavalry troops.

There were mainly minor meridians in the limbs, so it was much easier to alter them. However, the same could not be said for the meridians surrounding one's dantian and internal organs. They intersected one another with the utmost

complexity, and the slightest mistake could cause a reversal in one's zhenqi, possibly resulting in paralysis or even one's cultivation going berserk.

Not daring to rush into it, Zhang Xuan warily moved each meridian bit by bit with strict accordance to the steps.

While he was attempting a breakthrough to the Aureate Body realm, back on the Master Teacher Continent, the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters found itself with a group of guests.

They were none other than Luo Ganzhen and Jiang Fangyou.

Entering the main hall, they swiftly took their seats.

“Is the reason behind your arrival concerning the crisis in the Subterranean Galleries?” Ren Qingyuan looked at his two guests and got straight to the point.

“Indeed. It seems like the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters have noticed that something is amiss as well. Ren shi, I would like to request you to share the details of what you know with me so that we can compare the intelligence we have received!” Jiang Fangyou clasped his fist.

“Un!” Ren Qingyuan nodded. “Just a day ago, the Otherworldly Demons in our Master Teacher Pavilion's Subterranean Gallery were still incomparably ferocious, seeming as if they wouldn't rest until they breached our defenses. Yet, just this afternoon, most of their soldiers suddenly retreated, leaving behind only a small rearguard to defend the area. I thought that it was bait to draw our forces in, so we chose to stand our ground and bade our time. However, even after such a long time, there was still no movements from their side. When we dispatched our scouts to investigate the matter, we realized that most of them have retreated back behind the seal! Did the same situation happen in the Subterranean Galleries that you are standing guard over?”

“Indeed! We encountered the same peculiarity in our respective Subterranean Galleries. The Otherworldly Demons on our side abruptly returned to the otherworldly battlefield as well. I'm not too sure what they are up to at the moment, but I



have a bad feeling about it!” Luo Ganzhen said grimly.  
“Brother Fangyou, if I’m not mistaken, the reason you urgently gathered us is because you know something about this matter, right?”

The reason they had all gathered in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters at this crucial period of time was due to a request made by Jiang Fangyou.

“I do know something about this matter, and the reason I gathered all of you here so urgently is to discuss the matter!”

As he spoke, Jiang Fangyou took a sweeping glance at his surroundings. Only after seeing the multiple layers of seal placed over the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters, which prevented crucial information from leaking out, did he heave a slight sigh of relief.

Seeing how severe Jiang Fangyou’s attitude was, the faces of Ren shi and the others turned grim as well.

“I believe that the Master Teacher Pavilion is aware that ever since the fall of the Otherworldly Demon Emperor whose strength was so great that he could oppose even Kong shi directly, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe has been under the control of three apex experts!” Jiang Fangyou said.

“Un. They are Sovereign Chen Yong, Sovereign Chen Xing, and Sovereign Chen Ling, right? Sovereign Chen Yong takes on the leading role whereas Sovereign Chen Xing and Sovereign Chen Ling assume auxiliary roles... However, the three of them have never been on close terms, and they are extremely wary of one another. It’s due to their disharmony with one another that they have never been able to launch a decisive assault on mankind, or else even the Master Teacher Pavilion would have been troubled fending them off!” Ren shi nodded.

This was extremely confidential intelligence, but there was no way that the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters could have been oblivious to it.

“Indeed. Those three Sovereigns had been keeping each other in check all this while. However, earlier this afternoon, I

received news that Sovereign Chen Xing and Sovereign Chen Ling have proclaimed an alliance with one another!” Jiang Fangyou’s face darkened.

# 1689 Ren Qingyuan and the Others' Shock

“Alliance?” Ren Qingyuan was alarmed by the news.

“Based on what I’ve heard, it seems like the two Sovereigns have amassed a hundred-thousand-man-strong army. If they follow through with the alliance, it’s likely that we might face a major invasion soon... If the intelligence I have received is true, the location will be the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters’ Subterranean Gallery!” Jiang Fangyou said grimly.

“Most of the Sempiternal realm grand elders of the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters have already gone to the Temple of Confucius, and our master teachers are spread across the many Subterranean Galleries throughout the Master Teacher Continent. Even if we attempt to gather them now, they won’t be able to make it back here in time. We could use Teleportation Formations to get some of them over, but most of them are too weak to withstand the spatial turbulence!” Ren Qingyuan said with a deep frown.

If Jiang Fangyou’s intelligence was true, mankind was truly in huge danger this time around.

Even he was unable to think of a feasible solution to resolve this issue at the moment.

“I know that this matter concerns the survival of mankind, so Brother Luo and I have brought the elites of the Jiang Clan and the Luo Clan over so as to aid the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters in the defense of its Subterranean Gallery!” Jiang Fangyou said.

“Allow me thank you on behalf of mankind, Brother Jiang. Given that a full-blown invasion by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe lies just ahead of us, we have no time to lose. Let’s head down to the Subterranean Gallery right away and discuss our battle plans on the way there. I fear that they will

begin on their assault before we manage to get anything concrete out...”

Without any hesitation, Ren Qingyuan and the others quickly made their way over to the Subterranean Gallery beneath the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters.

Just like the Zhang Clan’s Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, there was a massive fortress behind the spatial seal to serve as the last line of defense against the Otherworldly Demons.

Unless the Otherworldly Demons breached the fortress, they would never be able to step foot on the Master Teacher Continent.

“What is the situation on the other side?” Ren Qingyuan quickly landed on the sentry post and questioned the 9-star master teacher standing guard there.

“There have been no movements from the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe since a while ago. We have just received word from our scouts that their soldiers have retreated through the spatial seal, seemingly planning something. As the killing intent lingering in the otherworldly battlefield affects one’s rationality, they didn’t dare advance too deep. As such, they aren’t certain about the exact situation either!” the 9-star master teacher reported.

“I see!” Ren Qingyuan nodded.

A crimson moon loomed over the otherworldly battlefield where the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe resided, causing concentrated killing intent to linger in the area. If normal master teachers entered the otherworldly battlefield recklessly, it would not be too long before their rationality was corroded by the killing intent, turning them into machines who knew nothing more than slaughter.

It was for this reason that mankind had chosen to maintain a defensive stance against the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe over the past tens of thousands of years. It was not because they did not want to eradicate the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe once and for all, but they were not able to do so.

Otherwise, given the countless experts within the ranks of the Master Teacher Pavilion over the past tens of thousands of years, there was no reason for them to give the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe a breather and allow them to recover from the severe blow that they had suffered during Kong Shi's era.

Jiang Fangyou pondered for a moment before saying, "It isn't a solution to continue waiting here blindly either. I'll head over there to check on the situation personally. We need more intelligence to prepare for what is to come. The Otherworldly Demonic Tribe usually neglect to guard their borders of the spatial seal, so I should be able to sneak in without alarming them."

"Brother Jiang, allow me to go with you." Luo Ganzhen stepped forward. "I have recently made some advancements in my comprehension of space. As long as the opponent's cultivation isn't above mine, I will be able to conceal us easily from the gazes of any Otherworldly Demon!"

"This..." Ren Qingyuan hesitated for a moment before turning around to the 9-star master teacher to instruct, "Organize our forces and have them prepare themselves for battle at any moment. I'll head over to the otherworldly battlefield to check on the situation with Brother Jiang and Brother Luo."

Since the scouts were unable to advance too deeply into the otherworldly battlefield, the information that they could acquire was limited. It would be better for him to make a move personally.

"Deputy pavilion master! You mustn't!"

"It's too dangerous!"

Many 9-star master teachers attempted to dissuade Ren Qingyuan from making this move.

"Don't worry, I'm only going there to do some scouting. With Brother Luo and Brother Jiang around, we won't face too much trouble!" Ren Qingyuan interrupted the crowd to appease them.

Seeing that Ren Qingyuan was determined, the crowd knew that it would be futile to attempt to change his mind. They

could only sigh deeply and fall silent.

As this matter was of the utmost urgency, the trio quickly hid their figures and advanced forward.

It did not take them too long to arrive before the spatial seal.

Just as the 9-star master teacher earlier had said, the Otherworldly Demons did not put up too much defense. The soldiers left behind to guard the area were not very strong; the group of three was able to bypass them with ease.

As soon as they entered the otherworldly battlefield, they felt an intense wave of killing intent gushing toward them. Even with their level of cultivation, they were still unable to prevent such overwhelming killing intent from seeping into their body. Thus, they could only hasten their movements.

“I feel great disturbances in the flow of spiritual energy over there. Let’s head that way to take a look!”

After flying briefly, the group of three felt something that could be described as a raging storm of spiritual energy coming from a certain direction. They traded gazes with one another and swiftly proceeded over.

Before arriving in the area, they made sure to conceal their figures entirely and proceed with full wariness. They feared that the slightest ripple that they made in their surroundings would betray their presence to the enemy.

It was not easy for them to arrive in the vicinity of the disturbances. Standing at the peak of a mountain, Ren Qingyuan glanced down at the valley before him, and his figure jolted in astonishment.

Seeing Ren Qingyuan’s state, Jiang Fangyou frowned in bewilderment. “What’s wrong?”

“Take a look at it yourself!” Ren Qingyuan remarked with trembling lips.

Luo Ganzhen and Jiang Fangyou were perplexed. They quickly glanced downward as well, and in the blink of an eye, their eyes were bulging, and their mouths were agape.

“These Otherworldly Demons... are all dead?”

The valley before them was filled with countless Otherworldly Demon corpses. They piled up on one another like many mini hills in the midst of the valley, forming a rather gruesome sight. This could probably only be described as a ‘sea of corpses’.

They had been worried about an invasion by the Otherworldly Demons and were frantically preparing in place many countermeasures to deal with them... Yet, before these Otherworldly Demons had even gotten beyond the spatial seal, they had already been completely wiped out. What in the world was happening?

“Let’s head over to take a look!”

Since the Otherworldly Demons were already dead, there was nothing for them to fear. Thus, they hurriedly made their ways over.

They quickly flew into the valley and swept across the corpses.

Analyzing the traces around them, Jiang Fangyou remarked in astonishment, “This should be the encampment for the allied soldiers of Sovereign Chen Xing and Sovereign Chen Ling. From the looks of it... it seems like they died from fighting one another!”

The soul oracles hidden amid the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had secretly sent a message to inform him of the alliance between the two Sovereigns. There was no doubt that such an alliance posed a major threat to mankind, so it was of the utmost importance for mankind to make preparations beforehand.

After learning of this news, Jiang Fangyou had been plagued with worry. He had trembled just thinking of what would become of mankind if they failed to fend off the Otherworldly Demons. But before the enemy even appeared, they had already all been killed.

The hell! What the heck is going on here?

Can anyone explain the situation to me?

“Could it be that the two Sovereigns had a falling out over the alliance and came to a fight as a result, thus causing the entire allied army to be wiped out?” Luo Ganzhen asked.

It was an extremely ludicrous reason, but he could not think of any alternative ways to explain this matter.

“Even if the two Sovereigns turned against one another, causing a battle to break out between the two factions, it’s impossible for the entire army to be wiped out like that... Someone must have gone around killing all of the survivors. Furthermore, don’t you think that there’s a striking similarity among how they died? The thousand Otherworldly Demons over here have all been crushed flat by some immense force, the thousand Otherworldly Demons over there had their hearts impaled, and the thousand Otherworldly Demons there had their heads lopped off...” Ren Qingyuan shook his head and rejected Luo Ganzhen’s hypothesis.

As a 9-star master teacher, he was extremely sharp in his observation and analysis. From the traces left behind, he could tell that not a single Otherworldly Demon of the army of a hundred thousand had escaped alive from this battle.

If the factions of the two Sovereigns were equally matched, it was possible for the war to end with many deaths. However, without the involvement of any external powers, it was impossible for all of them to die off so cleanly.

“Pavilion Master Ren is right. Not only so, the equipment and resources of the Otherworldly Demons have also vanished without a trace. I can’t see a single storage ring around... Without a doubt, someone must have plundered them!” Jiang Fangyou added.

Hearing those words, Luo Ganzhen swiftly swept his gaze over the countless Otherworldly Demons around, only to see their empty fingers. There really was not a single storage ring to be seen. Furthermore, even though most of the tents had been burned down to cinders, there were no military supplies to be seen.

How could such a large army have no military supplies at all?



There was only a single explanation for such a sight—a third party had been there. Chances were that this massacre had been orchestrated by the third party.

However...

Who in the world had the ability to destroy a hundred thousand Otherworldly Demon strong army in less than a day?

Hu!

At this moment, a sharp sound of wind could be heard from the distance. Following which, a figure appeared above the mountain valley that they were in.

# 1690 Just for Fun

In response to the sudden arrival of the figure, Ren Qingyuan and the others immediately raised their guard and whipped out their weapons. Just as they were about the attack the figure, they got a clear look of the other party.

Ren Qingyuan widened his eyes in astonishment and exclaimed, “It’s Luo shi!”

Jiang Fangyou and Luo Ganzhen also recognized the figure in the sky.

They had seen Luo Ruoxin during the engagement ceremony. Given her outstanding disposition and appearance, there was no way that they could mistake her for someone else.

Just that... why would she suddenly appear here?

Did she not head to the Zhang Clan together with Zhang Xuan to guard the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery?

“Could she be an Otherworldly Demon?” Luo Ganzhen’s eyebrows shot up as an air of hostility burst forth from him.

