

## 2201 Baiye Qinghong

It was no wonder he had only seen four God King Breakthrough Pills when he estimated there to be at least ten. It turned out that the bulk of the medicinal energy had gone into the Pill King!

Not only so, the spirit of the Pill King was more developed. It possessed wisdom that was on par with that of a human.

That was why it had chosen to hide inside the cauldron while the other pills attempted to escape, choosing to bide its time for the ideal opportunity to run. Then, just as Zhang Xuan let his guard down, it had immediately dashed out.

Its patience and ability to gauge the right timing were indeed remarkable.

If Zhang Xuan allowed the Pill King to escape, he would be missing out on the true treasure.

“Do you think that I’ll let you escape?” Zhang Xuan scoffed as he channeled his zhenqi into his feet and leaped powerfully into the air.

Boom!

He swiftly flitted in the direction of the Pill King, leaving behind ripples in the air.

Having driven the Red Dust Heaven Ascending Steps to its limits, he was able to fly at a speed even faster than that of the pill!

“A high-tier Celestial God... is actually flying?” Fu Jiangchen widened his eyes in disbelief.

It was an unchanging law in the Firmament that only God Kings were capable of flight, but this...

It was one thing for the other party to be able to subdue those four pills with a single move, but to think that he would be able to fly at a speed that was not any slower than him...

How in the world was the other party doing this?

For a moment, Fu Jiangchen was really wondering if he was seeing things.

The escaping Pill King was also taken aback to see the high-tier Celestial God chasing after it so quickly. Seeing that the other party was going to catch up with it soon, it swiftly morphed into the appearance of a ferocious-looking young man and turned around to slap the other party.

It was a simple move, but it harnessed a terrifying amount of power.

In terms of strength, the Pill King had already reached a level comparable to God Kings.

“Humph!”

With an awful look on his face, Zhang Xuan halted his footsteps to dodge the attack before counterattacking with the sword in his hand.

He realized that even though he had rid his body of his Heaven’s Path zhenqi, his fighting prowess did not fall; instead, he was stronger than ever.

The only issue was that the amount of zhenqi he had was much lower than before, so he could not afford to use his zhenqi recklessly.

Thus, he had to end the battle as quickly as possible!

Furthermore, this was not just an issue of his zhenqi running out. More importantly, the escape of the Pill King had caused quite the commotion, such that he could feel dozens of people’s Spiritual Perception gazing over there in just a few short breaths. If he did not resolve this problem quickly, the situation might go out of control.

Only on demise will a silkworm run out of thread; only as ashes will the tears of a candle dry up!

Zhang Xuan executed the sword art he had comprehended from the Pathos of Heaven, and a thin thread shot forth from his sword and wrapped itself around the Pill King. As if the final spark of flame before a candle died out or the last yarn of

thread a silkworm produced, this thin thread carried a heavy sentimentality and tied the Pill King down, preventing it from escaping.

You...”

The Pill King was astonished.

Celestial Gods and God Kings should have been two beings of different levels of existence. It thought that it would be able to get rid of the young man easily by retaliating with its full strength, but who could have known that it would be bound even before it could finish its attack.

Were the high-tier Celestial Gods really this powerful?

“Collect!”

Knowing that he would not be able to keep this up for too long with the limitations of his zhenqi—the earlier flight at his full speed and the two sword arts that he had executed had really sapped a lot out of him—he quickly pulled the thread made out of sword qi toward him to capture the Pill King.

“Argh!”

Amid its cries of agony, the Pill King, from its form as a young man, slowly grew smaller and smaller until it was no more than a round pill. At the same time, the spirit that had bom within it had been vanquished as well.

Having finally subdued the Pill King, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief. Reaching out, he was just about to grab the Pill King when his body suddenly froze in place. Not only so, even his flow of zhenqi disobeyed his will and screeched to a halt.

“What’s happening?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in shock.

Following that, he saw a beautiful lady walking toward him a step at a time.

With her dainty hand, she picked up the Pill King lightly between her fingertips.

“Friend, this pill is a medicine that my Berylgrass Gazebo paid a heavy price to forge. Thank you for capturing it in my stead.

I am very grateful for your assistance,” the lady said with a smile.

“The Berylgrass Gazebo?” Zhang Xuan asked with narrowed eyes as he channeled his zhenqi to break the seal cast on him.

The Pill King was a medicine that could possibly aid one in making a breakthrough to the God King realm. There was no power in the Firmament that could resist such temptation.

As such, Zhang Xuan had been worried all this while that someone would attempt to steal the Pill King away from him, and it seemed like the worst-case scenario had happened.

This wench sure was greedy. She was there to steal his possession, yet she still wanted to claim the moral high ground and retain her reputation while doing so.

The Firmament was a lawless place. In the end, it was the one with the strongest fist that called the shots.

“Indeed,” the lady replied gracefully as she whipped out her jade token. “This is the insignia of our Berylgrass Gazebo. Given that you have done us a great favor, it’s only right for us to reward you accordingly. With this insignia, you will be able to choose any cultivation technique manual of your liking at our Berylgrass Gazebo!”

Then, with a flick of her wrist, she passed the jade token over to Zhang Xuan.

“Is this the story you have managed to come up with to steal my possession?” Zhang Xuan sneered as he sliced the jade token in two without any hesitation. “Do I look like a pushover to you?”

It was one thing for the other party to seal his movements and steal his pill, but to think that she would even dare claim that it was hers. Zhang Xuan had never seen such bullsh\*t before!

“Steal your possession? That is a pill that I paid a high price to forge. Anyone with the slightest common sense will be able to tell that this is beyond a mere high-tier Celestial God’s ability to forge!” The lady flung her sleeves back and sneered coldly. “Think before you speak!”

“It’s indeed beyond my ability to forge this pill, which is why I engaged Master Fu Jiangchen’s help. I provided him with the medicinal herbs and the forging technique, but the pill ended up escaping just as we completed it. You said that you are the one who forged it, so why don’t you tell us what medicinal herbs are used in it, and what the respective steps required are?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Fu Jiangchen?” The lady burst into laughter. “It seems like you do know quite a bit. Indeed, I was the one who instructed him to forge the pill on my behalf, and I provided him with the medicinal herbs in order to do so. Little boy, it isn’t right for you to claim possession of something that isn’t yours. But sure, I’ll go with you for the sake of fairness then. Let’s call Fu Jiangchen over here and have him testify who the true owner of the pill is!”

After saying those words, the lady turned toward a manor and bellowed, “Fu Jiangchen, hurry up and get over here!”

Her words were swiftly transmitted over to Fu Jiangchen through her zhenqi.

Meanwhile, Zhang Xuan quickly reassessed his situation solemnly.

There was no one else in the area, but he could feel dozens of people’s Spiritual Perception observing the happenings intently. The reason the lady had claimed that the pill was hers right from the start was to claim the moral high ground. This way, no one would be able to legitimately compete for the Pill King with her.

Otherwise, they would risk sullyng their reputation.

Based on this, it could be seen that the lady before him had quite the standing in Linglong Royal City.

“You sure are brazen enough to not feel the slightest bit of embarrassment even after snatching your pill. Tell me, who are you?” Zhang Xuan harrumphed.

“You know of the Berylgrass Gazebo, but you don’t know who I am?” The lady chuckled softly. “I am Baiye Qinghong!”

“Baiye Qinghong?” Zhang Xuan’s face immediately darkened.  
“A Conferred God King?”

# 2202 Judgemen

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When he arrived at Linglong Royal City, he had inquired about the general political situation within Royal City from the guards at the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation. From them, he had learned that other than Fairy Linglong, the two people that he should look out for were Conferred God King Shangguan Yunwan and Conferred God King Baiye Qinghong.

Those two of them could be considered equals, and each dominated over half of Royal City.

As one of the few ravishing female Conferred God Kings of the Firmament, she had many loyal and powerful followers pursuing her.

Zhang Xuan had thought that the shameless person who was trying to snatch his pill would just be a God King at the very most, but to think that it was a Conferred God King!

On second thought, however, it was not all that surprising for a Conferred God King to want to claim the Pill King for herself. Each God King Breakthrough Pill could potentially create a God King, and the Pill King's effectiveness was far higher than that. If one used it sparingly, it could at least give rise to four additional God Kings!

Even Conferred God Kings would not be able to hold back their greed when there were great profits at stake!

Seeing that the other party finally knew of her identity, Baiye Qinghong placed her hands behind her back, putting on airs reminiscent of a queen. Glancing downward, she saw a weakened Fu Jiangchen flying over slowly.

He had expended all his energy earlier, but he was still able to swiftly recover a bit of his energy by consuming the pills he had with him.

“Fu Jiangchen pays respect to Conferred God King Baiye!”

Fu Jiangchen clasped his fist and bowed deeply, not daring to show the slightest breach in his etiquette.

Baiye Qinghong nodded slightly in response.

“The reason I called you here is so that you can clarify to everyone who the owner of this pill is. Am I the one who provided you with the medicinal herbs and pill formula to forge this pill?”

“This...” Fu Jiangchen’s face froze upon hearing those words. He anxiously glanced over at Zhang Xuan before biting his lips hesitantly, “Yes!”

“Apothecary Fu, you...”

Zhang Xuan did not think that Fu Jiangchen would betray him at this crucial moment. The way he addressed Fu Jiangchen also change back from Brother Fu to Apothecary Fu.

“Apothecary Zhang, it’s indeed true that Conferred God King Baiye is the one who instructed me to forge this pill. It’ll be best for you to step down and not cause a ruckus...”

“I’m causing a ruckus?” Trembling with rage, Zhang Xuan burst into laughter instead. Then, he shook his head. “It seems like the Sky of Linglong is ganging up against me for being an outsider.”

He had taken the Grass of God King there and paid a heavy price in order to have the pill successfully forged. Yet, they were now claiming otherwise?

It seemed like they were really taking advantage of his weakness in order to distort the truth to their advantage!

“Audacious! Conferred God King Baiye has magnanimously turned a blind eye to your insolence because you have accrued some merit capturing the pill, but instead of feeling grateful toward her, you continue to spout such brazen words. Are you asking to be killed?” Fu Jiangchen bellowed authoritatively.

Those words immediately caused Zhang Xuan’s rage to hit the roof, and right after, he heard Fu Jiangchen’s telepathic voice in his head.



“Brother Zhang, Conferred God King Baiye is too used to having her way. Even if I side with you, she’ll still likely try to make a move on you after you have left Linglong Royal City. If you really wish to go ahead with it, I can report the matter to Conferred God King Shangguan to have her judge this matter on our behalf, but ultimately, those two Conferred God Kings are equal in strength. If Conferred God King Baiye insists on having her way, there’s nothing we can do! I think it would be best for you to concede defeat...”

You are saying that I should just let her do as she pleases?”  
Zhang Xuan sneered.

“There’s no way around it! That’s a Conferred God King; we don’t stand a chance! Even after she takes the Pill King, you still have the other four pills to use. If this goes on, I fear that she might resort to violence. By then, not only will you be walking out of here empty-handed, your life will be in danger!” Fu Jiangchen exclaimed worriedly.

There was a common saying that a normal citizen could never defeat an official in power. Baiye Qinghong was one of the rulers of Linglong Royal City, as well as a Conferred God King who boasted strength just beneath that of a God Monarch.

Knowing that there was no point arguing with Fu Jiangchen over this matter, Zhang Xuan turned his gaze to Baiye Qinghong and asked with his chin tilted upward, “What if I refuse?”

As someone with his foundation based in the Sky of Linglong, Fu Jiangchen had far too many lives he had to consider before going against a Conferred God King, but that was not the case for Zhang Xuan!

It was true that the lady before him was ravishing, but what was the point of having such a beautiful appearance if what lay beneath was nothing more than a venomous heart?

He had hoped to keep a low profile so as to not cause too huge of a commotion, but this was one of the things that he simply could not tolerate. This was not the time to be thinking about remaining humble and low profile.

If he allowed it to happen this once, it would surely happen again and again.

It was time for him to let the others know that even though he, Zhang Xuan, had only arrived in the Firmament a month ago, he was not a person whom anyone could bully that easily!

“Conferred God King Baiye.” Having made up his mind, Zhang Xuan’s rage swiftly cooled down as he gazed at Baiye Qinghong with cold, rational eyes. “I’ll give you a chance. Declare the truth and concede your mistake.”

“Despite knowing Conferred God King Baiye’s identity, he still dares to make such a bold statement? Is he insane?”