Even though he had already acknowledged Zhang Xuan as the new head of the Luo Clan, he still could not bring himself to forgive Luo Ruoxin for intruding on the engagement ceremony back then and injuring the elders of the Luo Clan.

He had attempted to investigate Luo Ruoxin’s background afterward, but it seemed as though the latter had appeared out of nowhere. Even the Luo Clan’s formidable intelligence network was not able to gather any information on Luo Ruoxin at all!

For someone as powerful as Luo Ruoxin to suddenly appear without any prior signs... it was really hard not to doubt her identity!

Hearing those words, the two of them turned their gazes over and saw Luo Ruoxin. There were no peculiar emotions on her face as she looked upon the heaps of corpses strewn across the

area. Instead, she was looking around, seemingly trying to find something.

“If that’s truly the case,” Ren Qingyuan remarked with a frown, “I doubt that she would have been able to remain so calm after seeing the deaths of so many of her tribesmen...”

That was a hundred thousand Otherworldly Demons they were talking about! The death of so many elites was already enough to shake the foundations of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!

If Luo Ruoxin was truly an Otherworldly Demon, she should have shown some kind of reaction to the slaughter that had happened. The fact that she was able to remain impassive despite such huge losses likely suggested that she was not affiliated with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe.

“Ren shi, Clan Head Luo, and Clan Head Jiang, have you seen Zhang Xuan?”

While the three of them were discussing the matter telepathically, Luo Ruoxin had also noticed them, and she clasped her fist.

“Zhang Xuan? Is Zhang shi here as well?” Ren Qingyuan was taken aback by that question.

After they parted from one another the day before, Zhang shi had immediately rushed back to the Zhang Clan. It did not seem logical for Luo Ruoxin to be looking for him here in the otherworldly battlefield.

“Un. Yesterday, Zhang Xuan singlehandedly resolved the crisis in the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery before entering the otherworldly battlefield. I had to search for quite a while before tracking him here,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

“I heard about the situation at the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery. If I’m not mistaken, there are ten thousand Otherworldly Demons stationed there, right? What do you mean by... Zhang shi singlehandedly resolved the crisis?” Jiang Fangyou asked doubtfully.

The members of the Jiang Clan had been dispatched to reinforce the Zhang Clan’s Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery and the Luo Clan’s Starcluster Subterranean Gallery.

As one of the six largest Subterranean Galleries on the Master Teacher Continent, the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery was one of the major targets of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Given the scale of the invasion this time around, its security could be said to be shaky even when it was guarded by the powerful Zhang Clan. Yet, Zhang Xuan had actually resolved the crisis singlehandedly—how was that possible?

“Yes, there were ten thousand Otherworldly Demons stationed then. Yesterday, Zhang Xuan said that he would head over to scout the situation, but he ended up killing them all. By the time we noticed it, he had already entered the otherworldly battlefield,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

“He ended up killing ten thousand Otherworldly Demons while trying to scout the situation?”

“Are you sure you aren’t pulling our legs?”

The trio felt their hair standing on end.

Having clashed with the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe many times, they were well aware of the fighting prowess and capabilities of the Otherworldly Demons. Even an average Ancient Sage would have trouble dealing with ten thousand Otherworldly Demon soldiers! Yet, to actually wipe such an army out while scouting...

Was that for real?

“Indeed. In fact, the hundred thousand Otherworldly Demons here were likely killed by him. Just that... where is he? The three of you arrived earlier. Did you notice anything?” Luo Ruoxin asked.

She had been together with Zhang Xuan for the past few days, so she was well aware of the means he possessed. She had seen the corpses that Ren Qingyuan had pointed out earlier, and she recognized them to be the doing of the Golden Origin Cauldron and the Dragonbone Divine Spear. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

The only problem was that Zhang Xuan was nowhere to be seen. Since the three of them had arrived earlier, could they have found anything?

“You are saying that Zhang Xuan... singlehandedly wiped out an army of a hundred thousand Otherworldly Demons?”

“No, that’s not right. If we count the Otherworldly Demons from the Dracotiger Mountain Subterranean Gallery, that would be 110,000 Otherworldly Demons!”

“In other words, he resolved the major threat to the Master Teacher Continent by himself?”

The trio felt their heads spinning dizzily around them. All they had just heard was simply so inconceivable that it threatened to tear down everything that they had known about the world.

Was this for real?

110,000 Otherworldly Demons of Saint 3-dan and above was a force that even the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters would struggle to face! Even if the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters successfully rallied all of the forces at its disposal, it would have only ended in a narrow victory on their side.

Yet, the other party had actually resolved the crisis singlehandedly.

How in the world did he do it?

Not even Kong shi had achieved such spectacular accomplishments in his time!

Ren Qingyuan took a deep breath and calm his shock before replying Luo Ruoxin’s question. “Luo shi, we arrived moments before you, and we didn’t see Zhang shi anywhere...”

Before he could finish his piece, the air above suddenly turned turbulent. He hurriedly raised his head and saw large swathes of ominous clouds swiftly congregating together.

“It’s a cultivation ordeal,” Ren Qingyuan exclaimed in astonishment.

Unknowingly, a figure suddenly appeared in the sky, floating quietly beneath the congregation of ominous clouds.

Pitch-black flames rumbled amid the clouds above him, turning the surrounding air incredibly dry. The temperature swiftly surged with a momentum that felt as though it would melt the entire sky.

“It’s the heavenly flame tribulation...”

Luo Ganzhen and Jiang Fangyou gulped.

A day earlier, when they met with Zhang Shi, he had still been at Saint 9-dan pinnacle. Yet, within such a short span of time, not only had he achieved a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm, he was even fast on his way to advancing toward the Aureate Body realm.

How in the world did he cultivate so quickly?

Any other cultivator would require several years of effort before they were ready to push for a major breakthrough in their cultivation, but to the fellow in the sky, it seemed like nothing more than child’s play.

More importantly, he even had the spare time to kill 110,000 Otherworldly Demons and many Sempiternal realm commanders.

“You are all here!”

While the crowd was overwhelmed with utter shock, Zhang Xuan also caught sight of them and flashed them a smile.

“Give me a moment. Let’s talk after I overcome the heavenly flame tribulation!”

After saying those words, he dived right into the congregation of ominous clouds.

“Is he going to use the same tactic for the heavenly flame tribulation?” Luo Ganzhen’s body staggered a little upon seeing that sight.

He had heard stories about how Zhang Xuan overcame his lightning tribulation, but there was a huge difference between lightning tribulations and heavenly flame tribulations! To dive

right into the source of flames... was he not afraid of being reduced to cinders?

More importantly, what was with that relaxed expression on his face?

Are you that confident that you will be able to get through such a powerful tribulation safely?

“This...” Catching sight of Luo Ganzhen’s astonishment, Ren Qingyuan shook his head and explained, “Zhang shi should be fine. He overcame the heavenly flame tribulation back in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters yesterday!”

“He has already overcome it?” Luo Ganzhen exclaimed in bewilderment upon hearing those words. “Each cultivator will only face the heavenly flame tribulation once in their life at most, right? Why is he facing it a second time?”

The heavenly flame tribulation was a cultivation ordeal that one had to overcome when achieving a breakthrough to the Aureate Body realm. Each Great Sage would only face it once in their cultivation journey. It was unthinkable for anyone to have to face it twice!

“I’m not too sure what’s going on either. In any case, it’s a fact that he did face the heavenly flame tribulation in the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters just a day ago, and he survived the ordeal by diving right into the clouds as well. I don’t think he will face any problems now,” Ren Qingyuan replied.

“That’s not right. Ren shi, Zhang shi came to our Jiang Clan two days ago and underwent the heavenly flame tribulation then as well... But you are saying that he has faced the heavenly flame tribulation at the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters as well?” Jiang Fangyou asked doubtfully.

“You are telling me that it’s his third time facing the heavenly flame tribulation?” Luo Ganzhen nearly fainted on the spot.

That was the heavenly flame tribulation, a force that no cultivator would not fear!

To face it again and again... it was as if the heavenly flame tribulation was a sparring partner that he could challenge as and when he liked!

# 1691 The Two Sovereigns on the Verge of Insanity

Other cultivators would take their time to write their last will before facing the heavenly flame tribulation, knowing that there was a real possibility that they would lose their life in the cultivation ordeal. Yet, this fellow dived into it again and again as if he was enjoying a hot spring, going at it the day before yesterday, yesterday, and today...

Is it really alright to toy with the powers of the heavens like that?

While other cultivators had to put their lives overcome survive cultivation ordeals, when it came to Zhang Xuan, it felt like he was going on a leisurely tour instead!

And in truth, the ones who were surprised were not only Luo Ganzhen and the others. The heavenly flame in the sky was stupefied as well.

[[[[[[Freak, it's this fellow!

Freaking hell, it's this fellow again!

Holy freaking hell, why the heck is it this fellow again?

Bro, can't you just allow me to rest for a day?

You are making me work overtime day after day! Can't you have some sympathy for me?

I already ran to the otherworldly battlefield in order to avoid you, but you still came chasing after me...

...

The crowd could not make sense out of why Zhang Xuan was able to challenge the heavenly flame tribulation thrice, and they could not comprehend why it was the Empyrean Heavenly Flame each and every time. Eventually, they could only give up on trying to understand this inconceivable



phenomenon and focused their attention on watching the cultivation ordeal instead.

Ferocious black flames billowed within the clouds in the sky. At the start, they had still been roaring fiendishly, as if they would bring utter annihilation upon the world.

But as Zhang Xuan dived in, the ominous clouds suddenly began shuddering and twitching. Even that feral roar seemed to have turned into helpless moans.

By the ten-minute mark, the tribulation had already turned tail and fled, leaving a revitalized and satisfied Zhang Xuan floating in the air.

Modifying his dantian and altering his meridian network had taken quite a while, nearly an entire day, but its effects were remarkable. Otherwise, he would not have been able to push for a breakthrough to the Aureate Body realm so quickly.

With two prior experiences of dealing with the heavenly flame tribulation, he had opened up all of his acupoints and devoured the flames without any hesitation. With the augmentation of various cultivation resources, he had actually managed to advance to Aureate Body realm consummation within a short ten minutes!

Driving his zhenqi, a golden sheen swiftly enveloped his body. It was as if an incarnation of Buddha had descended upon the world.

After overcoming his heavenly flame tribulation, Zhang Xuan descended to where the crowd was and asked, “Why are you all here?”

Logically speaking, Luo Ganzhen, Jiang Fangyou, Ren Qingyuan, and Luo Ruoxin should have been in different Subterranean Galleries, fending off the invasion of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Why had they gathered in the otherworldly battlefield, to watch his cultivation ordeal?

“We noticed some peculiar movements from the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, so we came over to scout the situation. Were you the one... who killed these Otherworldly Demons?”

Even though Ren Qingyuan had vaguely guessed the story, he still found it hard to believe that something like this was possible. Thus, he pointed to the heaps of corpses scattered around.

“Oh. When I first arrived, these scoundrels were planning to launch a decisive invasion on the Master Teacher Continent. In order to stop them, I played on the tension between the two factions that made up the army and stoked them into fighting against one another. Fortunately, everything went according to plan!” Zhang Xuan said.

The desire for slaughter could be said to be coded into the genes of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. If they entered the Master Teacher Continent, many innocent humans would surely be killed under their barbarity. It did weigh on Zhang Xuan’s heart to claim so many lives callously, but he felt that it was necessary.

Benevolence toward the enemy in war was no different from malevolence toward one’s allies.

“You were able to make the two factions come to blows with one another?”

The lips of Ren Qingyuan and the others twitched as they listened to Zhang Xuan’s story.

While the latter had phrased it very casually, they understood the difficulties in trying to pull something like this off.

The Otherworldly Demons were not mindless creatures of power. They were shrewd as well, which made them particularly difficult opponents to deal with. Otherwise, the Master Teacher Pavilion would not have had so much trouble trying to deal with them.

“It must have taken you quite a bit of effort to turn them against one another...” Ren Qingyuan remarked.

“You’re right, it took me one whole hour to do so! I’m feeling really beat now!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He had needed to switch between multiple identities again and again, which was truly no easy feat. Even with his strength, he

could not help but feel completely drained by the time he managed to pull everything off.

It had indeed been rather difficult on him.

“An hour?”

Ren Qingyuan and the others suddenly felt utter helplessness weighing down on them.

If they had been in Zhang Xuan’s shoes, it would have cost them much more in order to deepen the tension between the two factions and force them to clash with one another. At the very least, it would have taken them years of careful preparation.

Yet, that fellow only took an hour...

The more they talked to the other party, the more stifled they felt on the inside.

[Can you go easier on our hearts?

“There should have been several dozen Sempiternal realm commanders within this army of a hundred thousand, right? Did you... kill them as well?” Jiang Fangyou asked.

“I did. It took me a while, but I managed to assassinate all of them!” Zhang Xuan nodded earnestly. “I ended up staining my armor in order to do so...”

In order to make his disguise more lifelike, he had cleaned his dirtied armor over and over again. By now, his armor was already completely soaked in blood, such that no amount of wiping would be able to get the blood out of it.

“...”

Jiang Fangyou felt suffocated.

[Even Yang shi would be forced to flee as far as he could when faced with several dozen Sempiternal realm cultivators. Yet, you actually managed to assassinate all of them without sustaining any major injuries, and you are even complaining about how they stained your clothes...

All of a sudden, Jiang Fangyou could not help but feel a little bit of pity for the Otherworldly Demon experts who had died

at Zhang Xuan's hand.

...

An imposing palace towered in the depths of the otherworldly battlefield, far away from where Zhang Xuan and the others were.

Two middle-aged men were seated opposite one another with wine cups in their hands.

The middle-aged man seated on the left wore a flowing golden robe. With a hearty laugh, he raised his cup and said, "A toast to our alliance! May our tribesmen reclaim the land that belongs to us!"

He was one of the Three Sovereigns of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, Sovereign Chen Ling!

Opposite to him was a middle-aged man dressed in a long, violet robe—Sovereign Chen Xing!

"May your words come to be!" Sovereign Chen Xing nodded in a dignified manner as he sipped on the wine, savoring its deep fragrance.

He had to admit that the wine prepared by Sovereign Chen Ling was truly fine. Even as one of the Sovereigns, it was not a flavor that he could taste too often.

"Rest assured, there's no way the humans stand a chance against our allied army. Once this matter comes to be, mankind will no longer pose a threat to us. We shall return to our land of prosperity and bring our Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to greatness once more," Sovereign Chen Ling roared joyfully.

However, the next instant, his expression froze, and it slowly turned into a frown. Without any warning, he dashed out of the room.

Noting Sovereign Chen Ling's queer movements, Sovereign Chen Xing realized that something major must have happened as well. Thus, he quickly left the room and followed Sovereign Chen Ling.

Before long, the two of them arrived before a vast altar.

Countless jade tokens floated in the air above the vast altar.

It was a tradition of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe to extract a sliver of each soldier's will and forge it into a jade token before the army departed for battle. This jade token indicated the condition of the individual. If a jade token shattered, it meant that the individual had already breathed his last breath.

This served as an effective method for the Sovereigns to gauge the status of the army and family members of the soldiers to keep track of the condition of their loved ones. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

Whenever a major battle broke out, the jade tokens would swiftly shatter one after another. This would mean that the brave soldiers of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were laying down their bodies and souls to further the cause of their tribe.

These men would be regarded as heroes, and they would be honored for their valiance. Their deeds would go down in history, and their name tablets would be placed on the God's Altar.

By the time that the two Sovereigns had arrived before the altar, the jade tokens had already begun shattering one after another. As beings who stood at the very top of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, they had already seen their fair share of deaths. If it had just been a normal battle, such a shattering of jade tokens would not have even fazed them. However...

Pipipah! Pipipah! Pipah pipah pipipah!

The jade tokens shattered with beautiful rhythm, reminiscent of an orchestral performance. It was baffling to think of it in such a manner, but there was a mysterious charm to the melody. From time to time, as if the melody struck a climax, there would be an extraordinarily powerful note that played on the heartstrings of the listeners.

Within the short span of a few minutes, the hundred thousand jade tokens floating above the altar had been reduced to a pile of dust on the ground. Nothing was left at all.

“Our army of a hundred thousand...”

Sovereign Chen Ling staggered weakly as the wine cup in his hand fell to the ground. His face paled in disbelief as he shook his head in incredulity.

An army of a hundred thousand elites should have been sufficient to push their way through the Subterranean Gallery and bring havoc upon the Master Teacher Continent... They had expected great casualties in the midst of doing so, but they were confident that victory was in their grasp. Yet, barely after they had confirmed their alliance, before their allied army could even make their way out of the Subterranean Gallery, it had already been wiped out.

For the jade tokens to shatter one another so determinedly and relentlessly...

What in the world was going on?

In an instant, the two Sovereigns were left completely stunned.

# 1692 Heading to the Temple of Confucius

It had not been easy for the two of them to put aside their differences and form an alliance, but everything had fallen apart before they could do anything at all. What was even worse was that they did not know who the culprit was!

“I can’t accept this. I’ll go take a look personally!” Unable to hold back his rage, a cataclysmic aura burst forth from Sovereign Chen Ling, causing the surrounding space to shatter.

He was an Ancient Sage expert!

“I’ll follow you!” Sovereign Chen Xing spat coldly.

Half of the casualties had been his subordinates. There was no way that he could let the matter slide so easily!

“Let’s head out together then. While we’re at it, we should settle that matter as well. Otherwise, we’ll be forced to remain subservient to that man for the rest of our lives!” Sovereign Chen Ling said as a sharp glint flashed across his eyes.

Sovereign Chen Xing nodded. “I heard that Sovereign Chen Yong has recently taken in an extraordinarily talented young man. That brat seems to know no bottleneck at all; his cultivation advances at a breakneck speed! None of our disciples are a match for him... If we allow brat to continue growing at this rate, we’ll soon lose what should have belonged to us!”

“Don’t touch that brat for the time being,” Sovereign Chen Ling said. “He has received the acknowledgement of Vicious’ will, and he practices the highest cultivation technique of our Otherworldly Demonic Tribe. Given the prestige that he enjoys at the moment, we can’t afford to touch him. However, once that matter comes to be, that brat will lose all his support.

Then, we can slowly grind him down... Perhaps, we might even be able to attain the highest cultivation technique!”

“You’re right. Let’s do it then!” Sovereign Chen Xing nodded before falling silent.

With a jolt, the two middle-aged men vanished from the spot. It seemed like they had torn through the restraints of space to head to an unknown place.

...

“You said that an army of a hundred thousand Otherworldly Demons has been eradicated by Clan Head Zhang singlehandedly?”

“Is such a thing even possible?”

“I heard it from Ren Shi personally, so there’s no doubt about the authenticity of the news. Even so, I still find the matter really hard to believe...”

“Since the threat of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe’s invasion has been resolved, we don’t have to be stationed in the Subterranean Gallery anymore...”

...

After overcoming the heavenly flame tribulation, Zhang Xuan had advanced tremendously in his cultivation once more. Since there was no need for him to remain in the area, he had swiftly left together with Ren Qingyuan and the others.

It did not take long for the news that the threat of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had been resolved by a single young man to reach the defensive forces guarding the 108 Subterranean Galleries.

Everyone was astounded.

There was no lack of talents in the history of the Master Teacher Continent. Many brave and powerful men had left behind legends that resounded in the ears of the populace even to this day. Yet, compared to the feat achieved by this single young man, those legends were not even worth mentioning!



To singlehandedly annihilate 110,000 Otherworldly Demons and several dozen Sempiternal realm experts... The more they thought about the matter, the more frenzied they became.

They could not help but pinch themselves to check if they were dreaming.

...

Oblivious to the uproar that he had caused, at this very moment, Zhang Xuan had already returned to the Zhang Clan.

“With the major setback suffered by the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, it’s unlikely that they will be able to amass the forces required to launch another invasion within a short period of time. Let’s head to the Temple of Confucius together. We’ll need to assemble a team to go along with us.”

After hearing the happenings in the otherworldly battlefield from his son, Sword Saint Xing was unable to close his mouth for a very long time.

“Alright!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

There was no doubt that the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had suffered a huge loss. Even if they attempted to amass their troops once more and launch another invasion, it was unlikely that they would be able to pose much of a threat.

Thus, what they should focus their attention on at the moment was the Temple of Confucius. Given that its opening was just around the corner, they should make their way over very soon.

If they arrived late, the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn could very well fall into the hands of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe or the Hundred Schools of Philosophers. This would be bad news for the Three Premier Clans and the Master Teacher Pavilion.

“The Temple of Confucius is located in Qufu. The space in Qufu is folded and distorted, so it would be unsafe to head over through spatial teleportation. We should teleport to somewhere nearby before flying over. We’ll head there first as the advance party to scout the situation there. Elder Wuyun, I’ll leave it to you to pick out the clan members for this

expedition and bring them over. Make sure to contact us as soon as you arrive!” Sword Saint Xing instructed.

After First Elder Zhang Wuheng was punished for plotting against the incumbent clan head, Elder Wuyun had taken over his responsibilities.

“Also, inform the grand elders who are in seclusion to hurry over as well. The Temple of Confucius will likely be their best shot at overcoming their current bottlenecks!”

Similar to the Master Teacher Pavilion, the Zhang Clan had many grand elders in seclusion as well. Unless the Zhang Clan was forced into a desperate position, they would never make a move.

Their cultivation had all reached Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm. Unless Ancient Sages made a move, they could be considered as the top experts of the Master Teacher Continent. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

It was unfortunate that they were not able to find a way to achieve a breakthrough to Ancient Sage, so they could only go into hibernation to lengthen their lifespan as long as possible.

There was much more to the Temple of Confucius than just the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. It was not a coincidence that no one had been able to achieve a breakthrough to Ancient Sage for the past ten thousand years. Perhaps the secret behind overcoming this bottleneck was hidden there as well.

Regardless of whether that was true or not, they would have to make a trip there to find out for themselves.

Currently, the Zhang Clan only had one Ancient Sage left. Once that Ancient Sage came to the end of his lifespan, without any other Ancient Sages to support the Zhang Clan, it would swiftly fall from the top echelons of the Master Teacher Continent.

“I understand!” Elder Wuyun nodded.

After making arrangements, Sword Saint Xing said, “Let’s head over now!”

Zhang Xuan took out the Dragonbone Divine Spear and slit a dimension rift in front of him.

A passageway swiftly formed in the dimension rift under his manipulation, and the crowd made their way over.

With his zhenqi cultivation reaching Aureate Body realm consummation, Zhang Xuan's fighting prowess had reached greater heights. Even without resorting to schemes, he was already able to face Sempiternal realm consummation experts like Wu Shu in a direct confrontation and even win.

In truth, he had been intending to push his zhenqi cultivation straight up to the Intuitive Impulse realm, but he had found that he was unable to do so at all!

The Intuitive Impulse realm allowed one to peer into the fortune of the world and consciously avert danger. However, such an ability was essentially peering into the secrets of the heavens as well, albeit to a lesser extent than that of seers. As one who possessed the Library of Heaven's Path, attempts to do so would only end in his electrocution.

He had secretly tried it a few times, and each and every time, he had ended up with a numbingly refreshing electric massage. Seeing that it was futile, he could only give up on the idea.

From the looks of it, he could not follow the conventional path that all cultivators would tread on. He would have to find his own way forward.

By the time they arrived at the other end of the passageway, they were already in close proximity to Qufu. They quickly began making their way over toward the Temple of Confucius when a figure suddenly approached them.

It was Wu Chen.

He had previously separated from them, saying that he had matters to attend to.

Wu Chen first greeted Luo Ruoxin with a bow before turning to look at Zhang Xuan. It could have just been Zhang Xuan's imagination, but he seemed to sense some conflicting emotions in the depths of Wu Chen's eyes.

“Have you settled your affairs?” Zhang Xuan asked.

All this time, he could feel that there was some kind of issue plaguing Wu Chen, leaving him in a heavy mood. Even as he followed Luo Ruoxin around, there was still a brooding atmosphere to him. However, the brooding atmosphere around him seemed to have vanished, which suggested that the matter had already been resolved.

Hearing Zhang Xuan’s question, Wu Chen snapped out of his contemplation and replied with a slight smile. “Thanks to your grace, it has been resolved without a hitch.”

“That’s a relief!” Zhang Xuan nodded. He knew that Wu Chen was unwilling to talk too much about his private matters, so he did not press on.

Before long, they were back on their way to Qufu. From where they were at, they were not too far away from their destination.

The closer they got to Qufu, the greater the pressure exerted on them from the ‘second sun’ in the sky. It was not as searing as the real sun, but the pressure that it emanated seemed to weigh directly on one’s soul.

To construct such a massive ancient domain in the midst of the sky and conceal it even from the detection of Ancient Sages... This was no longer the work of a man but a miracle created by a higher power.

# 1693 Qufu

“As expected of the World’s Teacher...” Wu Chen remarked in awe.

“Kong shi is known not just for his unparalleled fighting prowess but his astounding intelligence as well. He played a huge role in constructing a systematic lineage for the inheritance of numerous occupations. Of the Lower, Middle, and Upper Nine Paths, he organized no less than twenty occupations!” Sword Saint Xing explained with an excited gleam in his eyes.

The lineage of master teachers originated from Kong shi. There was no master teacher in the world who was not filled with awe and respect for Kong shi.

Zhang Xuan did not participate in the conversation with the rest of the crowd. Instead, he stared into the massive temple sealed within the ‘sun’ as a hint of bewilderment seeped into his eyes. For some reason, he could feel something within beckoning him.

As if resonating with this beckoning, the Library of Heaven’s Path trembled lightly, and the countless books stored within shook along with its movements.

Is there an artifact in the Temple of Confucius that could upgrade the Library of Heaven’s Path? Zhang Xuan wondered with a frown.

The Library of Heaven’s Path had always maintained a state of impassiveness to whatever happened around him. Rarely did it move of its own accord. Yet, at this moment, it was shaking non-stop.

It had not been this excited even when he paid a visit to the Seer Guild before.

Could it be that there was something that the Library of Heaven’s Path desired in the Temple of Confucius?

If that was the case, he would have to make sure to acquire it.

The reason he had been able to advance from a nameless nobody to an esteemed expert whom no one did not know of was not because of his astounding talent, high morals, or extreme diligence... rather, it was due to the Library of Heaven's Path!

If not for the Library of Heaven's Path, it was likely that he would still have been struggling in the Tianxuan Kingdom, attempting to push for a breakthrough to become a 1-star master teacher.