“He must be out of his mind!”

Those who were keeping a lookout on the situation exclaimed in shock.

“I have been polite to you so far out of consideration that you are a guest in our Sky of Linglong and that you have helped me capture my pill. However, you seem to be testing my patience. Did you think that I dare not make a move on you?” Baiye Qinghong gazed down at Zhang Xuan chillingly.

An indomitable pressure burst forth from her, shrouding the entire Linglong Royal City. The sky darkened, and the air turned incredibly heavy.

This pressure was felt by everyone within Linglong Royal City, but this was even more so for Zhang Xuan, whom this pressure was directed toward. His breathing became ragged as a result of that, and his zhenqi seemed to have frozen in place.

If not for the God King Sword in his grasp warding away some of the pressure, he might have plummeted from the sky. This was a force that even real God Kings would not be able to withstand, let alone a high-tier Celestial God!

The powers of a Conferred God King were indeed frightening!

Zhang Xuan swiftly drove his Pathos of Heaven, and the pressure on him finally alleviated. He shook his head and remarked in pity, “I presented the opportunity to you, but you

don't know how to cherish it. There's nothing else I can do then."

Seeing how Zhang Xuan was still spouting such words when he was already standing right before death's gates, Baiye Qinghong harrumphed coldly. "Humph, the arrogance of a person who doesn't know his place!"

It had been far too long since the last time someone dared speak to her in such a manner.

She raised her hand to teach the young man before her a lesson, but before she could even move, her body suddenly stiffened in place.

An overwhelmingly powerful force had suddenly locked onto her, sealing her strength.

Shocked, she quickly raised her head, only to see a golden book floating quietly above her.

"What...is that?" Baiye Qinghong uttered.

The book that was floating above her actually left her with a feeling of deep trepidation. She felt as if a higher being had set its eyes on her, and she would not be able to retaliate or escape no matter what she tried.

It was as if her existence was being rejected by the heavens themselves.

"It's just a book," Zhang Xuan replied.

He did not want to resort to this, but he could not tolerate this anymore. He had given her a few chances to back down, and since she was not willing to turn back, there was no reason for him to show her mercy.

He knew that this move could very well offend Fairy Linglong, but he did not care that much anymore.

"You exploited your strength to oppress those weaker than you, and you display an absolute lack of regret and repentance in your actions. I can't even begin to imagine what evil you have committed over the course of your long life. Since there is no one else to pass judgement upon you, I shall be the one to do so," Zhang Xuan said with a grand wave of his arm.

Hong long!

With the sound reminiscent of a collapsing mountain, the Book of Heaven's Path descended from the sky. "N-no!"

Baiye Qinghong had thought that her opponent was just an ordinary high-tier Celestial God whom she could suppress with ease; never in her wildest dreams did she expect the other party to have such a powerful artifact with him.

She tried to gather her strength to stand against the golden page, but under the crushing weight of the book, her entire arm immediately fractured upon impact.

She could not even last a single breath.

## 2203 Intervention

“Ah! What the heck is this?” Baiye Qinghong exclaimed with a voice filled with fright.

It was known in the world that the only ones who could truly stop a Conferred God King were the God Monarchs. It was for this reason that Baiye Qinghong dared to act as she pleased without worrying about the consequences.

Yet, she had never expected the high-tier Celestial God she was confronting to have such a powerful artifact with him.

She felt as if the weight of the heavens was pressing down on her. It was a force that was comparable to the strength of a God Monarch. Even though she was a Conferred God King, she did not stand a chance against such a powerful force.

“I can’t die like this! Shatter... Shatter!”

Baiye Qinghong screamed with all her might as she furiously pumped her energy outward to stop the book above her. Ripples appeared in the sky as she forcefully drew in all the Anima of Yearning within the Sky of Linglong to protect herself.

In terms of individual prowess, a Conferred God King was not too different from an ordinary God King. The truth behind their strength lay in their ability to manipulate the Anima of Yearning within their conferred territory, turning it into their strength.

That effectively made them nigh invincible existences within their own conferred land.

But no matter how much energy Baiye Qinghong tapped into, she could not possibly hope to rival the strength of the heavens. The barrier that she had formed with the Anima of Yearning dissipated with little resistance.

Pu!

This had really left Baiye Qinghong utterly terrified.

In this instant, she was truly panicked.

She realized that if she did not do something to stop the book soon, there was a good chance that she would be reduced to minced meat within the next few breaths.

“S-spare my life! I have wronged you. I saw the concentrated energy within the pill and got greedy. I shouldn’t have tried to selfishly claim it! The truth is that I don’t know what pill it is and where it came from...”

Without any hesitation, Baiye Qinghong cast aside her reputation and admitted to her guilt. Between her reputation and her life, the latter was clearly the priority.

“Conferred God King Baiye tried to snatch the pill of another person?”

“She spoke with such gusto earlier that I really trusted her... To think that it was all an act!”

“I have viewed her as my goddess for the past few centuries, ever since I was just a twenty-year-old lad! I can’t believe that a proud Conferred God King would resort to something as despicable as this...”

“Hey, you also saw how much energy lies within that pill. Can you say for certain that you wouldn’t do the same as her if you were in her position?”

“T-this... I guess I can understand her rationale for doing that, but still...”

Those who were watching the situation with their Spiritual Perception were all taken aback.

Given how Baiye Qinghong had appeared right after the pill was captured, as well as how confident she had spoken all this while, everyone had swiftly been convinced that the pill was indeed hers. To think that she was the plunderer...

This admittance had effectively soiled her reputation as the goddess of countless men.

In the end, even Conferred God Kings were mortals. It was impossible for them to be completely devoid of greed.

“Your words mean nothing to me anymore. It’s always easy to express your regret after you realize the consequences of your own actions. I gave you a chance earlier, but you failed to grasp it. You have to take responsibility for your own decisions,” Zhang Xuan replied with utter nonchalance.

Even the worst villains in the world would unhesitatingly apologize if there was a sword pressed against their neck. What was the point of receiving such an apology?

Kacha!

With the previous upgrade of his Library of Heaven’s Path, the duration for which the golden page was able to remain materialized in the world increased yet again. Under Zhang Xuan’s will, it crashed down on Baiye Qinghong with greater force than before.

The latter swiftly succumbed under the pressure, and the bones all over her body began fracturing. Fresh blood spurted out of her every orifice, dyeing her body crimson.

As powerful as Conferred God Kings were, they had not surpassed the limitations of the heavens yet. Thus, they were powerless before it.

“Please hold on a moment!”

There was an abrupt pulse of wind, and another ravishing figure appeared in the area.

The other Conferred God King of the Sky of Linglong, Shangguan Yunwan!

“Baiye Qinghong is a Conferred God King chosen by Her Sovereignty herself. Your act of killing her will be a blatant defiance toward Her Sovereignty’s authority! You have already made your point clear, so I ask of you to spare her life,” Shangguan Yunwan said.

“Are you threatening me in the name of your God Monarch?” Zhang Xuan glanced at Shangguan Yunwan coldly.

The eyes of the Conferred God Kings and God Monarch of the Sky of Linglong sure were convenient. While Baiye Qinghong was attempting to plunder his pill, they were blind enough not

to see anything at all, allowing Baiye Qinghong to arrogantly act as she pleased.

Yet, when the tables were turned, they did not hesitate to ‘see’ and intervene.

What right did they have to ask him to compromise? Their strength?

Dream on!

“Even if I didn’t say anything, you should also know what I mean deep down. The honor of a God Monarch cannot be sullied,” Shangguan Yunwan said.

The God Monarchs were the strongest existences in the world. Baiye Qinghong was a person appointed by Fairy Linglong to serve as a Conferred God King to the Sky of Linglong, so the only one who could hold Baiye Qinghong responsible for her actions should be Fairy Linglong.

The act of killing Baiye Qinghong could be viewed as an attempt to challenge Fairy Linglong’s authority.

“I do understand what you are saying. However, to confer a person like that as her Conferred God King, it doesn’t seem like Fairy Linglong is a good judge of character. Leaving such a person to manage the Sky of Linglong is exactly what will sully Fairy Linglong’s honor. Allow me to rid the black sheep on her behalf then!” Zhang Xuan declared.

“N-no...”

Bam!

With a cry of agony, Baiye Qinghong was smashed into the ground. Her soul also dissipated in that instant, leaving nothing behind at all.

Y-you...” Shangguan Yunwan did not think that the other party would still kill Baiye Qinghong despite having brought out the God Monarch’s name. Her lips quivered in rage as she raised her hand to point at him. “How dare someone like you have the gall to...”

But before she could finish her sentence, the other party shot her a piercing glare and said frostily, “Shut your mouth if you



don't want to die!”

Shangguan Yunwan's body trembled in anger, but having witnessed the prowess of the book, she dared not say another word.

Even Baiye Qinghong, who was equal to her in terms of strength, had been killed in an instant. If she dared say another word, it was likely that she would meet the same fate.

The God Kings and the other experts who had been keeping an eye on the situation also went completely quiet. They could not stop their bodies from shuddering after witnessing what had just happened.

That was a Conferred God King, an existence whom no one could stop other than the God Monarchs. Yet, in the blink of an eye, such an existence was killed, and the other one had been berated in public yet dared not utter a word of complaint”

Just where in the world did this frightening fellow come from?

At the same time, Fu Jiangchen's body was also trembling fearfully.

He had always viewed Zhang Xuan in high regard, believing that he would achieve great things in the future... Yet, who could have known that he wielded the strength to kill a Conferred God King and scare his goddess into not daring to speak a word?

It was fortunate that he did not think of attempting anything while helping him forge his pill, or else he would have probably been reduced to a corpse by now.

“Wait a moment, isn't he... Zhang Xuan?”

“Zhang Xuan? Are you referring to the Zhang Xuan from the Sky of Drifting Specter who came up with the Breakthrough Pill, Apothecary Zhang?”

“Yes, that's him. I was at the Sky of Drifting Specter on the day of the launch, and I happened to see him. So, I remember him quite clearly...”

“Ah, that explains it. As someone who could come up with the Beauty Pill and Breakthrough Pill, I suppose it's no surprise if

he could come up with that frightening pill over there too.”

“If he’s able to kill a Conferred God King so easily, does that mean that he has a God Monarch backing him? I wonder who it is...”

There was someone amid the spectators who recognized Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan had caused too huge a commotion back in the Sky of Drifting Specter, such that his reputation had already spread all the way there.

After berating Shangguan Yunwan, Zhang Xuan collected the Pill King bound within his sword qi with a flick of his finger before stowing it into a jade container.

All of a sudden, he felt a whiff of danger coming from the center of Linglong Royal City.

The silent space suddenly began rumbling furiously as the energy within Linglong Royal City swiftly surged toward the center. A despairing pressure suddenly fell out of nowhere.

“Is Fairy Linglong going to make a move as well?” Zhang Xuan muttered with narrowed eyes.

# 2204 Reunion with an Old Friend!

He had witnessed the strength of the Conferred God Kings with his own eyes, and it had been shown that the golden page was more than enough to curb them.

However, the energy that was gathering in the sky was even stronger than that of a Conferred God King. Just like the massive sun in the sky, it felt like an imposing and otherworldly force that mortals could not hope to oppose.

There was only one possibility for such a situation to occur, and that was for a God Monarch to have gotten involved!

It seemed like the Sky of Linglong's Fairy Linglong was still quite involved in the affairs of her territory. She could not resist making a move after seeing her Conferred God King getting killed.

“Her Sovereignty?”

Fu Jiangchen and the others also noticed the anomaly, and their faces warped in horror. They quickly lowered themselves to the ground and bowed their heads downward, not daring to raise them in the least.

Shangguan Yunwan also kneeled to the ground, but her tensed face was swiftly replaced with relief.

Her heart would really be chilled if their God Monarch was able to remain nonchalant after watching a Conferred God King getting killed in their territory.

Hong long long!

The accumulated energy swiftly morphed into a massive face that loomed over the entire sky, as if the sun.

Instead of appearing in person, Fairy Linglong sent a sliver of her will down instead.

“I never thought that there would be someone so audacious as to kill my Conferred God King!”

Fairy Linglong’s voice pierced right into one’s soul, leaving one with a looming feeling of helplessness.

The massive head above was just a sliver of the God Monarch’s will, but it was already far beyond what a mere high-tier Celestial God like him could deal with.

“Receive your punishment!”