Without a doubt, the Library of Heaven's Path was his greatest asset and trump card. No matter what dangers he would have to face, it would all be worth it if he could upgrade it further.

He activated his Eye of Insight in an attempt to peer into the sun. However, despite having flown several hundred li into Qufu, he was still unable to look into the depths of the Temple of Confucius. There seemed to be some kind of veil covering the temple, obscuring it from sight.

“The Temple of Confucius is located in a folded space. Until it's completely opened, not even Ancient Sages will be able to reach it even if they fly for over a decade,” Luo Ruoxin explained. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in astonishment.

In a sense, this was similar to how the sun was in his previous life. It seemed to hang directly above Earth, creating an illusion that it could be easily reached as long as one flew into the sky. But in truth, even if one moved at the speed of light, it would still take eight minutes in order to reach the sun.

“If we can still see it even from such a long distance away, how big must the Temple of Confucius be?” Zhang Xuan could not help but voice the question on his mind.

The reason that was the case for the sun was simply because of its massive scale.

If it was the same for the Temple of Confucius as well, could it actually be a gigantic world of its own?

“The Temple of Confucius isn’t too big. It’s a type of spatial manipulation; in truth, it isn’t that far away from us,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

It seemed like she had quite a deep understanding of the Temple of Confucius.

While they were chatting with one another, an ancient city soon came into view. The crowd quickly made their way over.

The land where the Temple of Confucius was located, Qufu!

This city was not as prosperous or massive as the Empire Alliance, and most of the buildings were ancient and decrepit. However, it had a quiet and peaceful aura, giving rise to a comfortable atmosphere. If one had to describe it, it would be reminiscent of an infant returning to a mother’s embrace.

“This is... the unique aura of a Celestial Master Teacher?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes shot up in astonishment.

The aura looming in the city was extremely similar to the aura that seeped into his body during the acknowledgement of Celestial Master Teacher. The only difference was that the concentration was many times lower.

“There are seemingly intangible forces that manifest in mysterious ways in the world. There is an academic aura for the academics and martial aura for martial arts. These two forces are derived from the unique culture of education and lineages on the Master Teacher Continent, and we collectively refer to them as ‘teacher’s milieu’. If one comes into prolonged contact with teacher’s milieu, one’s state of mind will mature swiftly. One’s thoughts will become more open and discerning, thus leaving little room for inner demons and irrationality to exist!” Sword Saint Xing explained.

“Teacher’s milieu?” Zhang Xuan repeated those two words before nodding slightly.

In truth, this unique aura was not exclusive to Celestial Master Teachers. When a master teacher paid respects to the predecessors in the Teacher Acknowledgement Hall, they could be bestowed with this aura as well. In a sense, it was a symbolism of culture.

It was through the milieu of a teacher that master teachers were able to win the respect of the world and become the leaders of the world.

“Has this place... always been like that?” Zhang Xuan asked.

He focused his attention on the teacher’s milieu around him, and just as Sword Saint Xing had said, the aura was indeed able to bring greater sharpness and acuity to his mind. At the same time, this sparked some doubts in his mind.

The effects of the teacher’s milieu were astounding, such that even the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters’ was unable to compete with it!

Seeing through Zhang Xuan’s doubt, Sword Saint Xing explained, “Before the opening of the Temple of Confucius, while teacher’s milieu still lingered in Qufu, it was far sparser than what you can perceive right now. Nevertheless, its enhancement to one’s state of mind was still rather conspicuous if one lived in the area for prolonged periods of time.

“Due to that, Qufu is also known as the ancestral land of the master teachers. Most 9-star master teachers reside in Qufu for a period of their life, not to cultivate or go into seclusion but to experience the life of a mortal and temper their state of mind!

“Take a look at that carpenter over there. Do you notice anything different about him?”

Zhang Xuan turned his gaze over.

By the side of a street, there was a carpenter who was in the midst of crafting a piece of furniture. The movements of his callused hands were extremely precise, as if they had been carefully measured by a ruler. Wooden shavings flew around the place. Before long, a completed product was sitting right before him.

“He is... a 9-star master teacher!” Zhang Xuan was astounded by what he saw.

The carpenter shaved the wood with light strokes that seemed to be devoid of strength, and there was not the slightest hint of zhenqi that could be felt flowing through his body. However,



the ocean-like accumulation of energy that Zhang Xuan could see in the depths of his dantian through the Eye of Insight told a very different story.

Not only was the carpenter likely a 9-star master teacher, chances were that he was an extremely powerful one as well.

“Indeed. He’s a 9-star master teacher who made his name three hundred years ago. He was at Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm back then, so there’s no doubt that he has grown much stronger by now!” Sword Saint Xing replied.

“An Aureate Body realm cultivator doing carpentry?” Zhang Xuan could hardly believe what he was hearing.

All along, he had thought that Great Sage experts were extremely rare among mankind. Yet, who could have thought that even a carpenter that he encountered on the street within Qufu would have reached such a level as well?

“Look at the fishmonger and butcher over there as well... They were all renowned 9-star master teachers in their era. Back then, they still weren’t too powerful, but over the years, they have reached Great Sage 3-dan Intuitive Impulse realm as well, just like me!” Sword Saint Xing explained.

“If nothing had happened to you back then, your mother and I would have come to Qufu to try living an ordinary life as well. Through experiencing the difficulties of mortal life, we would have been able to temper our state of mind and ready ourselves for a breakthrough to higher realms!”

Zhang Xuan nodded quietly in response.

Just as Sword Saint Xing had said, a lot of the ordinary-looking individuals around them were astoundingly Great Sage experts.

They were experts whose silhouettes could rarely be seen even within major clans, but in Qufu, they were as common as cabbage in a wet market.

It was no wonder Qufu was known as the ancestral lands of the master teachers. It seemed like there was indeed a basis to it.

Sword Saint Xing suddenly turned to look at Zhang Xuan and asked curiously, “Right! Xuan-er, what’s your Soul Depth at the moment? If you wish to advance your cultivation as a master teacher, raising your Soul Depth is of the utmost importance. If your Soul Depth isn’t up to par, your heart won’t be calm, and your will won’t be pure. Pushing your cultivation ahead will become much harder and harder!”

As long as one had a high aptitude, sufficient cultivation resources, and a good teacher, one would be able to advance one’s cultivation rather swiftly. However, tempering one’s state of mind was a step-by-step process that could not be rushed. There was no way to forcefully hasten the process, and any attempts to do so would likely end up bad.

His son was incredibly talented, but that did not change the fact that his son was only twenty this year. To become a 9-star master teacher at such an age... he could not help but wonder how high the Soul Depth of his son was and how he had managed to raise it so quickly.

“My Soul Depth?” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before replying honestly, “29.1.”

# 1694 The Importance of Soul Depth

Having undergone the fifth acknowledgement of Celestial Master Teacher and stumbling across many fortuitous encounters, he had been able to raise his Soul Depth considerably swiftly. It did not take him long to reach a level comparable to 9-star pinnacle master teachers. Most likely, the only master teachers who could surpass him were Yang shi and a couple of others.

“29.1?” Hearing that number, Sword Saint Xing’s lips twitched.

He had thought that given how fast his son’s cultivation had grown, his Soul Depth would have difficulties trying to catch up. Who would have thought that his son’s Soul Depth was actually much higher than his?

“You... How did you cultivate your Soul Depth?” Sword Saint Xing asked in astonishment. “It should have been extremely difficult to raise one’s Soul Depth! Even with the assistance of a cultivation technique, it still takes tremendous effort and time in order to do so...”

It was common knowledge that the greatest limiting factor to a master teacher was their Soul Depth. In order to experience the vicissitudes of life, Yang shi concealed his identity and wandered the world for many years before he managed to raise his Soul Depth so high.

On the other hand, his son was only twenty this year, and he had spent his earlier nineteen years in a place as remote as the Tianxuan Kingdom. How could his Soul Depth be so high?

“How did I manage to do it?” Zhang Xuan frowned slightly upon hearing such a question. “I don’t really know. I have never cultivated my Soul Depth before. It simply grew naturally...”

Hearing those words, Sword Saint Xing's face flushed completely crimson, and he nearly spurted blood. "Are you telling me that your Soul Depth grew to 29.1 naturally?"

Seeing how traumatized her husband was, Sword Saint Meng could not help but burst into laughter.

Of all people her husband could ask, he just had to ask their son. Was he not asking for a mental trauma?

The first time that they reunited with their son in the Empire Alliance, their son had only been at Saint 8-dan. However, within half a month, he was already an Aureate Body realm consummation expert... To attempt to compete with a prodigy of such a caliber, was it not obvious that he was asking for it?

"Is there a problem with my Soul Depth?" Zhang Xuan asked.

To be exact, calling it natural growth was not entirely accurate. However, it was true that he had never cultivated his Soul Depth before in order to raise it.

The golden page, acknowledgements of Celestial Master Teacher, Soul Tempering of a Mentor's Calligraphy, sudden bouts of inspiration... each and every time that he encountered one of these, his Soul Depth would increase by 1.0 or even more. Given so, it was no wonder that his Soul Depth had risen to 29.1 so quickly.

"There's nothing wrong at all," Sword Saint Xing replied with a stifled look on his face.

While others ground themselves down to the bones in order to raise their Soul Depth by just 0.1, this fellow was actually able to raise his Soul Depth to a level comparable to Yang shi without even bothering to cultivate it.

If other master teachers heard that, they would surely lose all motivation to cultivate.

Having stayed quiet all this time, Wu Chen suddenly spoke up. "You won't be able to reach Ancient Sage if you allow your Soul Depth to simply grow naturally. You need to temper it in order to make your state of mind more wholesome and resilient. Only then will you be able to advance further in your cultivation!"

“Does Soul Depth play a role in pushing for a breakthrough to Ancient Sage?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

Strangely enough, neither the Three Premier Clans nor the Master Teacher Pavilion headquarters had any books relating to Ancient Sages. As such, he knew next to nothing about the realm.

“Un. The crux to reaching Ancient Sage is to align one’s heart and will together with the world, thus granting one greater control over the environment. If one’s state of mind isn’t sufficient to harness the strength of the world, one will be at risk of turning into an idiot or descending into lunacy. It’s great that you are able to raise your Soul Depth quickly through natural means, but without undergoing any tempering, it will be nigh impossible for you to reach Ancient Sage!” Wu Chen seemed to be really familiar with this matter.

Then again, considering that he was a Sempiternal realm cultivator just like Yang Shi, it was likely that he had been seeking a way to push for a breakthrough to Ancient Sage all this while. It would not be surprising for him to be well-versed in such knowledge.

“I see!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He had an Otherworldly Demon Ancient Sage corpse in his storage ring. While he had no idea how far he was away from Ancient Sage, he could roughly fathom how powerful Ancient Sages were.

Even after the Ancient Sage’s death, the other party’s body remained so heavy that he had difficulty trying to lift it up. At the same time, the imposing aura that the other party emanated made it difficult for his Primordial Spirit to approach initially. These facts served as glimpses into how powerful Ancient Sage cultivators truly were.

Even though it was just a realm of difference between Sempiternal realm and Ancient Sage, this fine line demarcated the difference between a mortal and a deity. Naturally, the prowess of the two could not even begin to compare to one another.

Zhang Xuan thought that the difference lay in the accumulation of power, but who would have thought that Soul Depth actually played an important role as well?

“That’s not right...” A doubt swiftly arose in Zhang Xuan’s mind, and he quickly posed it to Wu Chen. “The advancement of Soul Depth is a requirement imposed only on master teachers, right? Given so, it’s unlikely for other cultivators to cultivate their Soul Depth. Since that’s the case, how can they achieve a breakthrough to Ancient Sage?”

Soul Depth was a requirement for the rank advancement of master teachers, which was the reason master teachers emphasized it so heavily. Other cultivators would not feel any need to cultivate their Soul Depth, and if so, would they not be unable to reach Ancient Sage?

“Ordinary cultivators do place great importance on cultivating their state of mind. Take apothecaries for example. If they weren’t in the right state of mind, the Tranquil Heart Pill they forged would be warped, thus transforming from a calming pill into lethal poison!” Wu Chen explained.

“The same goes for other occupations. If demonic tunists fail to cultivate their state of mind, how could they possibly conceptualize their intent through music to beguile their opponents? If formation masters neglect their state of mind, how would they be able to set up highly complex formations?”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan fell silent.

He had faced something similar to this back when he was undergoing his 1-dan apothecary examination. Back then, there was an apothecary who had not reached Heart of Tranquil Water and thus lacked control over his emotions. He had attempted to forge Tranquil Heart Pills while his mind was not in a composed state, and the pills that he produced eventually turned out to be lethal poison that could kill the cultivators who unfortunately consumed them. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

He could relate to how state of mind was important to a demonic tunist too. If he could not control his emotions, his

music would only run amok. For example, during his demonic tunist examination at the Hongyuan Master Teacher Academy, he had needed to make the divine cranes dance along with his zither melody. However, if he had allowed his emotions to run wild, it was likely that he would have jolted them to death with his music instead.

Thinking about that, there were indeed no occupations in the world that demanded nothing of one's state of mind. It was just that none of them were as demanding as the master teacher occupation.

“Before Kong shi's era, the cultivation of Soul Depth was categorized under Will of Mind, and it was divided into many different levels. This is also where Heart of Tranquil Water, Lucid Mind, Unperturbed Spirit, Impervious Will, Impregnable Heart, Uninhibited Psyche, Incorruptible Soul, and the like come from...” Wu Chen continued on.