Zhang Xuan knew that there was a good chance he would be killed once Fairy Linglong made her move, so he quickly channeled the golden page, which had depleted half of its energy but had not vanished after subduing Baiye Qinghong, to strike the massive face in the sky instead.

The massive face in the sky harrumphed. “You overestimate yourself!”

Pop!

The golden page abruptly vanished into thin air, as if it had never even appeared.

The trump card that allowed him to defeat a Conferred God King so easily could not even withstand the mere will of a God Monarch!

Zhang Xuan’s body stiffened upon seeing such a sight.

He had thought that even if he could not wound Fairy Linglong, he would still be able to hinder her for a moment. Who could have known that he would not even be able to last a single breath?

He still had another golden page in his Library of Heaven’s Path, but given the circumstances, he did not dare use it recklessly.

“It’s the privilege of the young to act recklessly, but excessive arrogance is a huge taboo,” the massive face remarked as it gazed down on Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan’s heart skipped a beat.

He quickly raised his God King Sword and executed his strongest sword art.

Before his sword qi could get far, it had started unraveling by itself. The next instant, he felt a stabbing pain in his arm before the God King Sword was knocked out of his grasp. Following that, a powerful impact struck his chest, causing him to fall to the ground severely wounded.

Tzzz!

The golden threads in his muscles swiftly repaired his wounds.

“You are stronger than I thought...”

The massive face was a little surprised to see that Zhang Xuan was able to withstand its attack. It began to reassess him once more before speaking. “As a God Monarch, I shan’t take advantage of your weakness. I can spare your life, but punishment is inevitable. Despite only being a high-tier Celestial God, you arrogantly killed my Conferred God King in my own territory, not showing the slightest regard for me. If I condone such an atrocity, our Sky of Linglong will be looked down on by others!”

Then, with a powerful voice, it proclaimed, “I hereby declare that you will be stripped of your cultivation!”

Boom!

Zhang Xuan swiftly found a powerful force wrapping itself around him, and the zhenqi within his dantian began to dissipate as if someone was sapping it out of his body.

“This...”

Alarmed, Zhang Xuan tried to resist the force, but he found himself completely powerless.

It was as if Fairy Linglong’s words had turned into a law of the world, leaving him unable to even struggle.

Am I really going to meet my end here? No... So what if she’s a God Monarch? I won’t be killed that easily!

Gritting his teeth, Zhang Xuan was just about to bring out his final golden page to deal with the massive face in the sky

when the force around him suddenly scattered.

Raising his head, he saw a round orb spinning nonstop between him and the massive face. Along with its revolution, the space in the area seemed to freeze in place.

Even the powerful might of a God Monarch was unable to bypass the spatial manipulation of the orb.

“This is...” Zhang Xuan was stunned. “... the Dimension Silencer?”

The orb was none other than the hereditary treasure passed down within the Luo Clan and currently in Luo Qiqi’s possession... the Dimension Silencer!

Luo Xuanqing had told him that shortly after he departed from the Master Teacher Continent, Luo Qiqi had left as well. He had thought that the latter might have gone to the Azure, but despite having tasked the Six Sects with searching for her, there had been no news whatsoever.

As such, he had suspected that she might have gone to the Firmament. So, he had instructed the Six Sects to continue looking for her and take care of her well if they found her while he headed up to the Firmament

After he arrived at the Firmament, he had also heard some news that suggested that she might actually be there. That being said, he had never expected her to suddenly appear at this moment to protect him from the attack of a God Monarch!

The massive face in the sky was also taken aback by the sudden intervention.

With a displeased voice, it questioned, “Qiqi, what are you doing?”

Hu!

The Dimension Silencer quivered a little before morphing into the form of a beautiful lady. The beautiful lady clasped her fist and said, “He is the person whom I like. Your Sovereignty, I ask of you to show him mercy!”

She was none other than Luo Qiqi.

It had been several months since they had last met, but she was still the same as the quiet and gentle lady in his memories. When she turned around to look at him, he could see a hint of anticipation mixed together with many complex emotions.

Even though she appeared to be the same as before, her strength far surpassed what it used to be. Taking a closer look, she was actually at God King realm pinnacle, just like Fu Jiangchen!

Zhang Xuan had been perplexed for a long while about why the Anima of Yearning he had collected suddenly increased so much, but thinking about it now, her sentiments probably played a huge part in that.

A God King realm pinnacle Dimension Silencer...

In terms of fighting prowess, she was definitely far stronger than Fu Jiangchen. Perhaps she might even be able to rival Baiye Qinghong in a fight.

Seeing how the young lady unhesitatingly threw herself before a God Monarch for his sake, he could not help but clench his fists tightly

“My feelings for you... aren’t just at the level of like,” Luo Qiqi said with a slightly bittersweet smile.

Then, she turned to the massive face in the sky and clasped her fist. “He... is the person I like. Your Sovereignty, I ask of you to spare him!”

Seeing this, Zhang Xuan could not help but recall how the young lady had once turned against her own clan for his sake, and it felt like history was replaying itself yet again.

This was a sentimentality he had never really been able to understand. Not once had he given her any promise or any hope, but despite that, she was still willing to toss aside everything else for him every time.

It made him feel both grateful and guilty.

“The person whom you aren’t able to forget about... is him?” the massive face asked doubtfully. “But he doesn’t have any feelings for you. I can see from his eyes that there is already

someone else in his heart. Qiqi, is it worth it for you to turn against me for someone who doesn't even like you?"

Somehow, those words felt like advice from one friend to another.

"I don't know... But as long as he's safe..."

Standing right before a God Monarch, Luo Qiqi's face did not have much emotion on it, just her unyielding determination.

"... that would be enough for me!"



## 2205 Glomp

“Why do you do this to yourself?” The massive face sighed deeply.

Fairy Linglong had known all this while that there was a person that lived in the heart of this reserved young lady, but she had never thought that it would be this man.

Luo Qiqi raised her head and said, “Your Sovereignty, I believe that you saw everything that happened earlier. It was Conferred God King Baiye who was greedy, so she attempted to take advantage of him. Zhang Xuan only retaliated due to her oppression. If we trace the chain of responsibility, it’s unfair to pin the blame all on him. So, Your Sovereignty, I ask you to spare him and allow him to leave!”

She had never thought of herself as a headstrong person, but when it came to something involving Zhang Xuan, she was determined to never back down.

“That is no longer the problem here. Even if my subordinate has done wrong, I should be the one to punish her. If he, an outsider, gets away scot-free after willfully killing my subordinate, our Sky of Linglong will be made light of by others,” the massive face replied.

She knew that Zhang Xuan was not at fault, but the Sky of Linglong was a part of the Firmament, not a closed-off dimension isolated from the rest of the world. Reputation was important when it came to dealing with others, so she could not afford to compromise.

“If that’s the case, I am willing to take the punishment on his behalf,” Luo Qiqi said with gritted teeth.

Not expecting the young lady to go this far, the massive face in the sky frowned.

“Qiqi, back down. I’ll settle this matter myself,” Zhang Xuan said as he flew into the sky and stood in front of the young lady.

He was already indebted to the young lady after all she had done for him. How could he allow her to come to harm due to him again?

His strength might be lacking, but having taken in the bloodline of the little yellow chick, his body had become undying. It would not be that easy for Fairy Linglong to kill him in his current state.

Furthermore, he still had a golden page with him. It might not be enough to defend against the might of a real God Monarch, but it could surely stand its ground against a sliver of Fairy Linglong's will.

"I guess you still have some guts in you..." the massive face remarked quietly after seeing Zhang Xuan's actions. "To face your own trouble by yourself, you still have a sense of responsibility in you."

Had it been anyone else, even if it was a Conferred God King, they would not have dared say anything excessive before a God Monarch. Yet, the young man was willing to step forth under such circumstances to take responsibility for his own actions.

Perhaps that was why Luo Qiqi was so devoted to him.

"My initial verdict was to cripple your cultivation, but since Qiqi has pleaded on your behalf, I'll make an exception and show you leniency. This sliver of my will is formed through the spiritual energy within Linglong Royal City, and it harnesses roughly a hundredth of my prowess. If you can withstand an attack of full might from me, I'll let the matter today go. Otherwise, you can only blame yourself for your weakness!" the massive face said.

Your Sovereignty..." Luo Qiqi protested with a pale face.

While the massive face was formed out of spiritual energy, the fact remained that it harnessed the will of a God Monarch. Putting aside Zhang Xuan, even ordinary Conferred God Kings would not be able to withstand it!

"I have already made up my mind. If he can't even survive something of this extent, he's not worthy of your feelings!"

A powerful will descended from the sky, and Luo Qiqi immediately fell silent. She suddenly found herself unable to speak or move.

Most likely, Fairy Linglong had chosen to immobilize her temporarily to prevent her from meddling in this.

“Let’s get started then!”

Knowing that there was no avoiding this, Zhang Xuan began channeling his zhenqi to its limits in preparation of facing Fairy Linglong’s attack.

Even though the attack only harnessed a hundredth of her full strength, it was still a force not to be underestimated. Hu!

With a wave of his hand, the God King Sword immediately flew back into his grasp, and he swung it toward the face with great power.

Through this slash, Zhang Xuan executed the three sword arts of the Pathos of Heaven simultaneously, and he manipulated the sword qi to form a massive barrier right before him.

“Despite your young age, you have comprehended your own sword art. Not bad...” The massive face nodded.

The next moment, a powerful force crushed down from above, and the barrier that was created using the three sword arts began to break apart at a visible pace.

“What terrifying might...” Zhang Xuan murmured.

He would have expected no less from a God Monarch. Even a hundredth of Fairy Linglong’s strength was still way beyond what he could deal with.

“I can only put my life on the line then...”

Once his sword art caved in and the force struck down on him, he would surely sustain severe injuries.

To be frank, Zhang Xuan was still fairly confident that he would survive this ordeal. After his body had been tempered through the Lucid Lunar Lake, it was able to recover from even the most severe of injuries as long as he was given enough time.

However, the problem was that he had to rush back to the Sky of Spirit Origin to make it in time for the tournament to earn the qualification to enter Spirit God Palace.

If he missed it, the next opportunity would be a hundred years from now. So, he could not afford to be crippled!

Thus, he was trying his hardest to avoid sustaining any injuries at all.

Left with no choice, Zhang Xuan turned to his Library of Heaven's Path to summon his golden page.

But at this crucial moment, a voice suddenly sounded in his head. "Let me do it instead!"

Following that, Little Chick leaped out of his dantian and opened its beak wide.

Glomp!

With a huge breath, it swallowed the massive face in the sky, leaving a big bloated yellow chick reminiscent of an oversized balloon floating quietly in the air.

Zhang Xuan's cheeks twitched.

He knew that the little yellow chick was capable of swallowing artifacts and items that were far stronger than it, but that was a sliver of a God Monarch's will!

Is it really fine for you to swallow it just like that?

Shouldn't we at least spare her some face?

Zhang Xuan was far from being the only one taken aback by this sight. Everyone who witnessed the scene was as dumbstruck as he was.

That massive face could be considered a representation of Fairy Linglong herself, and a chick had actually swallowed it just like that.

Luo Qiqi also turned to look at Little Chick with a look of disbelief on her face.

If she had known that Zhang Xuan had such a powerful trump card, she would not have intervened at all.

Before everyone's shocked gaze, the massive yellow chick released a resounding burp before its body began contracting back to its original size.

While it was still contracting, it licked its lips with an expression that looked as if it was not fully satisfied yet.

Weng!

Shortly later, yet another massive face appeared in the sky. This time around, however, without ample spiritual energy to fuel it, the face looked a little blurred.

Nevertheless, the will that was harnessed within it still cast a heavy pressure on those standing before it.

You..."

Instead of flying into a rage, the massive face looked at Little Chick with an indescribable expression on its face.

"I am Zhang Xuan's tamed beast, Little Chick... If you want to make a move on my master, you have to get past me!" Little Chick stuck its chick wings on its waist and spoke proudly.

Tamed beast? Little Chick?"

The massive face twitched a little upon hearing those words. "Do you know your true identity?"

"Of course!" Little Chick replied proudly. "I am a legendary beast who once ruled over the lands... Supercock"

The massive face twitched yet again before looking at Zhang Xuan with an assessing gaze.

If Fairy Linglong had thought that the young man was just a talented cultivator who possessed some special means previously, she did not dare think that way anymore.

It was one thing for the young man to have comprehended a cultivation technique and sword arts that surpassed the heavens and possessed a book that could kill a Conferred God King...

But she never could have imagined that the young man would actually tame that person as his tamed beast, even brainwashing him into thinking that he was a cock!

Furthermore, that person even took pride in such an embarrassing name.

Was this really happening?

It really felt like everything in the Firmament was going haywire!

## 2206 An Edict from the Sky of Freedom

“Since you have managed to block a blow from me, I’ll consider this matter settled.”

As a God Monarch, Fairy Linglong could not afford to renege on her promise. No matter what kind of means the young man had used, it was a fact that he had managed to withstand her attack.

So, the massive face harrumphed. “You can leave now!”

“Thank you!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist as he heaved a sigh of relief.

While Little Chick was able to devour that massive face in the sky, they were still in a disadvantageous position given that they were in the Sky of Linglong. If Fairy Linglong decided to make a move personally, they would not stand a chance at all.

So, this was already the best outcome for him.

Zhang Xuan turned around to talk to Fu Jiangchen.

“Apothecary Fu, I am thankful that you helped me forge my pill. I helped you raise your cultivation, and I gave you some insights into pill forging during the process earlier. That should be enough to compensate you for your assistance.”

To be frank, he was still a little angry at how Fu Jiangchen had backstabbed him at a crucial moment earlier to help Baiye Qinghong. He understood that Fu Jiangchen was indeed in a difficult position considering the circumstances, but he could not simply treat it as if nothing had happened at all.

So, it was inevitable that their relationship would have to drift apart.

“I am grateful for your guidance, Apothecary Zhang.” Fu Jiangchen bowed deeply.

He had still treated Zhang Xuan as his junior earlier, but after witnessing how the latter was able to kill a Conferred God King easily and devour the will of a God Monarch, there was no way he would dare act in such a manner anymore.

Furthermore, he also felt deeply guilty about his earlier actions.

“Qiqi ...”

After addressing Fu Jiangchen, Zhang Xuan turned to the young lady behind him and called out to her with an awkward look on his face.

He was not sure how he should face her. She had done so much for him thus far, but he could not give her what she wanted the most.

Just as he was at a loss as to what to say, the young lady looked at him with clear eyes and asked, “Zhang shi, I... Would it be fine for me to continue following and learn pill forging from you?”

Hearing those words, a slight chuckle escaped from Zhang Xuan’s lips as he nodded. “Of course.”

As if the arrival of spring, a beautiful smile blossomed on Luo Qiqi’s lips. “That’s great.”

She then turned to the massive face in the sky and knelt down before saying, “Your Sovereignty, I am extremely grateful to you for saving me from the spatial turbulence and bestowing me with plenty of resources, allowing me to raise my cultivation swiftly. It’s due to your help that I was able to grow so quickly. I’ll never forget what you have done for me!”

Those words made the massive face in the sky frown.

Your Sovereignty, I once told you that once I received news on him, no matter what kind of danger lies ahead, I’d seek him and stay by his side. Now that he is right before me, I wish to leave together with him. I hope that you’ll grant me your blessing,” Luo Qiqi said as she kowtowed solemnly several times.



The massive face was silent for a moment before sighing deeply. “I already knew about it when I heard about the Breakthrough Pill and Beauty Pill. I didn’t tell you because I feared that you would leave right away, but it seems like what that will happen will eventually happen.”

Given the ruckus that Zhang Xuan had caused in the Sky of Drifting Specter, how could Fairy Linglong, as a God Monarch, possibly remain oblivious to it?

She had just worried that Luo Qiqi would leave right away after hearing the news, so she had chosen to intentionally keep the matter from her. Yet, shortly after that, the young man had gone there on his own and caused an even larger commotion than before.

Seriously, this young man sure was a troublemaker!

It was a mystery why someone as nice as Qiqi would fancy such a man...

“Forget it, go on and pursue your own happiness,” the massive face said. “I don’t believe that the person he likes can be even more outstanding than you!”

Fairy Linglong knew that the young lady whom she had saved from the spatial turbulence was the manifestation of the Dimension Silencer. Even in the Firmament, the Dimension Silencer could still be considered a top-tier treasure. That was also precisely why the young lady had been able to become a God King within such a short period of time.

With such talent, there was probably no one in the Firmament who could compete with her.

Fairy Linglong did not know whom Zhang Xuan liked, but she did not believe that it was possible for any man to resist the pursuit of a lady as fine as Luo Qiqi for too long.

Thank you, Your Sovereignty!” Luo Qiqi replied in delight before turning back to face Zhang Xuan.

After she heard of his departure from the Master Teacher Continent, she had immediately torn apart the dimension barrier to pursue him. However, she did not expect to make her way all the way up to the Firmament in one shot.

She had thought that it would take a very long time before they would be reunited, so this sudden meeting had come as a huge surprise to her too.

Zhang Xuan nodded at Qiqi before turning to the massive face in the sky to say, “Qiqi has been under Your Sovereignty’s care all this while, so it’s only right for me, as her teacher, to thank you and repay the favor.”

“Repay the favor? How do you intend to repay my favor? By killing my Conferred God King and devouring my will?” The massive face harrumphed.

As soon as Fairy Linglong heard those three words, ‘repay the favor’, from Zhang Xuan’s mouth, she felt a surge of anger rising from her chest.

You killed my Conferred God King shortly after arriving in my territory, and you even had your tamed beast devour my will”

While it was true that there was not much damage to her, it still caused her reputation to be sullied.

“Of course not.” Zhang Xuan chuckled awkwardly. “If I’m not mistaken, Your Sovereignty, you haven’t been able to sleep well, right?”

He had realized that he could not use the Library of Heaven’s Path to peer into the flaws of the God Monarch, but nevertheless, he was still able to discern some things from Fairy Linglong’s will.

Fairy Linglong was an extremely powerful God Monarch, wielding powers that placed her at the forefront of her peers. However, she suffered from a major issue, and that was a lack of sleep!

Typically speaking, those who had reached her level of cultivation did not need to sleep. Even if she did not rest for ten thousand years, her physical condition would not be fazed in the least.

That being said, most experts still slept as a form of relaxation for their body and mind.

As a person who had reached the peak of the world, there was no need for Fairy Linglong to cultivate desperately. Left without much of an aim in life, it became even more important for her to rest well to avoid getting too restless.

Those words made the massive face in the sky frown.

The young man's words were spot on. She was indeed suffering from insomnia, and no matter what she did, she was unable to fall asleep... but how did the other party know about this?

Not even Luo Qiqi was aware of this matter!

Your Sovereignty, please rest assured. I am an apothecary. While I don't have a solution for your affliction at the moment, I'm confident that I will be able to think of something in time. I hope that I can repay the grace you have showered upon Qiqi with this." Zhang Xuan clasped his fist.

His cultivation was still too weak, so it would be hard for him to deal with a problem that even Fairy Linglong herself was unable to solve. Nevertheless, as he raised his cultivation, he should be able to figure out a way to solve her affliction.

Til be waiting then..."

The massive face left behind those words before dissipating from the sky.

Heaving a sigh of relief, Zhang Xuan turned to Luo Qiqi and said, "Let's go."

Luo Qiqi turned to him and smiled before nodding quietly.

With that, the two of them began making their way outside the city.

In Linglong Royal City, within a massive palace floating in the middle of a sky, a lady gazed upon the departing figure of Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi with her hands behind her back.

If Zhang Xuan saw the face of this lady, he would be surprised to find that it was identical to that of the massive face that had appeared earlier.

She was Fairy Linglong of the Sky of Linglong!

“I wonder just what is so great about love that it drives people frenzied in pursuit of it...” Fairy Linglong muttered to herself.

“Qiqi, I can only hope that you won’t regret the decision you have made today. However, I doubt that that man is completely devoid of feelings for someone as outstanding as you. It’s pretty obvious who he should choose between you and that woman. Humph, if I find out who that woman is, I’ll surely teach her a lesson...”

Before Fairy Linglong could finish her words, the space around her suddenly began trembling as a golden board materialized out of thin air.

Seeing this, Fairy Linglong hurriedly lowered her posture, not daring to even breathe lowly.

“Fairy Linglong of the Sky of Linglong, receive the edict!” the golden board declared grandly. “You are to head to the Sky of Freedom right now!”

“God Monarch Lingxi wishes to meet with me?” Fairy Linglong was taken aback.

However, she dared not go against the order, so she quickly replied, “I have received the edict!”

With a slight waver of her body, Fairy Linglong vanished from the spot.

## 2207 God Monarch Lingxi

With a wave of her hand, Fairy Linglong tore apart the fabric of space to follow the golden board. The next moment, she was standing before a massive gate shrouded amid a layer of fog.

Sky of Freedom, Heavenly Palace of Freedom.

The gate was still tightly shut.

“Fairy Linglong of the Sky of Linglong has come to pay respect to God Monarch Lingxi!” Fairy Linglong lowered her body and waited patiently for the gate to open.

The term ‘Nine Skies Nine Monarchs’ made it sound as if the Nine God Monarchs were of equal standing, but only those who had reached the level of a God Monarch would know that the true master of the Firmament was none other than the person lording over the Sky of Freedom.

The surroundings were absolutely silent. There was no breeze or the calls of any beasts around.

The air in the area was so still that it felt suffocating.

Fairy Linglong continued waiting patiently amid this stifling environment, but on the inside, she was trying to figure out the reason behind this summon.

The other party had sent the golden board over to invite her there, but despite her arrival, the gate still remained firmly closed. There was no one to receive her, and there were no indications as to what she was supposed to do.

She did not recall doing anything that would have offended God Monarch Lingxi!

Fairy Linglong waited for a while longer, but there was still no response at all. So, she raised her voice slightly and announced her presence once more. “Fairy Linglong of the Sky of Linglong has come to pay respect to God Monarch Lingxi!”

It had been an hour since she arrived, and her posture had remained lowered the whole time. It was not that she could not stand upright; she dared not.

She waited for yet another hour after that, but the massive gate still showed no signs of opening. Just as Fairy Linglong was wondering if she should take her leave and return another day, a voice suddenly echoed from the depths of the Heavenly Palace of Freedom.

“This is a clone formed by a sliver of my will. I’ll give you three moves to defeat it!”

Weng!

Right after those words were spoken, a young lady appeared before Fairy Linglong.

The young lady was dressed in a simple but elegant white robe. She had an aura that seemed to meld into nature, making her presence nearly imperceptible.

Fairy Linglong’s eyebrows shot up in astonishment.

She did not recall doing anything to offend God Monarch Lingxi! Why did she have to defeat the other party’s will within three moves?

“Alright then!”

Even though Fairy Linglong was bewildered, she knew that she could not go against the other party’s will.

So, she straightened her posture and took a step back before abruptly charging forward to strike the young lady with a palm strike.

Tzla!

The surrounding space ripped apart as though it was as flimsy as a sheet of paper, causing a black dimension rift to appear on the young lady.

Yet, the dimension rift did nothing to faze the young lady at all. It was almost as if she did not exist in the world.

“One,” the white-robed young lady uttered nonchalantly.

Fairy Linglong was taken aback to see that her attack was not able to faze the other party. Biting her lips, she did not dare hold back at all. She lifted both of her fists and struck down on her opponent simultaneously.

In terms of strength and talent, she was ranked among the top few in the Nine God Monarchs. Even the Cloud Dragon Monarch would have to tread carefully around her.

With her fusing her entire strength into both of her fists, a destructive prowess wreaked havoc upon the world. Her assault did not just cause a dimension rift anymore; instead, the space that stood in her path was all disintegrated into fine dust.

Stable space was one of the foundations of life. The act of tearing down space was the act of destroying all life within that space.

However, the white-robed young lady still did not make a move at all. She allowed the destructive force to ripple through her body, but it did not even leave a trace on her.

“Two,” the white-robed young lady counted.

Knowing that this was her last move, Fairy Linglong extracted a droplet of blood from her glabella and set it ablaze. The next instant, her aura surged furiously.

Gathering all her strength into her palm, she struck down once more.

This time, her palm strike was at least two times stronger than her first attack, but instead of shattering or disintegrating, the space distorted this time around.

The palm strike landed squarely on top of the white-robed young lady, but the latter remained rooted to the spot, not affected by the offense.

A voice echoed by Fairy Linglong’s ear. “Three.”

Then, the white-robed young lady lifted her finger and flicked it.

Peng!

Fairy Linglong was immediately sent flying. Blood spewed from her mouth as she tumbled through the air before crashing heavily onto the ground with a pale face.