“However, Kong shi felt that such categorization is overly complex and hard to accurately gauge. Thus, he simplified the entire model through quantifying it with numbers, which gave rise to the Soul Depth that we are familiar with. The model has been adopted by the Master Teacher Pavilion, with every 3.0 points indicating a new tier. 1-star master teachers require a Soul Depth of 3.0, 2-star master teachers require a Soul Depth of 6.0, and so on. Going by this, 9-star master teachers require a Soul Depth of 27.0. The requirement on Soul Depth is much harsher than cultivation; those who haven't reached the required Soul Depth cannot be promoted, even under exceptional circumstances!”

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

Kong shi had simplified the ‘Will of Mind’ model into the ‘Soul Depth’ model, and the Master Teacher Pavilion had adopted the latter as one of its promotion criteria. On the other hand, the other occupations still persisted in using the ‘Will of Mind’ model, which worked fine as well since they did not require such a fine distinction.

Of course, just because the other occupations did not adopt the ‘Soul Depth’ model did not mean that they would not temper

their state of mind.

While both models worked fine, there were still some advantages to quantifying ‘state of mind’ in the form of ‘Soul Depth’. It would allow master teachers to constantly track their progress in cultivating their states of mind, thus encouraging them to adopt practices beneficial to advancing their Soul Depth. It was due to this that the Master Teacher Pavilion had become the leading expert in this field, and the other occupations struggled to catch up.

“I have been here once before, and if I recall correctly, there’s a place just ahead that allows one to temper one’s Soul Depth. It’s known as the Heart Pavilion. There are cultivation techniques in there that allow one to reinforce one’s state of mind, insights left behind by countless experts, and formations that temper one’s state of mind. Why don’t we head there to take a look? Since you have never tempered your state of mind before, you might be able to make considerable advancements through it!” Sword Saint Xing suddenly suggested.



# 1695 Surge in Soul Depth

“Heart Pavilion?” Zhang Xuan nodded. “Let’s head there to take a look!”

Since the Temple of Confucius had not opened yet, he had some time to spare. Given that the Heart Pavilion could help him temper his state of mind, there was no harm heading over to take a look.

All along, he had been dependent on fortuitous encounters in order to raise his Soul Depth. However, it would not do for him to be solely reliant on luck in tempering his state of mind. It would be great if he could acquire a feasible cultivation technique that would allow him to raise his Soul Depth.

After walking for a while, a building came into sight. Walking in, they were greeted by a middle-aged man.

“Greetings. Do you intend to temper your state of mind or examine it?”

“We wish to temper our state of mind,” Zhang Xuan replied.

“This way please...” The middle-aged man gestured with a smile. “First and foremost, our Heart Pavilion doesn’t accept spirit stones and other currencies. We only accept Saint pinnacle artifacts as payment. Every two hours inside will cost a Saint pinnacle artifact!”

“It sure is expensive...” Zhang Xuan was slightly taken aback by the price.

After all the scavenging that he had done, he had no lack of Saint pinnacle artifacts in his inventory. Nevertheless, it was still a price that most cultivators would struggle to fork out, including those from major clans.

Most Saint 9-dan cultivators would not even have a Saint pinnacle artifact, and yet, two hours in the Heart Pavilion would cost one such item.

“It can’t be helped. It’s extremely expensive to construct a formation and space that is safe yet challenging enough to temper one’s state of mind, and maintaining it also costs a hefty sum,” the middle-aged man replied.

“That’s true, I suppose.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

Most of the cultivators who had come to Qufu to temper their state of mind were 9-star master teachers, individuals who possessed Soul Depths of 27.0 and above. At their level, ordinary Illusory Formations and Beguilement Formations were already ineffective on them. In order to exert pressure on them, the highest quality formations and artifacts had to be used. Given so, it was inevitable for the cost to be on the pricier side.

“Here you go!” Zhang Xuan tossed over a Saint pinnacle weapon. “I would like to test the effects out for myself first. If it’s effective, let’s go in and cultivate together!”

Having plundered the military resources of 110,000 Otherworldly Demons, there were more than a thousand Saint pinnacle artifacts in his storage ring. Considering that he had no use for artifacts of that tier anymore, he had no issues spending them there.

The crowd nodded in response.

“This way please...” The middle-aged man swiftly led them into a vast hall.

Placed at the very center of the hall was a crystal ball. It revolved quietly above a stone platform, emanating a mesmerizing glow.

The walls around the hall were inscribed with insights and cultivation techniques that would raise one’s Soul Depth.

“These are left behind by the experts who have been to the Heart Pavilion to temper their state of mind. We have tested them personally, and they are all highly effective in raising one’s Soul Depth. However, please do take caution when reading through them. If you attempt to take in too much, they could end up hindering your state of mind instead. Use them

prudently, and your Soul Depth will surely surge ahead,” the middle-aged man said with a smile.

Cultivation techniques were valued not in quantity but quality.

Attempting to take in too much would only end up confusing one instead.

Every cultivator had their own path of cultivation to follow. The more they attempted to emulate the route of others, the further they would stray from their path. If a cultivator lost themselves in the wisdom of others, not only would their growth slow down, their cultivation might even go berserk!

It was for this reason that the Master Teacher Pavilion discouraged individuals from studying too many cultivation techniques.

Of course, there were pros and cons to the matter.

If a cultivator successfully utilized the wisdom of others to further their own path, they would be able to reach a height far beyond their predecessors.

“When you are ready, just place your hand on the crystal ball ahead and focus your attention on your consciousness. The crystal ball will process the fluctuations in your state of mind. If you reach the limits of your tolerance at any point in time, we’ll immediately terminate the formation so that you are not hurt!” the middle-aged man explained.

“I understand!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He took two steps up to the crystal ball, but he did not rush to place his hand on it. Instead, he swept his gaze across the wall opposite of him. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

Hu!

A new book materialized in the Library of Heaven’s Path.

Placing his finger on the book, its content swiftly flowed into Zhang Xuan’s mind. Slowly, his eyes lit up in excitement.

By compiling all of the cultivation techniques and insights detailed on the wall together, he had successfully compiled a

Heaven's Path Heart Tempering Art.

While he had encountered numerous books relating to the tempering of one's state of mind in the past, he had never paid much attention to it. However, as he browsed through the content of the Heaven's Path Heart Tempering Art, he swiftly realized that raising one's Soul Depth was not easy. In terms of difficulty, it was much higher than raising one's cultivation, especially due to how elusive and intangible the entire field was.

The typical method to temper one's state of mind in the Master Teacher Continent was using Illusory Formations to put one's consciousness through various turmoil. Through overcoming those ordeals, one's state of mind would gradually grow steadier and more resilient.

However, this 'typical method' was both passive and indirect. It relied heavily on luck and circumstances. Even if one augmented the process with heart tempering cultivation techniques and artifacts, the rate of growth still would not be too remarkable.

Fortunately, the Heaven's Path Heart Tempering Art that Zhang Xuan had just compiled through the Library of Heaven's Path resolved this problem perfectly. It allowed him to cultivate his state of mind directly, just like his zhenqi and soul.

"Let me begin..." Zhang Xuan quickly went through the heart tempering cultivation technique in his mind before placing his hand on the crystal ball.

Weng!

A shimmer of light shrouded the crystal ball as numbers surfaced on it—29.1.

Just as Zhang Xuan had calculated, his Soul Depth had already reached a level equivalent to 9-star pinnacle master teachers.

"He's... a 9-star master teacher?" The middle-aged man recoiled in shock.

He had thought that given how young Zhang Xuan was, his Soul Depth would surely be the lowest among the group. Most

likely, that was why he had gone there to temper his state of mind. Yet, who would have thought... 29.1! Even if he looked at the whole of Qufu, it was unlikely that there would be too many master teachers who could match him.

“Un.” Seeing the middle-aged man’s shocked expression, Sword Saint Meng nodded proudly. “Is there anyone who has encountered sudden bouts of inspiration while tempering their state of mind here?”

“There is! Many years ago, Yang shi visited our Heart Pavilion, and his Soul Depth was at 28.2 when he first tested it. In the midst of tempering his state of mind, an epiphany suddenly struck him, and his Soul Depth shot up by 0.2, reaching 28.4. That matter has become a legend of our Heart Pavilion!” the middle-aged man said.

The difficulty in raising one’s Soul Depth grew exponentially difficult the higher one’s Soul Depth was. Beyond 27.0, every increment of 0.1 would usually require many years of hard work. It was indubitably a remarkable feat for Yang shi to have advanced his Soul Depth by 0.2 in less than two hours. Very few would be able to emulate his success.

“Yang shi is indeed formidable... Do you have any rank board or the sort here? What is the fastest rate that a master teacher has raised his Soul depth?” Sword Saint Meng continued asking.

“We do have something similar to that. The current record holder for the fastest increment in Soul Depth is held by an 8-star master teacher. His Soul Depth was 24.7 when he first arrived, and when he tested it two hours later, it had already reached 25.7. That was an increment of a whole 1.0! But of course, it’s hard to compare this with Yang shi’s feat. After all, the higher one’s Soul Depth is, the more difficult it is to raise it!” the middle-aged man said.

Raising one’s Soul Depth was similar to building a narrow tower. The bottom layer was always easier to build, but after reaching a certain height, the difficulty would suddenly skyrocket.

“Dear, are you thinking that our Xuan-er will be able to break the record?” Sword Saint Xing asked.

It was not too difficult for him to follow his wife’s train of thought.

“My son is a prodigy. Isn’t it normal for him to break records?” Sword Saint Meng replied matter-of-factly.

“I think you have too much confidence in our son! Tempering one’s Soul Depth is different from raising one’s cultivation. There’s no way to force the matter...” Sword Saint Xing shook his head.

Raising one’s Soul Depth was not as easy as taking in spiritual energy and converting it into one’s strength. It was a far more complicated process, and it was highly dependent on luck. Even though his son was a prodigy, there were some things in life that talent simply could not influence!

“Look over there!”

Before Sword Saint Xing could finish his words, a shrill voice sounded. Sword Saint Xing immediately turned his gaze over, and on the crystal ball, he saw the number ‘29.1’ flickering and turning into ‘29.2’, ‘29.3’, ‘29.4’...

“This...” Sword Saint Xing was flabbergasted.

# 1696 Soul Depth of 29.9

Not only was Sword Saint Xing stupefied by what he was seeing, even the middle-aged man was standing petrified on the spot. It looked as if he had just seen a ghost!

Complete silence loomed in the air.

It was just a moment ago that they had been praising Yang Shi for raising his Soul Depth by 0.2 so swiftly, but that was the result of a sudden epiphany, and it had taken him two whole hours in order to do so. On the other hand... to jump up by 0.1 every ten seconds, how in the world was the young man doing it?

Even 1-star master teachers with Soul Depths of 3.0 would not be able to do it so swiftly!

“Could the crystal ball be spoiled?” the middle-aged man muttered as he hurried forward to check on the artifact.

However, the crystal ball was completely intact. There was not the slightest trace of damage that could be seen on it.

If the crystal ball was not faulty, it meant that the changes had come from the young man himself, but was such a matter humanly possible?

Wu Chen’s eyebrows danced frenziedly around the place, and he looked as if he was about to lose his mind.

This was not cultivation but Soul Depth that they were talking about, and the other party’s Soul Depth was beyond 29.0 at that! To be increasing 0.1 every ten seconds...

“He has a strong foundation for his state of mind, having cultivated every realm of his Will of Mind impeccably. This has made his state of mind incomparably wholesome. As a result, he faces little impediment in the advancement of his Soul Depth, thus allowing him to raise it swiftly!” Luo Ruoxin placed her hands behind her back as she calmly explained the situation.

There was not the slightest hint of surprise on her face, as if she had expected such a matter to happen.

As a Celestial Master Teacher, Zhang Xuan had a strong foundation for his state of mind. Using the tower analogy once more, if the lower blocks were laid impeccably, it would be much easier to build the top layers.

“Strong foundation...”

Coming to realize what was going on, bitter smiles appeared on the faces of the crowd.

This was especially so for Sword Saint Xing. He was so embarrassed that he could have found a hole to bury himself in!

He had been thinking that his son’s state of mind would be lagging behind due to him advancing his cultivation too quickly. However, this matter had told him loud and clear that his son’s cultivation was not fast at all... On the contrary, his cultivation was having difficulty keeping up with his state of mind!

Since he had already met the necessary requirements to push for a breakthrough in his cultivation, what was the point of him remaining stationary on the spot?

Before everyone’s shocked gazes, the number on the crystal ball finally came to a halt.

29.9!

Exhaling deeply, Zhang Xuan retracted his palm from the crystal ball and shook his head. “This seems to be my limit!”

Cultivating the Heaven’s Path Heart Tempering Art, he had indeed been able to advance his Soul Depth swiftly at the start. However, as soon as it struck 29.9, he realized that he was unable to raise his Soul depth any higher. It was as if there was a massive barrier standing ahead of him, obstructing his path forward.

No matter how hard he tried to push through it, the barrier simply would not falter. He swiftly realized that it was



impossible for him to break the barrier with his current strength.

Watching as Zhang Xuan walked back in his direction, the middle-aged man's eyes were widened as though large bells. "Just like that... you are already done cultivating?"

Normal cultivators would find even ten hours too short for their cultivation, but this fellow had actually reached his bottleneck within just two minutes.