This single strike had left her with severe injuries.

It was obvious that the two of them were not on the same level.

Enduring her pain, Fairy Linglong gritted her teeth and rose to her feet. She lowered her head and said, “God Monarch Lingxi, thank you for your guidance... If I may ask, have I done something wrong?”

The God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom rarely summoned the other God Monarchs.

The fact that the other party had called her all the way here only to treat her in such a manner... it could only mean that she had done something that displeased the other party.

But the issue was that...

I don't even know what I have done to offend you! Why don't you at least tell me what I have done so that I can take note of it in the future?

You called me here and started pummeling me without telling me the reason...

What am I supposed to make of this?

“You need to work a lot harder if you wish to teach me a lesson. Your current strength... is still far from sufficient!”

Leaving those words behind, the white-robed young lady morphed into a droplet of clear water and fell to the ground.

To think that the opponent she had been facing all this while was a clone made out of a mere droplet of water!

The God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom was indeed on a different level from the rest of the God Monarchs.

While she was astonished by the prowess displayed by God Monarch Lingxi, she could not help but be baffled by the words of the other party.



Teach you a lesson?

Given your prowess, I wouldn't dare to teach you a lesson even if someone were to inflate my guts by tenfold!

Wait a moment... It was right after I muttered to myself that I would teach the person whom Zhang Xuan likes a lesson that the golden board appeared and summoned me here... Could it be that...

A look of horror suddenly appeared on Fairy Linglong's face.

If what she was thinking right now was really true, then Zhang Xuan was truly a terrifying individual.

To have such a tamed beast and such a girlfriend...

Was he really just a high-tier Celestial God?

It feels like nothing is going right for me these days. I really should try my best to steer clear of that fellow in the future...

Fairy Linglong was not sure whether her conjecture was right, and she dared not verify it. In any case, it was best to avoid trouble wherever possible.

Sighing deeply, she waved her hand and returned to the Sky of Linglong.

Shortly after she returned to her palace, a middle-aged lady suddenly rushed into the room and kneeled before her. "My deepest congratulations, Your Sovereignty!"

"Congratulations?"

A Conferred God King of hers had just been killed, but she had not been able to deal with the culprit, and just a moment ago, she had been summoned to the Sky of Freedom, only to get pummeled.

She could not think of anything that could lift her spirits at a moment like this.

Your Sovereignty, the two people whom you brought back from the Celestial Mountain have been cultivating in the Spacetime Mirror, and just a moment ago, they managed to reach God King realm pinnacle while clearing the trial," the middle-aged lady reported.

“They’ve cleared the trial?” Fairy Linglong’s eyes widened in surprise before a delighted smile emerged on her face.

This was indeed the best news that she could have received heard after the day of setbacks.

She had picked out two talented cultivators from the Celestial Mountain, and she had devoted a lot of resources to groom them. With their breakthrough, the Sky of Linglong would be in a much better position in the upcoming Flood of Spiritual Energy.

At the very least, they would not be forced to take a passive position as they did previously.

“Let’s head over there to take a look,” Fairy Linglong said as she quickly made her way over to the Spacetime Mirror.

On the outside, the Spacetime Mirror appeared to be no different from an ordinary mirror. Concealed within it, however, was a dimension where time flowed ten thousand times faster than that of the Firmament.

In other words, several hundred years had already passed for those two cultivators ever since she brought them back from the Celestial Mountain.

It was truly an impressive feat for those two people, who had barely reached the God realm when she first brought them to the Sky of Linglong, to reach God King realm pinnacle within just several hundred years. Hu!

With a thought, she brought the two cultivators inside the Spacetime Mirror out.

They were two ladies.

One looked quiet and reserved whereas the other one emanated a frostily cold vibe.

Despite having spent hundreds of years within the Spacetime Mirror, it did not seem like the passing of years had left its mark on them. They still looked almost the same as they did when they first entered the Spacetime Mirror.

As soon as they appeared from the mirror, auras powerful enough to tear apart the fabric of space burst forth from their

bodies.

Despite only being at God King realm pinnacle, the auras they emanated were already even more powerful than those of normal Conferred God Kings.

Be it their cultivation techniques or their temperament, they were indeed ideal candidates for conferment.

The more Fairy Linglong looked at them, the more satisfied she was with them.

She looked at them with eyes filled with anticipation as she said, “The two of you have already reached God King realm pinnacle, which means that you are strong enough to bear the power of conferment. Are you willing to become my Conferred God Kings?”

# 2208 Fairy Linglong's Mental Breakdown 1

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“Conferred God King?” the two female cultivators asked hesitantly.

A cultivator who had reached God King realm pinnacle, as long as he was able to earn the recognition of a God Monarch, could be granted a conferment. This conferment would entitle them to greater powers, making them the strongest existence beneath the God Monarchs.

Those who could not receive a conferment from a God Monarch would find their cultivation capped. No matter how talented they were, they would only be a little more powerful than ordinary God Kings.

“Indeed!” Fairy Linglong nodded.

Her initial plan was to reserve the conferment for Luo Qiqi after Baiye Qinghong's death, but the latter had chosen to leave with Zhang Xuan instead.

Nevertheless, everything still turned out fine in the end. While the Sky of Linglong had lost a Conferred God King, it could potentially gain two more if the conferment went through. That would put it on par with the rest of the Nine Skies.

Seeing how those two were hesitant, Fairy Linglong frowned. “Are you unwilling to become my Conferred God King?”

“We would be glad if the conferment grants us greater powers than before, but...” The quiet and reserved lady paused for a brief moment here before continuing. “If we become your Conferred God King, will we have to follow your orders unconditionally, such that we'll have to turn against our kin as long as you order us to?”

Fairy Linglong chuckled after hearing the other party's question. “You have misunderstood. Becoming a Conferred

God King means to receive the acknowledgement from a territory of the Firmament, thus entitling you to the Anima of Yearning of those living in the area.

“If you receive the acknowledgement from a territory within the Sky of Linglong, you will be considered my subordinate, but there is no restriction on the conferment that forces you to obey my orders unconditionally.

“If a Conferred God King had to obey every single one of their God Monarch’s orders, that wouldn’t be a Conferred God King but a puppet!”

Hearing those words, the two female cultivators nodded in realization.

“If that’s the case, we are willing to become the Conferred God Kings of the Sky of Linglong!”

“Good!”

Fairy Linglong raised her hand, and a brilliant light embraced the two female cultivators.

At the same instant, the countless lives living within Sky of Linglong heard a voice sounding in their heads.

“To the people of the Sky of Linglong, heed my words. For her imprudence and dishonorable actions, Baiye Qinghong has been stripped of her conferment. I hereby declare that Wang Ying and Wei Ruyan will be replacing her as Conferred God Kings of the Sky of Linglong!”

The countless lifeforms of the Sky of Linglong immediately saw the figures of two beautiful ladies in their heads, and they hurriedly kneeled down.

“Paying respects to the Conferred God King Wang Ying and Conferred God King Wei Ruyan!”

The lifespan of a Conferred God King exceeded a hundred thousand years, so every conferment represented the rise of a lasting major power.

For a long time, the Sky of Linglong had only had two Conferred God Kings. When news started spreading that Baiye Qinghong had been killed, many were worried that the Sky of

Linglong would lose the power to curb the other Skies. Yet, contrary to that, Fairy Linglong had conferred two new God Kings right away.

Not all cultivators who had reached God King realm pinnacle could be conferred. Those who were able to receive the conferment were all exceptional individuals who possessed talent beyond their peers.

Hong long!

With the submission of the populace, the two young ladies immediately felt a powerful will seeping into their bodies. As if they had been recognized by the world, they found that they were able to tap into a greater reserve of power from the world.

“Is that the Will of the World?”

The two female cultivators widened their eyes.

Fairy Linglong chuckled softly as she answered their doubts. “Receiving the conferment of a God Monarch won’t affect your zhenqi or cultivation. However, your soul will receive the acknowledgement from the Will of the World. This allows you to truly tap into the powers of the world, thus increasing your fighting prowess significantly.”

Conferred God Kings were not powerful because of their superior cultivation or purer zhenqi. Rather, it was because of the rights they received as a result of the conferment.

These rights came from the acknowledgement from the Will of the World, and it allowed them to tap into a reserve of power far beyond what any God Kings could hope to match.

“I see...”

Feeling the greatness of the power, the eyes of the two female cultivators glowed in excitement.

From the moment they received the acknowledgement from the Will of the World, they realized that even though the power was conferred to them by Fairy Linglong, unless they died or gave up on it voluntarily, it was impossible for anyone to take this power away from them.

Not even Fairy Linglong had the authority to revoke these rights!

Thank you, Your Sovereignty!” The two of them bowed down deeply as they voiced their gratitude.

Fairy Linglong nodded in satisfaction as she looked at the two young ladies dotingly. “Aren’t you going to call me teacher?”

She was the one who had taken them from the Celestial Mountain, and she had used the power of the Spacetime Mirror to accelerate their growth and offered them guidance from time to time. If not for her help, there was no way they could have cleared the trial required for the conferment so quickly.

Their relationship had never been officially acknowledged by either side, but Fairy Linglong could feel the sentiments of a teacher and a student between them.

This was also the first time that she had accepted anyone as her disciple.

She had not spent much time with these two female cultivators, but she was very fond of them. Wang Yin was reserved, but she was extremely kind to those around her. Wei Ruyan was cold, but she was extremely loyal to those whom she was close to.

Fairy Linglong thought that it would be great if she could have these two as her disciples.

“Pardon us, Your Sovereignty, but the both of us mentioned previously that we already have a teacher...” Wang Ying clasped her fist.

“I know that you already have a teacher, but how can he compare with me? He’s just the person who has guided you through the first phase of your journey!” Fairy Linglong frowned.

She had learned that these two had a teacher back when she was still fetching them from the Celestial Mountain. Back then, they had initially resisted leaving with her, and they had insisted on leaving a message for their teacher.

And to be frank, it was the respectful attitude that they had toward their teacher that made her even more satisfied with them.

She had thought that they would forget about their previous teacher with time and favor her instead, but who could have known that that only teacher they recognized was still him?

It was not that she could not understand their loyalty, but she was a God Monarch!

As long as she gave the word, there were countless people in the world who would do anything to become her disciple.

Yet, after all she had done for these two, they still refused to acknowledge her as their teacher...

Just what was so good about their previous teacher!

In the end, was their teacher not nothing more than an ordinary God who offered them some guidance in the earlier phases of their cultivation? Was there really a need for them to go this far for him?

“Your Sovereignty, I will have to ask you not to insult our teacher,” Wei Ruyan said. “He has done far too much for us to ever repay him, and if we really have to choose between the two, we can only return our cultivation to you.”

“Your Sovereignty, he’s the only teacher we have recognized in this lifetime, and this will never change,” Wang Ying said. “Please pardon our obstinacy.”

“It can’t be helped then...”

Fairy Linglong could only shake her head regretfully after seeing how determined those two were. After heaving a deep sigh, she looked at them and asked, “Do you know of the Flood of Spiritual Energy?”

Wang Ying nodded. “We have heard of it.”

The news had been going around furiously in the Firmament. Even though they had been in seclusion most of the time, they had still been able to hear a thing or two from the guards.



If not for the Flood of Spiritual Energy, even if their talent was not too bad, there was no way a God Monarch would regard them so highly as to go all out to help them raise their cultivation.

“The Flood of Spiritual Energy happens once every decade, and it’s a major affair in the Nine Skies,” Fairy Linglong explained. “During that period, even Conferred God Kings and God Kings can easily lose their lives.

“Even though you have become Conferred God Kings, you still aren’t the strongest of them all yet. Similar to how I found you on the Celestial Mountain, the other God Monarchs have also managed to find their own successors. These successors are bound to receive personal guidance from their respective God Monarchs, so we can expect them to be extremely difficult opponents to deal with. If you don’t acknowledge me as your teacher, I won’t be able to impart more advanced battle techniques to you. That will put you in a very dangerous position against them, and you might even lose your lives!

“Putting everything aside, have you heard of the young man known as Zheng Yang whom the Blazing Sun Monarch took away with him? According to what I’ve heard, that young man received his conferment several days ago, and in terms of fighting prowess, he’s able to stand his ground against some of the veteran Conferred God Kings. If you face him during the Flood of Spiritual Energy, the chances of you winning are really slim...”

“We have heard of him...” Wang Ying nodded. “He’s my Fourth Junior!”