"Un. I just paid for two hours straight, so we should still have some time left. Do any of you want to give it a try?" Zhang Xuan asked as he turned to the crowd.

"I'll give it a try!" Sword Saint Meng said.

She still had a gleeful smile on her face, overjoyed by her son's incredible feat.

"Give me a moment. I had an epiphany after browsing through the cultivation techniques inscribed on the walls, so I created one of my own. Allow me to impart it to you!" Zhang Xuan said.

"You created a new cultivation technique?" Even Sword Saint Meng could not help but be startled by what she had just heard.

It hasn't even been three minutes from the moment we entered the room till now, but not only have you raised your Soul Depth by 0.8, you even managed to create a cultivation technique?

"Indeed!" Zhang Xuan nodded, not bothering to explain the matter any further.

With a tap of his finger, a sliver of his will dived into Sword Saint Meng's consciousness.

Swiftly going through the knowledge that had just been imprinted into her mind, Sword Saint Meng's body stiffened in shock.

As an Intuitive Impulse realm expert, she had her own heart tempering cultivation technique to reinforce her state of mind. However, when she looked at the heart tempering cultivation

technique that her son had sent over, she realized that what she had cultivated previously was no different from trash!

She quickly internalized the heart tempering cultivation technique that she had just received, and it did not take long for her to fully grasp it.

“Let me give it a try!” Taking a deep breath, Sword Saint Meng walked up to the crystal ball and placed her palm on it.

Weng!

Numbers surfaced on the crystal ball—27.3.

She was a powerful cultivator, and her swordsmanship was nothing short of impressive. However, her Soul Depth had stagnated shortly after she reached the mark required to become a 9-star master teacher.

Feeling the pressure coming from the crystal ball, Sword Saint Meng closed her eyes and began to drive the heart tempering cultivation technique that her son had imparted to her.

Kacha!

The numbers on the crystal ball flickered—27.4.

A minute later, 27.5.

Yet another minute later, 27.6...

It swiftly formed a fixed pattern, similar to what had happened in Zhang Xuan’s case. The only difference was that Zhang Xuan’s increment had happened once every ten seconds whereas Sword Saint Meng’s came once every minute.

“...”

Sword Saint Xing widened his eyes in horror once more.

If there was anyone in the world who knew Sword Saint Meng the best, it was none other than him.

His wife had a fiery temper and fidgety demeanor, which made it extremely difficult for her to raise her Soul Depth. He had to search for all sorts of treasures that were beneficial to raising one’s Soul Depth, and in order to cater to his restless wife, he had even designed a collaborative swordsmanship for

the two of them to practice together just to temper her state of mind. Even so, it had taken a very long time before her Soul Depth reached 27.3.

And after that, it had simply stagnated there. For many years, it had not even moved a single inch.

But at that very moment, it was increasing by 0.1 every minute...

Sword Saint Xing quickly turned to his son and said, “Your heart tempering cultivation technique...”

Without a doubt, this miracle definitely had something to do with the cultivation technique that his son had imparted to his wife.

“Here you go. You can give it a try afterward!” Knowing what Sword Saint Xing was thinking of, Zhang Xuan chuckled softly as he tapped his finger and imparted the simplified version of the Heaven’s Path Heart Tempering Art to him as well.

Sword Saint Xing swiftly browsed through it, and a moment later, he fell into a daze.

It was no wonder his wife was able to raise her Soul Depth so quickly! This heart tempering cultivation technique was truly out of that world!

The predecessors of the Zhang Clan had created innumerable cultivation techniques in order to temper their Soul Depth and overcome their limitations, but none of them came close to competing with the heart tempering cultivation technique that had just been imparted to him.

The more I look at him, the more I find myself unable to see through him... Sword Saint Xing shot a glance at his son and sighed deeply. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

He knew that his son had many secrets, and he had thought that he would come to learn of them as they spent more time together. However, the closer they became to one another, the more mysterious his son became to him.

It was as if his son was the embodiment of omniscience. Any cultivation technique, even the most elementary ones, when placed in his hand, would showcase extraordinary effects, transforming into invaluable treasures that the world would die to lay their hands upon.

Legend has it that Kong shi wielded such an ability too. Could it be that my son is going to become an expert on par with Kong shi? Sword Saint Xing trembled in agitation at the thought.

According to the legends, Kong shi had possessed the ability to understand anything that he laid his eyes upon and master any craft in a moment's time. That was actually similar to what his son was able to do. Was his son really going to reach a level comparable to Kong shi?

Just the thought of it filled him with anticipation for the future.

“Come over. I have already reached my bottleneck, and I don't think I can go any further than this...”

While Sword Saint Xing was still deep in thought, his wife spoke. He quickly turned his gaze over and saw the number '29.9' on the crystal ball. Within such a short period of time, his wife's Soul Depth had actually increased by 2.6, reaching 29.9, the very limits of a 9-star master teacher!

“29.9 is the limit of a Great Sage. If you take another step forward, it will mean that your Soul Depth has reached a level comparable to Ancient Sages!” Wu Chen explained.

Achieving a breakthrough from 29.9 means that my Soul Depth has reached a level comparable to Ancient Sages?  
Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

I'm unable to advance my zhenqi or soul cultivation any further at the moment, but I do have a golden page on hand. If I use it, will I be able to raise my Soul Depth by another 5.0, thus reaching a level comparable to Ancient Sages?

# 1697 Sword Saint Xing Makes a Breakthrough

The effect of the golden page was not just limited to smashing his enemies to a pulp. More than that, it would help him assimilate the knowledge that he had stored in the Library of Heaven's Path and raise his Soul Depth.

He had used the golden page to raise his Soul Depth twice, and each time, it had increased by 5.0. If he used the golden page to increase his Soul Depth, would he be able to overcome the 29.9 bottleneck? If it worked out, he would possess a state of mind comparable to Ancient Sages!

He had only faced an Ancient Sage in battle once, and he had smashed the other party to death with his book before the other party could do anything. Nevertheless, from the other party's corpse stored in his storage ring, he was still able to roughly fathom how terrifying Ancient Sages were. If he could advance his Soul Depth further, would he gain the ability to protect himself even when faced with an Ancient Sage? Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

Even if his fighting prowess was lacking, as long as his state of mind was up to par, he might just be able to fool Ancient Sages with his disguise!

State of mind was of paramount importance when it came to disguise. As long as his Soul Depth was up to par, it would be difficult for anyone to see through his disguise.

Let me give it a try! Zhang Xuan thought excitedly.

Recalling the state that he had been in when he first used the golden page to raise his Soul Depth, he closed his eyes and willed, Increase my Soul Depth!

There was no reaction.

Zhang Xuan closed his eyes once more and willed, Increase my Soul Depth!

There was still no reaction at all.

The golden page continued floating quietly in the Library of Heaven's Path, seemingly mocking him for his futile actions.

Please, help me raise my Soul Depth!

I choose you, golden page! Crush that bottleneck before me!

Push! Puuuushhhhhhh! Just 0.1 more...

...

After wasting a minute on trying to get the golden page to work, Zhang Xuan could only rub his glabella in distress.

From the looks of it, it seemed like he could not rely on the golden page to raise his Soul Depth anymore.

Cultivating one's state of mind was indeed not that easy!

From the looks of it, he had to prepare himself for a long battle. If a day would not work, he would just have to use two. If two did not work, he would have to use three... Or else, half a month should surely do the job, right?

If not, he could try to aim for a sixth acknowledgement of Celestial Master Teacher or something. That might work, too.

Heaving a long sigh, Zhang Xuan was just about to see how Sword Saint Xing was progressing along when he suddenly felt spiritual energy converging toward them.

He turned his head over and saw that shortly after Sword Saint Meng's Soul Depth had reached 29.9, her cultivation, which had stagnated at Intuitive Impulse realm consummation for a very long time, had suddenly surged up, reaching Sempiternal realm!

Sword Saint Meng had always been a highly talented cultivator, and the reason that she had been unable to make the breakthrough before was because of the knot in her heart for having lost her son. Now that she had found her son and her Soul Depth had just made such a massive advancement, using

the momentum built up so far, she managed to push through her bottleneck and achieve a breakthrough in her cultivation!

In Great Sage 4-dan Sempiternal realm, the term ‘sempiternal’ referred to the deathlessness and imperviousness of one’s Primordial Spirit. No external force would be able to sway one’s emotions, and with a mere thought, one would be able to tear the fabric of space apart.

Such was the power wielded by the strongest experts beneath Ancient Sage.

As spiritual energy surged into her body, Sword Saint Meng’s cultivation swiftly rose.

Seeing that it would take a while for Sword Saint Meng to reinforce her cultivation, Zhang Xuan flicked a grade-9 pill into the latter’s mouth.

The pill melted as soon as it entered her mouth, and a tremendous burst of spiritual energy immediately surged through her body. The bottlenecks that had been limiting her previously were instantaneously cleared out.

After ensuring that Sword Saint Meng would not face any problem in her breakthrough, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

Many dangers lurked within the Temple of Confucius, be it from fellow explorers or from the traps within. It was of the utmost importance for the Xingmeng Sword Saints to become stronger so that they would be able to protect themselves.

Even though he was only a transcended soul, he had already come to view the Xingmeng Sword Saints as close kin of his. He would not allow any danger to fall upon them.

Turning his gaze toward Sword Saint Xing, who was standing before the crystal ball, Zhang Xuan saw that his Soul Depth was also increasing by 0.1 at fixed intervals, just like Sword Saint Meng. It did not take long for his Soul Depth to reach the bottleneck of 29.9.

“I have reached the limits for my Soul Depth too...” Sword Saint Xing said with eyes glowing in excitement.

“Aren’t you going to push for a breakthrough, too?” Zhang Xuan asked doubtfully.

“There’s no hurry. I just made a breakthrough in my state of mind, so I need to condition my state for a while before I am ready,” Sword Saint Xing replied.

“There’s no need for that. Quick, let’s get it over and done with. I took a look at your condition earlier, and the reason you haven’t been able to achieve a breakthrough is due to several blockages in your meridians. I have a pill over here that will help you open up your sealed meridians. With this, you should be able to reach the Sempiternal realm easily,” Zhang Xuan said as he flicked a pill toward Sword Saint Xing as well.

Given that your wife has already achieved a breakthrough, do you think you have the leisure to condition your state? You are already henpecked enough as it is! Are you willing to see your position in the family plummet even further than this?

“I...” Sword Saint Xing was slightly stunned by the vehement attitude of his son.

Am I... being looked down by my son for cultivating too slowly?

Oof!

It was a heavy blow, but Sword Saint Xing could not find any rebuttal at all.

One year ago, when his son had barely started out as a Fighter, he had been at the Intuitive Impulse realm.

Half a year ago, his son had successfully reached the Saint realm. He had been at the Intuitive Impulse realm.

A few days ago, his son had made a breakthrough to Great Sage 1-dan Introspective Convalescence realm. He had still been at the Intuitive Impulse realm.

On this very day, his son was already at the Aureate Body realm. But as for him... Yes, he was freaking at the Intuitive Impulse realm!

If he did not start to speed up now, he would really be overtaken by his son!



Without much hesitation, Sword Saint Xing swallowed the pill that Zhang Xuan had flicked to him. As the medicinal energy diffused through his body, he felt a concentrated surge of zhenqi coursing swiftly through his meridians, clearing up the blockages in the blink of an eye.

Following which, a powerful aura burst forth from his body. After facing stagnation in his cultivation for so many years, he had finally achieved a breakthrough!

“This...”

Seeing how he had achieved a breakthrough before he could even sit down to cultivate, Sword Saint Xing could not help but feel a little dazed.

Was this breakthrough not a little too easy!

However, he knew that this was not the time for him to be shocked. He quickly closed his eyes and began reinforcing his cultivation.

Seeing that both his father and mother had reached the Sempiternal realm, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. He turned to Luo Ruoxin and Wu Chen and asked, “There’s still some time left. Do you want to try as well?”

“Thank you for your offer, but there’s no need for it. The Soul Depth of both Milady and I has reached a bottleneck. It would be meaningless for us to continue cultivating our state of mind!” Wu Chen clasped his fist.

“Bottleneck? Are your Soul Depths at 29.9 too?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He knew that Wu Chen and Luo Ruoxin were no ordinary Sempiternal realm cultivators, but he did not think that their Soul Depth would have reached 29.9 as well. It seemed like their background was much more impressive than he had thought.

“I guess we’re done then!” Zhang Xuan said. He turned to the middle-aged man by the side and said, “We have only used the crystal ball for less than an hour. Are you going to refund the remaining hour to us?”

“...” The cheeks of the middle-aged man twitched.

While other cultivators used the entire two hours in hopes that they would be able to advance their Soul Depth by 0.1, those three actually took less than an hour to advance their Soul Depth to 29.9. More importantly, they were even asking for a refund after all of that!

He swore that he had never seen anyone as stingy as that before!

“What? Are you unwilling to refund us?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

“That’s not it. It’s the utmost honor of our Heart Pavilion to have you here. Why don’t we count the hour you have spent here on me as well?”

Seeing that the other party was earnestly asking for a refund, the middle-aged man flicked his wrist and returned the Saint pinnacle artifact to the other party.

It might have seemed as if he had made a loss, but the fact that three cultivators had advanced their Soul Depth to 29.9 at his Heart Pavilion was an invaluable advertisement for him.