# 2209 Fairy Linglong's Breakdown 2

“Fourth Junior?”

Fairy Linglong was dumbfounded.

Wait a moment, what?

That young man named Zheng Yang is already famous throughout the Sky of Blazing Sun for his powerful cultivation and ingenious spearmanship. With his frightening fighting prowess, he has already defeated quite a few veteran Conferred God Kings.

Due to that, that darned pervert has already bragged about this matter to me several times.

And you are right now that Zheng Yang... is your junior?

“So, he’s also a student of that teacher you mentioned, is he?”  
Fairy Linglong asked with bulging eyes.

“That’s right!” Wang Ying nodded.

Her teacher had decided on their rankings when he finally accepted them as his direct disciples, and Zheng Yang happened to be ranked fourth.

Fairy Linglong was unable to speak for a very long while.

She had never expected to hear something so shocking. To think that they were under the same teacher...

She had thought that it was already amazingly fortunate for the teacher of Wang Ying and Wei Ruyan to take them in as his disciples, but who could have known that Zheng Yang was his disciple too?

It was no wonder those two were unwilling to acknowledge her as their teacher. It seemed like their teacher was quite a figure, too.

But so what?

She was still a God Monarch!

On the other hand, their teacher was a mere God realm cultivator. Even if he was lucky enough to have taken in three talented cultivators, he could not compete with her!

Fairy Linglong felt that she still had an advantage.

No matter what, she had to convince these two about the perilous situation they were in. Otherwise, she would not be able to impart her techniques to them, and they would not be able to compete with the Conferred God Kings of the other Skies!

Fairy Linglong quickly calmed herself down before carrying on with a solemn voice. “Even if Zheng Yang is your junior and will go easy on you, there are still other strong Conferred God Kings that you need to pay attention to. Take the disciple whom God Monarch Fumeng has taken in, Zhao Ya, for example. She is rumored to be on par with Zheng Yang in terms of strength. The Sky of Adamant Gold is located in the west of the Firmament whereas the Sky of Linglong is located in the southwest. Due to our close proximity, there’s a great likelihood that we’ll come to blows with one another. If you don’t brush up on your skills under my guidance, it’ll be hard for you to stand against her...”

“That’s my First Senior,” Wang Ying replied quietly.

“...”

Fairy Linglong’s eyelids twitched upon hearing those words. Unable to keep her cool, she asked, “What about Conferred God King Lu Chong of the Sky of Drifting Specter? He should have nothing to do with you, right? He’s actually really powerful...”

“That’s my Sixth Junior.”

“...”

Fairy Linglong’s facial expression was starting to run amok at this point. “What about Conferred God King Liu Yang, Conferred God King Zhang Jiuxiao, and Conferred God King Kong Shiyao of the Sky of Cloud Dragon? Surely you can’t be related to them too.”

“They are my Third Junior, Eighth Junior, and Ninth Junior.”

Wang Ying was feeling quite relieved to hear that her senior and juniors were faring well in the Firmament.

However, Fairy Linglong looked as if she was going to descend into lunacy. “What about the new Conferred God Kings of the Sky of Acheron, Yuan Tao, Dan Xiaotian, and Bai Ruanqing?”

“They are my Fifth Junior, Tenth Junior, and Eleventh Junior.”

Pu!

Unable to take it any longer, Fairy Linglong spurted a mouthful of blood.

She could not help but recall how all the God Monarchs were delighted to have managed to find their own successors. All of them were confident that they would be able to gain more resources for themselves for the Flood of Spiritual Energy. But in the end, it turned out that all their successors had the same teacher.

They were all from the same lineage!

It could still be considered luck if a teacher accepted two or three talented cultivator as his disciples, but to have eleven of such disciples... such a thing definitely could not be shrugged off as mere luck!

“Is your teacher really just a God realm cultivator?” Fairy Linglong asked.

“Indeed. When we entered the Celestial Mountain, our teacher was still at the God realm...”

“An ordinary God wouldn’t have had the privilege of enjoying an abundance of cultivation resources and the Spacetime Mirror, so I reckon it’s unlikely for him to have become a Celestial God. For such a person to actually have so many Conferred God Kings as his disciples...” Fairy Linglong could hardly come to terms with this reality.

Was that fellow not a little too frightening?

No, wait a moment... Since their teacher had not caught the gaze of any God Monarchs yet, if she found him first and convince him to submit to her, would she not gain control over all of those Conferred God Kings as well?

With such thoughts in mind, Fairy Linglong's eyes lit up as she asked, "Is your teacher still in the Sky of Drifting Specter? Is there anyone who knows of his relationship with you?"

Wang Ying pondered for a moment before replying, "Our teacher has always preferred to keep a low profile. He'll be content as long as we're getting along fine, so it's highly unlikely that he'd talk about his relationship with us of his own accord. As for whether he's still in the Sky of Drifting Specter or not, we haven't contacted him for a month now, so we don't really know for certain..."

If there was anyone who knew Zhang Xuan the best, it was his direct disciples.

Kind, humble, and low profile—their teacher was a person overflowing with virtues.

Even though they had already been through three worlds together, they still had not been able to see anyone who could match him in terms of character.

Unless any of them were in a position of danger, it was unlikely that he would show himself before the God Monarchs.

Currently, her juniors and senior were getting along well, and they had even managed to become Conferred God Kings. Given her understanding of their teacher, he would probably try to stay out of their path to avoid troubling them.

"That's good..." Fairy Linglong heaved a sigh of relief.

The fact that the person's identity had not been revealed yet meant that the other God Monarchs would not be able to get to him before her. Forcefully calming herself down, Fairy Linglong asked, "May I know your teacher's name? What does he look like?"

She would have to first find him based on his name and appearance before figuring out a way to forge a good

relationship with him.

“Our teacher seeks a humble and low-profile life. He’ll be displeased if he finds out that we revealed his identity to another person. Your Sovereignty, I have to ask for your understanding in this matter...” Wang Ying bowed deeply.

As her teacher’s disciple, she had to respect her teacher’s wish for privacy.

“I understand that you are concerned about your teacher, but once your relationship with Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, Yuan Tao, and the others is known by the others, there will surely be people who start looking into this matter. No matter how low profile your teacher might be, it’s only a matter of time before someone figures out his relationship with the rest of you. By then, he might face a great deal of trouble, especially from the other God Monarchs. You must understand that I’m not trying to make things difficult for you or your teacher. If possible, I would like to help you protect your teacher as well so that you can set your mind at ease,” Fairy Linglong explained.

“This...” Wang Ying and Wei Ruyan looked at each other hesitantly to decide on what they should do.

There was a grain of truth to what Fairy Linglong had said.

With their current fame in the Firmament, there would surely be curious individuals who would try digging into their background.

Unlike them, their teacher did not have the guidance of a God Monarch, the aid of overpowered artifacts such as the Spacetime Mirror, or an abundance of cultivation resources. If someone intended him harm, it would be difficult for him to protect himself!

So, it would be wonderful if Fairy Linglong was sincere in wanting to help them protect their teacher. That would really set their minds at ease.

“Rest assured, I am a woman true to my words. I only want to know his identity in order to protect him; I have no plans of causing him any trouble. As a God Monarch, I won’t stoop so

low as to spout lies to you two...” Fairy Linglong further reassured them.

“Your Sovereignty, we trust you.”

There was no reason for someone as powerful as a God Monarch to fool them like that. Knowing that Fairy Linglong had good intentions at heart, Wang Ying hesitated for a moment before adding, “If you manage to find our teacher, I hope that you can bring us over so that we can pay respects to him...”

“That isn’t a problem!” Fairy Linglong replied.

“Alright then. It’s unlikely that Your Sovereignty will have heard of our teacher... He’s a humble cultivator who goes by the name of ‘Zhang Xuan’!”

Putong!

Fairy Linglong’s foot slipped, and she fell to the ground.

# 2210 Feng Hanqiu

Fairy Linglong was utterly flabbergasted to discover that the ‘Zhang Xuan’ they were talking about was indeed the same ‘Zhang Xuan’ whom she knew of.

For the entire conversation, those two had been emphasizing again and again how humble and low profile their teacher was, such that she actually believed their words. After all, he was indeed a person who managed to groom so many talented experts without making his name known.

Yet, their teacher was actually... Zhang Xuan!

You said that he keeps a low profile?

Low profile your head!

You said that he is an ordinary God?

Ordinary your head!

There’s hardly any cultivator who doesn’t know of his name after he launched the Beauty Pill and Breakthrough Pill in the Sky of Drifting Specter. Not only so, just a few hours ago, that man came over to the Sky of Linglong and killed one of my Conferred God Kings, devoured my will, and took the Dimension Silencer away with him...

As if that isn’t frightening enough, that man had that person as his tamed beast, and his girlfriend is actually the strongest person in the Firmament!

You call that low profile and ordinary?

Pui!

He is the very antithesis of low profile and ordinary! There is no Celestial God who is more high profile and extraordinary than him!

More importantly...

The reason I asked you for his name is so that I can find him and rally him over to my side. But after that bitter spat



between us earlier, how am I supposed to do so now?

Fairy Linglong's mind began churning nonstop as she tried to figure out what she should do with the current situation.

Even if we didn't have a conflict with one another earlier, it wouldn't be easy to bring him over to my side given his tamed beast and girlfriend... Should I just bestow him a conferment for the sake of it? Ah, but it would be better to keep this news under wraps. It wouldn't be good if the other God Monarchs learned about this matter...

...

Having successfully left Linglong Royal City without any issues, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

It was fortunate that Little Chick had stepped forward and protected him earlier, or else he would have been in a really difficult position.

Zhang Xuan was not worried about anyone else making a move on him, especially after what he had done earlier. So, while he made his way over to the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation, he glanced over at the young lady behind him and asked, "How did you get here? And how did you get to know Fairy Linglong?"

"After I left the Master Teacher Continent..."

Luo Qiqi began recounting her story.

She had morphed into the Dimension Silencer and broken the dimension barrier. However, in a series of unfortunate events, she had ended up getting caught within a spatial turbulence. In the end, she had been found and saved by Fairy Linglong, who then brought her over to the Firmament.

In the first place, the Dimension Silencer was an artifact that was from the Firmament but had somehow fallen to the Master Teacher Continent. After returning there, her cultivation had swiftly improved. Within a short month, she had raised her cultivation all the way up to God King realm pinnacle.

Paired with her abilities as the Dimension Silencer, even ordinary Conferred God Kings would find it hard to put up a

fight against her.

On the other hand, Zhang Xuan did not expect Luo Qiqi to have met with so many hardships. With a deep sigh, he shared with her how the Luo Clan had been faring when he returned to the Master Teacher Continent a while back.

“I have really let my clan down,” Luo Qiqi mumbled with reddened eyes.

The flow of time in the Firmament was ten thousand times that of the Master Teacher Continent. A month up there was equivalent to ten thousand months beneath, which equated to the passing of around eight hundred years.

Most of her kin were probably aged by now.

After arriving there, she had realized that she could not break the dimension barrier as easily anymore. Most likely, she would not meet her family members again in her lifetime.

Zhang Xuan patted her back quietly in consolation for a while before asking, “While you were with Fairy Linglong, did you happen to meet my two direct disciples, Wang Ying and Wei Ruyan?”

“I didn’t meet them personally, but based on what I’ve heard, it seems like they have been cultivating inside Her Sovereignty’s Spacetime Mirror. Their cultivation should be no weaker than mine at the moment,” Luo Qiqi replied.

Hearing that Fairy Linglong had been treating his direct disciples well, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

While chatting a bit about various matters, they finally arrived before the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation.

“Do you have the token to use the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation?” Zhang Xuan asked.

His token could only allow for the teleportation of him and his tamed beast, so he would not be able to take Luo Qiqi with him. But if they were to attempt to fly over to Spirit Origin Royal City, it would probably take several years before they arrived at their destination.

Luo Qiqi chuckled softly and said, “I don’t need that to travel around...”

The token primarily served to protect cultivators from getting hurt. As the Dimension Silencer, she governed over the spatial laws of the world. The spatial turbulence during the teleportation could not hurt her.

In fact, while it would take quite a toll on her to do so, she could already rip space apart and travel freely from one place to another.

So, the two of them went on to use the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation. With a brilliant glow of light, the two of them vanished from the spot, and the next moment, they were already in the Sky of Spirit Origin.

Zhang Xuan quickly turned his gaze over to Luo Qiqi, and fortunately, she was unharmed.

Entering Spirit Origin Royal City, they quickly made their way over to the Inferno Phoenix Clan.

As soon as Zhang Xuan walked through the entrance, Feng Jiuge, who appeared to have been pacing back and forth waiting for him, rushed up to him anxiously. “Teacher!”

“What’s wrong?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

“Shortly after you left, we received an announcement saying that the tournament would be brought ahead. I sent you quite a few messages on your Communication Jade Token, but there was no response,” Feng Jiuge said nervously.

The Three Great Clans of Spirit Origin Royal City had initially set the time of the tournament roughly an hour later, but according to the rumors, it seemed like something had happened within Spirit God Palace, causing it to continuously radiate light.

Taking it as a sign that something major was going to happen, the Three Conferred God Kings had decided to bring the tournament ahead to quickly get it over and done with so that they could focus on what that was to come.

In other words...

During the period that Zhang Xuan was away, the person who was to enter Spirit God Palace had already been chosen!

Hearing that the tournament had already concluded, Zhang Xuan could not help but frown. He had already rushed all the way there, but it was still too late in the end.

However, it could not be helped. The Communication Jade Token that he used had limited range, and it would only work if both the sender and receiver were in the same Sky. Given that he had gone all the way to the Sky of Linglong, there was no way he would have been able to receive Feng Jiuge's message.

He could only hope that his disciple had claimed first place instead. This way, he might still be able to impersonate his disciple and sneak in.

So, he quickly turned to Feng Jiuge and asked, "What place did you finish?"

"I..." Feng Jiuge's face reddened. He quickly knelt onto the floor and kowtowed. "I have let you down! I only managed to place second in the tournament..."

His teacher had gone through so much trouble to decipher the mysteries of combat for him, allowing him to even overcome the Nine Phoenix Stellar Formation. Yet, in the end, he was still defeated by another in the final round...

"You finished second?" Zhang Xuan was surprised. "Who came first?"

Feng Jiuge had fought practically the strongest experts in the Inferno Phoenix Clan, and he had managed to defeat them with ease. So, unless his opponent was Zhang Xuan himself, he should have been able to defeat any Celestial Gods.

So, how did he end up placing second?

Were there even stronger experts in the other two clans?

"I am the one who placed first!"

Before Feng Jiuge could respond, a voice suddenly echoed behind them. Following that, several young men walked into the courtyard with widened strides.

The one that was leading the group appeared to be in his thirties, and he had a pair of lofty eyes.

“Teacher, he’s the one who placed first in the tournament. He is an expert from the Glacier Phoenix Clan, Feng Hanqiu,” Feng Jiuge explained to his teacher through zhenqi telepathy.

“Feng Hanqiu?” Zhang Xuan frowned. “A God King?”

At first glance, it would appear that there was nothing special about the young man. However, when taking a closer look, one would realize that there was a frightening amount of energy harnessed within his body, reminiscent of a massive snow mountain that had the potential to cause a terrifying avalanche.

It was clear that he had already reached the level of a God King.

But was the tournament not intended for Celestial Gods? Why would there be a God King in the tournament as well?

Besides, what was the point of a God King going into Spirit God Palace?

“He made a breakthrough on the spot while fighting against me,” Feng Jiuge said.

Initially, he had still had the upper hand against Feng Hanqiu, but perhaps due to the pressure continuously heaped on him, Feng Hanqiu managed to make a breakthrough on the spot and become a God King. That resulted in a vast difference in their strength, and eventually, Feng Jiuge lost.

Zhang Xuan finally nodded in realization.

While he had imparted his combat skills to Feng Jiuge, the latter had not managed to grasp the quintessence of them yet. It was inevitable that he would be no match for a real God King.

“I heard that you are the strongest cultivator among the younger generation of the Inferno Phoenix Clan. Do you dare have a match with me?” Feng Hanqiu asked.

# 2211 What Have I Been Doing All My Life?

Even though he had managed to defeat Feng Jiuge, he still has not fought with the latter's 'teacher' yet. As such, the first place that he had received through the tournament was not exactly 'proper'.

For this reason, he had headed right over to the Inferno Phoenix Clan as soon as the tournament ended in order to wait for 'Feng Xuan's' return and challenge him.

"If I defeat you, will you pass the opportunity to enter Spirit God Palace over to me instead?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"If you are able to defeat me, that right will naturally be passed down to you!" Feng Hanqiu replied.

Spirit God Palace contained the artifacts that the Deathless Monarch had left behind. Through studying the artifacts of the Deathless Monarch, a Celestial God could greatly increase their chances of becoming a God King.

However, Feng Hanqiu was already a God King, so it did not matter whether he entered Spirit God Palace or not.

In the past, when the Deathless Lava Reservoir was still functioning, it would still have been worthwhile for him to enter it to temper his body and possibly comprehend the crux of deathlessness. However, the Deathless Lava Reservoir had also become defunct in recent years, so there was not much for Feng Hanqiu to look forward to anymore.

Besides, if the young man was able to defeat him, it would go to show that he should have been the true victor of the tournament. The other candidates should have no issues with him passing down the right to someone like that.

"That's a relief. Let's begin then!" Zhang Xuan nodded.

"I have already made a breakthrough to God King, so the battle is disadvantageous to you. Out of consideration for

fairness, I'll give you a three-move advantage!" Feng Hanqiu said.

God Kings and Celestial Gods were two vastly different existences. It was already improper for a God King like him to challenge a high-tier Celestial God to a battle, so it was only right for him to offer a handicap.

But in response to his offer, Zhang Xuan shook his head and replied, "There's no need for that."

The other party had only just made a breakthrough to God King. In his view, there was no need for such a handicap.

Not wanting to waste his time on words, Zhang Xuan took a step forward and appeared right before Feng Hanqiu in an instant. Just by raising his hand lightly, the air in the courtyard suddenly seemed to freeze in place.

"He's formidable!"

Feng Hanqiu had still planned on handicapping himself when he sensed the tremendous might building up before him. His eyes narrowed in astonishment, and he did not dare lower his guard anymore.

He quickly drove his zhenqi furiously as he retaliated with a punch.

Peng!

However, Zhang Xuan seemed to be completely unaffected by Feng Hanqiu's retaliation. He struck his palm down leisurely, and the latter's face immediately paled.

The next instant, his body skidded all the way back till he knocked violently against a wall.

The victor had been decided within a single move.

Despite having become a God King, Feng Hanqiu was still no match for Zhang Xuan.

Zhang Xuan walked up to Feng Hanqiu and said, "Hand your slot over to me."

His zhenqi capacity had reduced significantly after he neutralized his Heaven's Path zhenqi against the gray surge of

energy, but in return, the increased purity of his zhenqi granted him greater burst power. Even a God King realm pinnacle expert like Fu Jiangchen would not be a match for the current him, let alone Feng Hanqiu.

“Thank you for showing mercy on me...” Feng Hanqiu stood up with a look of disbelief.

While he found it all hard to accept, he could tell that the other party had gone easy on him with the earlier strike. Otherwise, he would not have gotten away with such minor injuries.

With a flick of his finger, he passed a jade token over to Zhang Xuan.

It was the insignia required to enter Spirit God Palace.

Zhang Xuan quickly accepted the insignia in relief.

With this, he would finally be able to enter Spirit God Palace and find Luo Ruoxin.

“Brother Feng Xuan, may I know how you were able to become so strong despite being only a Celestial God?” Feng Hanqiu asked in wonderment.

He had been ranked first on the Sky of Spirit Origin’s Board of Potential God Kings previously. He was indubitably one of the strongest Celestial Gods in the entire Firmament.

Yet, even after he made a breakthrough to the God King realm, he was still no match for the young man before him.

He really could not fathom how it was possible for a Celestial God to be able to become so powerful.

“There’s nothing special to it. Once you accumulate enough, it’ll eventually lead to a qualitative difference,” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

“Accumulate enough...” Feng Hanqiu repeated those words contemplatively before nodding in realization. “Brother Feng Xuan, what you mean to say is that I should spend more time and effort trying to reinforce my cultivation so as to build up a firm foundation instead of rushing to make a breakthrough, right?”



Feng Hanqiu had thought that he had already spent a lot of time building up his cultivation at high-tier Celestial God realm pinnacle. It was due to his diligent accumulation that he had been able to make a breakthrough in the midst of a duel.

But as it turned out, he was still lacking a lot compared to the other party.

Was his foundation still not strong enough?

But he had clearly felt himself reaching his limits. He had no idea how he could go any further than that!

It was just like piling up boxes. Beyond a certain height, it was impossible to go any further.

There was simply a limit to how much a cultivator could reinforce their cultivation. If one tried to push beyond the limit, it could have adverse consequences.

“Indeed. Sometimes, even though it might seem like you have already reached your limit, if you work just a little harder, you might find that there is still room for improvement,” Zhang Xuan said.

It was similar to how he thought that the Heaven’s Path zhenqi was the most formidable zhenqi in the world. But when he finally cultivated the Pathos of Heaven, he realized that there was actually a level even higher than where he already was.

“I have benefitted from your guidance!”

Hearing those words, Feng Hanqiu lowered his head and thanked Zhang Xuan. A curious glint flickered across his eyes as he asked, “Brother Feng Xuan, it must have taken you quite a bit of effort to reinforce your cultivation to such an extent, right?”

“Indeed!”

Recalling all the difficulties he encountered in his cultivation, Zhang Xuan felt like he could grumble for days on end!

“Ever since I reached high-tier Celestial God five days ago, I have been working hard every single day to reinforce my cultivation. No matter how busy I am, I still reserve at least an hour every day specifically for my cultivation. Sometimes, I

might even cultivate up to four hours without rest! You can probably imagine the hardships I have been through in order to reach my current level!”

“F-five days?” Feng Hanqiu was stunned. “You have only cultivated for at most four hours a day for five days after reaching high-tier Celestial God?”

After hearing what Zhang Xuan had said, he thought that the latter would have cultivated for at least decades in order to reach his current level, but five days?

Scram!

Hardship my ass! Even a single seclusion of mine would be far longer than that!

Furthermore, there was even a day when you cultivated for an hour...

“Indeed. It has already been five days, so I should have already made a breakthrough by now, but I just can’t find a suitable cultivation technique,” Zhang Xuan said. “This sure is a bummer. Oh right, Jiuge, why don’t I help you make a breakthrough?”

If not for the fact that he had an urgent need to enter Spirit God Palace, he could have devoted his time to figuring out the next level of the Pathos of Heaven, and he could have already made a breakthrough by now.

It was obvious that he was lagging behind.

Just by imagining how strong his direct disciples would be by now made him feel a little anxious. He really had to pick up his pace, or else it sure would be awkward if he met them.

“So, you have spent less than twenty hours cultivating since you made a breakthrough to high-tier Celestial God realm pinnacle?” Feng Hanqiu was really feeling a little frenzied.

“Brother Feng Xuan, it’s not that I want to nag at you, but becoming a God King is more than just reinforcing your cultivation. You need to be able to grasp the powers of nature, and that will take quite a bit of effort and time in order to do it...”

Halfway through his words, Feng Hanqiu realized that ‘Feng Xuan’ was not paying attention to him at all, and his words slowly trailed off.

While he was talking, ‘Feng Xuan’ had already walked up to Feng Jiuge, and the latter was nodding excitedly.

“Since I have some spare time, let’s do it right now!”

Without further ado, Zhang Xuan took out a pill and placed it into Feng Jiuge’s mouth. Following that, he placed his palm on Feng Jiuge’s back and sent a powerful surge of zhenqi into his body.

Kacha kacha kacha!

Feng Jiuge’s eyebrows shot up as he swiftly overcame the limitations of his cultivation. An amazing amount of energy gathered within his dantian before bursting outward in the form of an indomitable aura, rising right toward the clouds.

“This is the power of a God King...”

Standing by the side, Feng Hanqiu and his group of followers clawed at their hair in disbelief.

“Feng Jiuge really managed to make a breakthrough just like that?”

It was just a moment ago that Feng Hanqiu had talked about how difficult it was to become a God King, and the next moment, ‘Feng Xuan’ had already helped his disciple make a breakthrough.

Was there a worse way to slap a person’s face than this?

More importantly, the person whom he had helped achieve a breakthrough was known to have his cultivation regressing continuously for the past two years due to his unique condition, such that he had even been expelled from the Inferno Phoenix Clan a few days prior.