All in all, it was still a win for him.

“That’s more like it...” Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction as he returned the Saint pinnacle artifact to his storage ring.

The middle-aged man nodded in response before his gaze slowly drifted over to the crystal ball. A gleam flickered in his eye as he thought, Since they were able to achieve a breakthrough in their Soul Depth so quickly, is there a chance that I might just be able to do the same?

With such a thought in mind, he quietly shuffled his footsteps over to the crystal ball.

The formation in the crystal ball had to be activated for two hours at the very minimum. Since the current guests were not intending to use it anymore, it would be a waste to leave it be. He might as well use it for himself.

He placed his hand on the crystal ball, and after a very long time... there was still no change to his Soul Depth.

At that moment, he realized that the advancement of their Soul Depth actually had nothing to do with his crystal ball at all...

# 1698 Luo Ruoxin's Worry

By the time Zhang Xuan and his group left the Heart Pavilion, the sun had already started to set.

Instead of wandering around town, Zhang Xuan went into one of the residences belonging to the Zhang Clan to reinforce his cultivation and discern the changes in his body.

Cultivation was an arduous process. It was not possible to reach the peak after just a bit of hard work. Even someone as talented as him had needed to constantly put in hard work in order to reach his current level.

With the recent breakthroughs that he had made, both his zhenqi cultivation and soul cultivation had reached Great Sage 2-dan Aureate Body realm consummation. With his Dragonbone Divine Spear and the Spatial, Time, and Soul Quintessences, he would be able to put up a fight even against Sempiternal realm consummation experts.

He no longer had to rely on external help, such as Kong shi's blood droplet, in order to challenge them.

Over the next few days, he chose to remain in his accommodation, and he did not head out much.

Three days later, the expedition party of the Zhang Clan arrived in Qufu as well and converged together with their group.

After several days of cultivation, the Xingmeng Sword Saints had successfully reinforced their Sempiternal realm cultivation. If they executed their collaborative swordsmanship, they would be able to oppose even Sempiternal realm consummation experts. There were very few beneath Ancient Sage who would be able to threaten them anymore.

Nearly all of the grand elders of the Zhang Clan had joined the expedition party for the Temple of Confucius. Taking a swift

glance, there were over twenty of them who had reached Sempiternal realm.

As expected of the number one Sage Clan of the Master Teacher Continent, its roots sure did run deep!

...

On the fifth day, Luo Ruoxin suddenly knocked on his door.

“Zhang Xuan, I heard that there’s quite a commotion outside. Are you interested in taking a walk with me?”

“Sure!” Zhang Xuan nodded without any hesitation.

Ever since he arrived in Qufu, he had been spending nearly all of his time cultivating. It was indeed starting to get a little boring and monotonous, so it would be good for him to head out to have a look!

Leaving the residence, he found that the city had become significantly more bustling over the past four days. He spotted not just the master teachers and experts of the Master Teacher Pavilion but the old ancestors and grand elders of the other occupations too.

Before he knew it, nearly all of the top experts of the Master Teacher Continent had already converged in Qufu.

In fact, these ‘top experts’ weren’t just limited to humans. Quite a number of Great Sage beasts had also arrived in Qufu over the past few days.

Despite the massive influx of experts into Qufu, the city still surprisingly remained in order. He did not see any battles or duels happening around. The city remained as peaceful and harmonious as it had always been.

Seeing through Zhang Xuan’s doubts, Luo Ruoxin explained with a smile, “This is the sacred land of the master teachers; no one would dare cause any trouble here. Even if a conflict broke out, they would choose to settle it outside.”

Qufu was not just the place where the Temple of Confucius was located, it was also the ancestral land of the Master Teacher Pavilion. There was no one who would be so foolish

as to cause trouble here and become the public enemy of everyone else.

Strolling down the busy streets, Zhang Xuan could not help but notice how crowded Qufu had become. He glanced at Luo Ruoxin and asked, “Say, do you think that there are any Otherworldly Demons here?”

It was a known fact that Otherworldly Demon Emperors had the ability to disguise themselves as master teachers, and even 9-star master teachers would not be able to distinguish them.

Since both humans and beasts had already made their way to Qufu, the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe would not allow this opportunity to slip through their fingers. They would surely try to hide amid the crowd and sneak into the Temple of Confucius when the time came.

“I suppose so,” Luo Ruoxin replied with a nod. She glanced at Zhang Xuan and said, “After the Temple of Confucius opens up, we’ll all be teleported to a random location within. This means that we won’t be able to remain together... You must remember to keep your guard up at all times.”

“Teleported to a random location within?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

“Un. Wu Chen has been gathering intelligence on the Temple of Confucius. According to what he has found so far, as soon as the Temple of Confucius opens, we will be enveloped by a formation that will randomly teleport us into the Temple of Confucius. There’s no knowing where you will appear... Without a doubt, there are Otherworldly Demons teleporting along with us as well, so you mustn’t let your guard down,” Luo Ruoxin said.

“Un, I won’t!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

If he was teleported into a dire situation, he would just have to rely on his disguising ability.

Plus, his threat was not just limited to the Otherworldly Demons. It was likely that the Hundred Schools of Philosophers bore some hostility toward him as well, and they might even intend him harm.

He was not as helpless as he was before, but he would still have trouble dealing with a large group of people simultaneously. In the end, one could never be too careful. He did not want to lose his life before he could even make his way into the Temple of Confucius.

Luo Ruoxin hesitated for a moment before taking off the pendant around her neck and passing it over to Zhang Xuan. “This pendant was given to me by my father. It should be able to save you if you meet any danger.”

The exterior of the pendant resembled crystal, but its interior was the color of fresh blood. It was an exquisite artifact.

“This...” Zhang Xuan looked at the pendant that Luo Ruoxin was passing to him with a doubtful expression.

He knew that there would be dangers lurking within the Temple of Confucius, but he did possess fighting prowess comparable to Sempiternal realm consummation experts. Even if someone intended him harm, he had the strength to protect himself.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was not accepting her pendant, Luo Ruoxin insisted determinedly, “Take it. We don’t know what lies within the Temple of Confucius, so the only thing that we can do is take as many precautions as possible. I know that you aren’t too worried about your safety, but if an Otherworldly Demon successfully achieves a breakthrough to Ancient Sage inside and your identity is exposed to them by some chance, you will be in great danger...”

The identity that she was referring to was, of course, Celestial Master Teacher.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan fell silent.

There was some sense to what Luo Ruoxin was saying.

Ancient Sages were forbidden from entering the depths of the Temple of Confucius, and no one had successfully made a breakthrough to Ancient Sage for the past ten thousand years. However, there was a great possibility that there might be an artifact within the Temple of Confucius that would allow one to take the final step forward.

If that artifact fell into the hands of the Otherworldly Demons, it could really end badly. It would still be fine if the Otherworldly Demons were oblivious to Zhang Xuan's identity as a Celestial Master Teacher, but if they somehow learned of the matter, there was no doubt that Zhang Xuan would be their priority target.

With Zhang Xuan's capability, he could still fend off Sempiternal realm cultivators without any trouble, but when faced with an Ancient Sage, the only option that he had was to flee as far as he could.

The disparity in their strength was simply too great to even attempt to fight back.

Knowing that Luo Ruoxin was worried about him, Zhang Xuan took the pendant before asking anxiously, "But if I take your pendant, what about you?"

If the pendant truly had the ability to protect him, was it really fine for him to take it? Would Luo Ruoxin not be in danger if so?

"You don't have to worry about me. Even if I encounter an opponent I can't defeat, I am still able to escape," Luo Ruoxin reassured. Not wanting to linger too long on this topic, Luo Ruoxin remarked, "I saw Luo Qiqi earlier."

"Qiqi?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback. "Is she here too?"

He had not seen Luo Qiqi ever since they separated at the Luo Clan. If Luo Ruoxin had seen her around, could she be there for the Temple of Confucius as well?

Thinking about it, it did make sense. As the owner of the Dimension Silencer, Luo Qiqi boasted strength comparable to Sempiternal realm cultivators. Considering how huge a matter the opening of the Temple of Confucius was, it was reasonable for her to show up in the vicinity.

"Yeah. She's... a good person," Luo Ruoxin said in a daze.

"Ruoxin, are you fine?" Hearing the abrupt remark made by Luo Ruoxin, Zhang Xuan frowned.



“It’s nothing. I just can’t help thinking that once we separate from one another after the opening of Temple of Confucius, we might never meet one another again,” Luo Ruoxin said.

She would usually have a lofty and nonchalant look on her face, but at that moment, a hint of worry and reluctance could be seen on her countenance.

Seeing that Luo Ruoxin was worrying over this matter, Zhang Xuan attempted to console her. “Don’t worry. We’ll surely survive the dangers in the Temple of Confucius and reunite with one another!”

Ever since he first met her, she seemed to have been able to remain calm no matter what happened. It was as if there was nothing in this world that could faze her, or perhaps, she was simply a little detached from the world. Yet, she seemed to be particularly emotional that day.

It was true that he would face many enemies in the Temple of Confucius, and the random teleportation only introduced further unpredictability to the expedition. There was no doubt that the expedition would be fraught with dangers, but he would not go down without a fight.

As for Luo Ruoxin... even with his current eye of discernment, he was still unable to see through the depths of her strength. From this, it was evident that her strength was far more terrifying than his.

Given so, what did they have to fear?

“I guess so. Let’s not talk about this anymore!” Luo Ruoxin replied with a light smile. She stretched out her hand and asked, “Where is the Prime Amulet? Can you let me take a look at it?”

“It’s here!” With a flick of his wrist, Zhang Xuan took out Little Amulet and passed it over.

This was an artifact that they had acquired through their partnership. Putting aside the fact that she only wanted to have a look at it, even if she wanted the Prime Amulet, he would have given it to her without any hesitation.

# 1699 Entering the Outskirts of Temple of Confucius

Taking the Prime Amulet, Luo Ruoxin stroked it lightly with her fingers. A moment later, she passed it back. “Here you go!”

“Why don’t you just take it? I can wait for you at the entrance of the Temple of Confucius, and the two of us can enter together!” Zhang Xuan suggested with a smile.

He had no intention of leaving Luo Ruoxin behind in the Temple of Confucius, and he trusted Luo Ruoxin as well. Thus, it did not matter to him who was in possession of Little Amulet. Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

“There’s no need for it. It’ll be good to leave it with you. I just wanted to take a look at it...” Luo Ruoxin shook her head as she passed the pendant back.

“Alright then... It would be great if we could use the Communication Jade Token after entering the Temple of Confucius, but if we are unable to contact one another, let’s meet at the entrance of the Prime Hall. I’ll be waiting for you there!” Zhang Xuan said.

“Alright.” Luo Ruoxin nodded with a light smile.

Strolling through the bustling crowd while making some idle conversation, Zhang Xuan could not help but remember the day that he confessed at Firesource City. It felt as if the entire world had become insignificant as long as she was by his side. It was a feeling of peace that he had never known to be possible.

He did not know how she felt about him, but she gave him a striking sense of familiarity. He knew that it was irrational to think of it in such a manner, but it felt like their fates were tightly interweaved together. Being beside her felt like the

most natural thing to him, such that he could no longer fathom a world without her.

The time spent with loved ones always flew by swiftly. Unknowingly, a day passed.

They swiftly returned to their accommodations.

Zhang Xuan was just about to bid Luo Ruoxin farewell when the ground suddenly started to tremble. Tremendous pressure abruptly descended upon Qufu, and the ancient buildings that made up the city swiftly succumbed to the pressure and collapsed one after another.

“What’s going on?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

This was the city that Kong shi had resided in during his lifetime, so it was bound to be a place of great fortune. Even the Sanctum of Sages had never suffered an earthquake before, so why would Qufu suddenly suffer such intense tremors?

Luo Ruoxin turned her gaze upward as she said grimly, “The Temple of Confucius is opening.”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan swiftly looked up into the sky as well. The second sun in the sky began to flicker non-stop, signaling that something was going to happen very soon.

Following which, rays of myriad colors descended upon Qufu, creating passageways that linked the two worlds together. As more and more rays fell upon the world, the pressure on the ground seemed to grow stronger and stronger.

“This is bad...”

Sensing danger from the intensifying pressure, the cultivators who had yet to reach Great Sage hurriedly took out protective artifacts to shield themselves.

Even Zhang Xuan felt goosebumps rising all over his body from the sheer pressure, and he quickly drove his zhenqi to ward off the force crushing down on him.

Kacha! Kacha! Kacha!

Cracks began appearing on the ground. The spiritual energy in the surroundings swiftly formed a massive tornado that swept

everything toward the sky.

Amid the roaring hubbub around him, Zhang Xuan felt a warmth sensation on his hand—Luo Ruoxin.

There was a look on her face that Zhang Xuan had never seen before.

“Zhang Xuan, if I have hidden some things from you... will you hate me?”

Unable to comprehend why Luo Ruoxin would suddenly ask such a question at this point in time, Zhang Xuan replied, “I won’t. I know that you have your own concerns for keeping secrets from me, and I understand that. I’ll wait for the day that you are willing to speak...”

“Then, what if I...”

In the midst of Luo Ruoxin’s words, a deafening rumble suddenly echoed from the sky. Following which, the entire Qufu was devoured by a brilliant white light.

“Ruoxin!”

The sight before Zhang Xuan blurred as he felt the warmth in his hand vanishing. He saw the world spinning around him before he blacked out altogether.

...

When Zhang Xuan opened his eyes once more, he was already in the midst of a vast mountain range. He was completely surrounded by tall grass that seemed to stretch all the way to the horizon.

“Ruoxin!”

Zhang Xuan quickly got up and searched his surroundings frantically. However, there was not a single person in sight.

Although Zhang Xuan was stunned for a moment, realization soon struck him.

It seems like the Temple of Confucius has opened, and we have all been randomly teleported in...

It was just a moment ago that he had still been in the Zhang Clan's residence in Qufu, but in the blink of an eye, he was already in the midst of a mountain range. At the time, the young lady whose hand was locked together with his had vanished as well. It was apparent that he had been teleported away by some formidable force.

Without any doubt, it was clearly the doing of the Temple of Confucius.

Everyone that had been in Qufu should have been teleported to a random location in the Temple of Confucius.

Knowing that they had just been teleported to different locations, Zhang Xuan's heart finally calmed down. He released his Spiritual Perception to sense the surroundings around him, and he could not help but nod.

The 'teacher's milieu' in here is much more concentrated than in Qufu...

It was no wonder everyone wanted to come to the Temple of Confucius in search of their 'fortuitous encounter'. Putting everything aside, just the 'teacher's milieu' there was much more concentrated than in Qufu. A master teacher who cultivated there would find their Soul Depth growing at an astounding pace.

The spiritual energy in here is much denser too. I have never seen a blessed land of such quality before!

It was one thing for the 'teacher's milieu' to be much more concentrated in Qufu, but even the spiritual energy was so dense that it almost felt tangible to the touch! Even without utilizing a pinnacle spirit stone, a cultivator would be able to advance their cultivation swiftly there!

Knowing that he was in a different environment, Zhang Xuan quickly checked his physical condition, and after confirming that his fighting prowess was no lower in the Temple of Confucius, he heaved a sigh of relief.

Following which, he flicked his hand and took out his Communication Jade Token.

He attempted to activate it, but to his disappointment, he was not able to contact anyone at all.

Just as he had guessed, it was impossible to use Communication Jade Tokens in the Temple of Confucius. It felt like there was some kind of barrier around the area that prevented remote communication.

Next, he whipped out his Dragonbone Divine Spear and pierced the space before him.

The space wavered a little, but it did not tear open to form a dimension rift.

It seems like I am unable to do spatial leaps in here.

If he could not open a dimension rift, he would be unable to construct spatial passageways and leap from one area to another.

It doesn't seem like I can perform Soul Traverse either... Zhang Xuan sighed deeply. This means that Teleportation Formations won't work in here either!

To his amazement, the space in the Temple of Confucius was actually even more resilient than that of the Master Teacher Continent! Despite the surge in his cultivation, he was still unable to tear the space open.

Let me try flying...

Leaping into the air, Zhang Xuan attempted to head as high as possible in an attempt to get a bird's eye view over the entire place. However, the higher he went, the greater the pressure weighing down on him seemed to become. It was as if someone was strapping more and more weights on him.

Driving his zhenqi furiously, he barely reached the top of a tree before succumbing to the pressure.

Hu!

He fell back down to the ground, producing a massive pit below him.

As Zhang Xuan patted off the dust from his body, the astonishment on his face could not be concealed.

The space in the ancient domain was clearly far more compact than the space in the Master Teacher Continent, thus making flight exceptionally difficult. Even with his prowess, he could only reach the top of a tree before plummeting to the ground. It was likely that most other cultivators would fare worse than him.

He had been planning to quickly scout the area and ascertain the location of the Subordinate Halls and Prime Hall. However, from the looks of it, it seemed like Kong shi had already taken precautions to ensure that his trial would not be that easy.

Unwilling to give up, Zhang Xuan scanned the surroundings with his Eye of Insight.

Since there existed ‘teacher’s milieu’ in the air, it was likely that the Prime Hall was located in the area where the ‘teacher’s milieu’ was the most concentrated!

As such, as long as he followed the concentration gradient of the teacher’s milieu, he should be able to reach the center very swiftly.

But very soon, after taking a sweeping gaze across the area, his face turned livid.

It was true that ‘teacher’s milieu’ was omnipresent in the area, but to his astonishment... there was no concentration gradient at all! The concentration of teacher’s milieu was equal throughout.

To put it in other words, he could not make use of the concentration gradient to find the Subordinate Halls and Prime Hall!

Humph! Even if Kong shi thinks that he can stop me with just this much... I still have the Library of Heaven’s Path to fall back on! Zhang Xuan harrumphed coldly as he took out a book.

If it had been any other cultivator, they would have given up at this point and been forced to roam aimlessly around the area until they found a feasible path forward. However, that was not the case for Zhang Xuan. He still had a final trump card

that he could use—the Library of Heaven’s Path! Back then, when he was in Ancient Sage Ran Qiu’s ancient domain, he had been able to use the Library of Heaven’s Path to find the location of the Dragonbone Divine Spear without any trouble. He would surely be able to do so this time around too!



# 1700 Goldface Skywolf

Whipping out a brush, Zhang Xuan quickly drew out his surroundings in the air and wrote out the words ‘This is where the Prime Hall lies’ in the eight directions.

Then, he tapped on the painting with his finger.

Weng!

He quickly checked the Library of Heaven’s Path, but no book had been compiled.

“...” Zhang Xuan’s face darkened.

No book had been compiled. In other words, the Library of Heaven’s Path would be ineffective in helping him find the location of the Prime Hall!

This was the first time that he had encountered such a situation.

The Temple of Confucius is hidden in a folded space, and over the past tens of thousands of years, there hasn’t been a single seer who has been able to divine its location. Most likely, Kong shi has used some kind of means to conceal it from view!

There were countless experts among mankind and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe alike. The Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, which Kong shi had left behind, was an artifact desired by countless people, but its whereabouts remained a mystery even after the passing of tens of thousands of years. Clearly, some kind of anti-divination technique had been cast over it to conceal it from the sights of the heavens.

As such, it was inevitable that the Library of Heaven’s Path was unable to divine its whereabouts.

The extent of the capabilities of the Library of Heaven’s Path was limited by the scope of the heavens. Where the heavens were unable to reach, the Library of Heaven’s Path would be rendered powerless, too.

Clearly, the Temple of Confucius was such an existence.

With a tap of his finger, Zhang Xuan took out the Prime Amulet and asked, “Little Amulet, where do I have to go to reach the Prime Hall?”

Since his other idea did not work, he could at least count on the Prime Hall!

The Prime Hall flew into the air and wiggled its body a little before replying, “I can only sense the Prime Hall when we are within twenty li of the Temple of Confucius. From where we are now... I’m not too sure...”

It was able to sense the location of the Temple of Confucius, but there was a limit to its range of detection. If it was too far away from the destination, it would not be able to sense its presence.

“Alright then. If you notice anything, send me a telepathic message right away...” Seeing that even his last idea was not working, Zhang Xuan sighed helplessly.

As someone who wielded great powers in the Master Teacher Continent, he did not think that he would end up being so helpless in this folded space.

“Noted! However, if you don’t choose your direction wisely in the Temple of Confucius, you could end up straying off path,” the Prime Amulet advised.

“Indeed. I have to pay careful attention to where I head to. I can’t afford to act recklessly in here...” Zhang Xuan nodded contemplatively. A moment later, his eyes lit up as he exclaimed, “Right!”

“Do you have an idea in mind?” the Prime Amulet asked.

“The Dragonbone Divine Spear!” Zhang Xuan chuckled softly as he whipped out the Dragonbone Divine Spear once more.

“Is it able to discern directions in here?” The Prime Amulet felt like it had just taken a heavy blow. “Are you certain that it’ll be able to find the Temple of Confucius when even I am unable to do so?”

It was an artifact created for the sole purpose of finding the Temple of Confucius! If it was unable to find the Temple of Confucius, no one else should be able to! What was the point of taking out the Dragonbone Divine Spear at this point in time?

In the next moment, the Prime Amulet saw Zhang Xuan flicking his wrist, and the Dragonbone Divine Spear began spinning furiously in the air.

It took a while before it came to a halt. Pointing in the direction that the Dragonbone Divine Spear was facing, Zhang Xuan nodded. “Un, let’s head that way then!”

After which, he began making his way over with a confident look on his face.

“...” The Prime Amulet.

“...” The Dragonbone Divine Spear.

They had both been wondering what kind of ingenious method their master was going to resort to, but who could have expected him to simply bet everything on dumb luck?

You are here to find the Temple of Confucius, not to spin the Wheel of Fortune!

Ignoring the stifled duo, Zhang Xuan returned the Prime Amulet to his storage ring and wrapped the Dragonbone Divine Spear back around his waist before marching forward with widened strides.

Since he had no clue where he should be heading, he might as well just start walking around and explore the area.

The folded space was rich with spiritual energy, so Zhang Xuan did not feel any fatigue advancing forward. Soon enough, he arrived before a stream. Taking a closer look, Zhang Xuan could not help but exclaim in awe.

What was flowing in the stream was not water but spirit essence!

In other words, the spiritual energy in the air was so concentrated that it could easily condense into water and form a stream!

The saint beasts on the Cloudmist Ridge had once gone on a rampage over their disappeared spirit essence! He did not think that it would be so readily available in here.

“Collect!”

Even though spirit essence of such a tier was no longer useful to Zhang Xuan, his spendthrift nature still kicked. He could not bring himself to leave such good stuff lying around, so he collected it all into the Myriad Anthive Nest, making sure not to waste even a single droplet.

Traversing across what used to be a stream, he marched on ahead and found many medicinal herbs. Even the youngest of these herbs was at least at a thousand years old. The oldest one that he found was tens of thousands of years old. Even from afar, he could already smell the deep fragrance of the mature medicinal herbs.

It's truly a world filled with treasures... Zhang Xuan thought as he excitedly picked a dozen stalks.

The Temple of Confucius sure was an amazing place. It was as if treasures were littered everywhere!

It was no wonder all of the experts of the Master Teacher Continent wanted to enter it. Dense spiritual energy, high concentration of 'teacher's milieu', and the readily available treasures... these were the ingredients required for one's cultivation to advance swiftly. With them, a cultivator would be able to avoid struggling so desperately outside

Ding ding ding!

In the midst of his exploration, Zhang Xuan suddenly heard the clanging of metal in the distance. Without any hesitation, he dashed in that direction.

Before arriving at the source of the metallic clanging, he had already altered his appearance.

As the head of the Three Premier Clans and the Sanctum of Sages, there was probably no one who did not know of him by now. Furthermore, as he had once been a wanted fugitive of the Master Teacher Pavilion, it was not difficult for one to

learn of his appearance. Considering how sensitive his identity was, it would be best for him to take caution.

Circling around a hill, Zhang Xuan finally arrived at the source of the metallic clanging. Five men and two women were currently surrounding a beast, battling it.

It was a Goldface Skywolf, blessed with the strength of an Aureate Body realm expert at birth. Once mature, it would gain strength comparable to an Intuitive Impulse realm expert.

Of its seven opponents, three were in the Aureate Body realm whereas the remaining four were in the Intuitive Impulse realm. They were not dressed in master teacher robes, and there was no emblem on their master teacher clothes either. It was hard to tell their allegiance.

Under the combined assault of the seven experts, the Goldface Skywolf was forced to retreat time and time again. It was in a disadvantageous position, being severely outnumbered.

Normally, beasts would wield far greater fighting prowess than cultivators of the same cultivation realm. However, knowing that the Temple of Confucius would be fraught with dangers, the cultivators who had come over had brought many treasures along. They tossed all of their artifacts over as if they did not cost money at all. At the same time, it seemed like the Goldface Skywolf was lacking in battle experience.

As a result, it took only a few instants for the Goldface Skywolf to be severely wounded.

Seeing that the Goldface Skywolf was finally coming to its limits, a young man amid the crowd bellowed, "Follow my command. We'll launch an attack simultaneously!"

"Very well!"

The eyes of the other members of the group lit up. The next moment, all sorts of weapons darted toward the Goldface Skywolf.

Under the relentless assault of the cultivators, the Goldface Skywolf finally succumbed and dropped dead on the ground.

"We have managed to kill it!"

The group collectively heaved a sigh of relief. They were just about to celebrate when they heard footsteps, and they hurriedly raised their weapons once more.

“Who are you?” a member of the group asked warily.

“I’m just passing by the area,” Zhang Xuan replied.

“Passing by?”“Find authorized novels in Webnovel , faster updates, better experience , Please click for visiting.

The members of the group eyed Zhang Xuan suspiciously, seemingly fearing that he would steal the Goldface Skywolf that they had just killed.

Seeing their expressions, Zhang Xuan swiftly understood what was going on and waved his hand. “I am uninterested in that beast. You don’t have to be so wary of me!”

Considering how he had appeared a moment after they slew the Goldface Skywolf, it was no wonder they would be doubtful of his intentions.

“Humph! I doubt you would dare anyway...”

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was only at the Aureate Body realm, the crowd heaved a sigh of relief. The young man who had issued the order earlier turned his gaze back to the carcass of the Goldface Skywolf. With a flick of his wrist, he took out a sharp dagger and began dismantling the carcass.

It did not take long for him to retrieve the Skywolf’s fangs and claws.

“I played the greatest role in killing this fellow over here, so I believe none of you will have any objections to me taking the fangs and claws, right? Feel free to divide whatever’s left among the rest of you!” the young man said.