Given that Feng Jiuge had just regained his cultivation, he should still have been in the midst of reinforcing his cultivation.

Yet, with just a single pill, Feng Jiuge had managed to reach the realm that he had worked hard for decades to reach...

Feng Hanqiu could not help but feel as if his world had been turned upside down.

When did becoming a God King get so easy?

If it had been so easy all this while, what had he been doing all his life?

## 2212 Become the Clan Head!

Even though Feng Jiuge's cultivation had regressed for two years, he had managed to temper his soul and spirit well within this period.

From his lofty position as the genius of the Inferno Phoenix Clan, he had fallen to the bottom and experienced the warmth and coldness of the world. These experiences were invaluable in building up who he was, and it had made his soul more resilient than ever.

Due to this, the God King Breakthrough Pill was particularly effective on him, allowing him to successfully make a breakthrough.

Had it been anyone else, it would have been difficult for them to make a breakthrough so successfully.

Other than that, Feng Jiuge's body had been thoroughly cleansed by Zhang Xuan's zhenqi while he was getting rid of the gray congregation of energy. That had played a huge part in building up Feng Jiuge's foundation too.

After his breakthrough to God King, Feng Jiuge spent some time reinforcing his cultivation. When he finally opened his eyes once more, he quickly kneeled to the floor and bowed. "Teacher, thank you for your guidance!"

"There's no need to stand on ceremony," Zhang Xuan replied. "How are you feeling right now?"

Feng Jiuge rose to his feet and perceived his newfound powers for a moment. "My zhenqi cultivation has reached the God King realm, but my soul cultivation is still lacking at the moment. I'll have to nourish it quite a bit in order to restore the balance within my body."

Even though he had been through quite a bit within this short period of time, he was still too young. As such, his soul was slightly lacking.

His fighting prowess had risen considerably due to his breakthrough, but due to the disharmonious state his body was in, he would still be weaker compared to a real God King.

“The soul is the hardest to cultivate of all,” Feng Hanqiu remarked.

If one was lacking in terms of zhenqi, there were plenty of cultivation resources that could provide one with more spiritual energy. However, when it came to raising one’s soul cultivation, there were only so few things that one could do.

For example, even though Feng Hanqiu had made a breakthrough to God King as well, he was still a long way off from fully grasping his powers as a God King due to the weakness of his soul.

“Indeed,” Zhang Xuan said, “this is quite a problem to deal with...”

Despite the huge commotion he had caused through the Breakthrough Pill and the Beauty Pill, he had only been able to raise his soul cultivation to high-tier Celestial God realm pinnacle thus far. From this, it could be seen that raising one’s soul cultivation was rather difficult.

But halfway through Zhang Xuan’s words, he suddenly felt a massive surge of Anima of Yearning gushing into his soul.

This caused his high-tier Celestial God realm soul cultivation to begin rising at a swift pace.

Zhang Xuan was a little taken aback.

This time around, the Anima of Yearning he received was several hundred, or perhaps, a thousand times more than what he had received previously!

“Is a Conferred God King thinking about me? And a dozen of them at that?”

He could hardly believe what was happening.

Incredibly pure Anima of Yearning was surging into his soul continuously, as if ten additional Conferred God Kings had started thinking about him.

Hong long!

Before he could even say anything, his soul cultivation surged past his bottleneck, causing a staggeringly powerful aura to burst forth from his soul.

Just like that, his soul cultivation had reached the God King realm!

“...” Feng Hanqiu was frenzied once more.

Could cultivation become more like child’s play than this?

Even though it was baffling to see Feng Jiuge to achieve a breakthrough to the God King realm all of a sudden in his zhenqi cultivation, it was still within the realm of reason. After all, he had achieved a breakthrough in the midst of a battle as well.

But for someone to suddenly make a breakthrough in his soul cultivation with such incredible vigor...

The heck!

If you had the ability to do this in the first place, why did you agree with me in saying that it’s hard to raise one’s soul cultivation?

It is almost as if you are trying to break my sanity!

Stop it!

Feeling a little faint-headed from all the shocks that kept coming nonstop, Feng Hanqiu swayed weakly on his feet.

Unfortunately, the worst had yet to pass for him.

As he lifted his gaze, he realized that something that was even more ridiculous was happening right before his eyes.

Even after the other party’s cultivation had made a breakthrough to the God King realm, it was showing no signs of stopping.

God King realm primary stage!

God King realm intermediate stage!

...

At a rate visible to the eye, the other party's soul cultivation rose all the way to God King realm pinnacle.

It was only at this point that his swiftly rising soul cultivation finally slowed down.

“...”

Seeing this, Feng Hanqiu felt his eyes becoming a little moist. He really felt like weeping.

He had still felt so good about himself a moment ago when he successfully made a breakthrough in the midst of his battle. He had thought that his time had finally come, and he would be able to forge a legend about himself in the world.

It was with such confidence that he marched to the Inferno Phoenix Clan to challenge their number one.

But all that had happened was him suffering mental traumas one after another.

It was harder to raise one's soul cultivation than one's zhenqi cultivation!

Yet, the other party had made consecutive breakthroughs, climbing all the way up to God King realm pinnacle in a single shot!

Those that had gone there along with Feng Hanqiu were also traumatized beyond words.

“What a pity. I don't have a cultivation technique that would help me make a breakthrough to God King realm for my zhenqi cultivation,” Zhang Xuan murmured.

While he had no idea why so many Conferred God Kings had suddenly started thinking about him, he was more than happy to accept their Anima of Yearning.

He had been getting worried because his soul cultivation did not seem to have grown much over the past five days, but with this breakthrough, he would not have to worry about it for a long time. It would set a strong foundation for his zhenqi cultivation to make a breakthrough to the God King realm in the near future.



“Let me give it a try...”

Zhang Xuan channeled his condensed soul energy together, and he could immediately feel the space around him rippling in response to his might.

“This is the strength that God Kings wield?” Zhang Xuan was astounded.

When he fought with God Kings, he had thought that their strength was just so-so. However, after making the breakthrough himself, he could really see the huge gap between a Celestial God and a God King.

Just the pressure he emanated from his soul would be enough to halt the zhenqi circulation of any Celestial God.

With his current strength, even without resorting to his golden page or Little Chick, he would be able to stand his ground even against a Conferred God King like Baiye Qinghong.

While he could not say that he was confident of victory, at the very least, he would be able to put up a fight.

“Once I make a breakthrough in my zhenqi cultivation, I should be able to subdue someone of Baiye Qinghong’s prowess...”

While there was supposedly a huge gap between God Kings and Conferred God Kings, through the Pathos of Heaven—a cultivation technique that surpassed the heavens—and the superior resilience of his soul, he was confident that he would be able to fight them as equals and even kill them once he became a full-fledged God King!

That would also mean that he was another step closer to Luo Ruoxin.

After exploring his newfound strength, Zhang Xuan breathed out deeply before opening his eyes once more. Rising to his feet, he was just about to check if there were any unexpected side effects from Feng Jiuge’s breakthrough when he suddenly noticed that a middle-aged man had entered the room and was staring at him with a look of agitation.

“Who are you?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

“I am the clan head of the Inferno Phoenix Clan,” the middle-aged man replied.

“The clan head?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Thinking back, he had met the First Elder and Second Elder thus far, but he had not met the clan head before.

“Junior Feng Xuan pays respect to the clan head!” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist and bowed.

“Ah, there’s no need for such formalities. Even though you have made a breakthrough in your soul cultivation instead of your zhenqi cultivation, you are still a God King realm cultivator. That makes us peers,” the clan head said as he quickly pulled Zhang Xuan upright.

For a clan like the Inferno Phoenix Clan where there were many experts who lived long lives, it would incredibly bothersome and ineffective to really classify one’s seniority through relations.

For this reason, as long as two members of the clan were not direct kin and were of the same cultivation realm, they could be considered peers.

Aware of this rule, Zhang Xuan nodded and dropped the formalities.

He was about to ask the reason behind the other party’s sudden visit, but the middle-aged man had already started murmuring excitedly to himself. “He actually managed to raise his soul cultivation to God King realm pinnacle... With his talent, I think that there’s a good chance that he might be able to clear the Trial of Conferment and reach for greater heights...”

Then, the clan head suddenly raised his head and asked with anticipation in his eyes, “Before I move on, may I ask if you are interested in succeeding me as the next head of the Inferno Phoenix Clan?”

## 2213 Light Up!

Zhang Xuan shook his head and said, “I am too used to living a leisurely life, so I must say that I’m not comfortable with taking up such heavy responsibility...”

The only reason he had gone to the Sky of Spirit Origin and assumed the identity of Feng Xuan was to enter Spirit God Palace. There was no way he could take on the additional burden known as the Inferno Phoenix Clan!

Not expecting ‘Feng Xuan’ to turn down the offer, the clan head was at a loss for words. Just as he was about to ask the reason behind it, Zhang Xuan asked a different question. “You mentioned the Trial of Conferment earlier... Is there a trial that God Kings have to undergo in order to become Conferred God Kings?”

All along, he had thought that Conferred God Kings were chosen by God Monarchs based on their merits, and they gained great power as a result of their favor. So, it was a little odd for him to hear that there was a trial for that.

“Conferment refers to the act of a God Monarch bestowing the jurisdiction of a territory over to an individual, granting him the rights to access the Anima of Yearning in the region. However, the Anima of Yearning is a natural force that nature depends on the sentiments of those creating it. Due to that, the Anima of Yearning in a region is often extremely chaotic, and to control such a force requires one’s soul to be extraordinarily powerful.

“For this reason, the basic requirement for one to become a Conferred God King is for one’s soul cultivation to reach God King realm pinnacle. Contrary to popular belief, one’s zhenqi cultivation is actually of secondary importance. Your chances of succeeding are actually quite high, so won’t you give it some thought?” the clan head said.

Each living being was unique and had its own set of beliefs and emotions. These would all be mixed within their Anima of

Yearning, and to use a person's Anima of Yearning meant to take on the sentiments they carried.

If a Conferred God King's soul was not strong and pure enough, they could easily be influenced by the malevolent emotions within the Anima of Yearning and fall into a state of confusion.

For this reason, the strength of one's soul was of paramount importance for one's conferment.

It was true that the young man before him was still a high-tier Celestial God, but it should only be a matter of time before he became a full-fledged God King given his talents. With the level of his soul cultivation, the chances of him successfully becoming a Conferred God King in the future was at least fifty percent!

The reason their Inferno Phoenix Clan had been able to prosper was because of their old ancestor, the Fire Feather Conferred God King. If another Conferred God King appeared among them, there was no doubt that the position of the number one clan in the Sky of Spirit Origin, or perhaps even the whole Firmament, would be theirs to claim!

"I see... Thank you for your high opinion for me, but I'm afraid that I'll have to refuse," Zhang Xuan replied.

Seeing how reluctant the other party was, the clan head knew that it would be hard to convince him right away. So, he decided to take a step back for the time being. "I understand your thoughts. Why don't we do this instead? There is a stone phoenix sculpture just outside of Spirit God Palace that is used to control the formation within the palace and test the potential of a God King. Even though you aren't interested in it, there's no harm giving it a try, right?"

With the Flood of Spiritual Energy looming around the corner, there was no power that would not want to increase the number of Conferred God Kings on their side.

This young man was probably the closest to become a Conferred God King in the Sky of Spirit Origin!

As long as they could prove his talent to the other two clans, he would be able to convince them to devote their resources to help him achieve a breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation.

If everything worked out, not only would the forces of the Sky of Spirit Origin be bolstered, more importantly, it would also guarantee the prosperity of the Inferno Phoenix Clan for the next hundred thousand years!

“You are going to enter Spirit God Palace anyway. Why not just give it a try while you are there?” The clan head pushed his case further.

Zhang Xuan nodded. “Alright then...”

The clan head was right.

There was no harm in him giving it a try, especially since he had been wanting to head to Spirit God Palace anyway.

...

Spirit God Palace floated above Spirit Origin Royal City. Flying behind the clan head of the Inferno Phoenix Clan, he soon arrived before it.

There were already two other people waiting outside the palace for him.

They were the heads of the other two clans.

“Feng Yuanchi, you said that his soul cultivation has already reached God King realm pinnacle?”

As soon as they landed on the ground, one of the clan heads stepped forward with a look of displeasure in his eyes and an ice-cold aura.

He was the head of the Glacier Phoenix Clan, Feng Hanxue.

It should have been their clan’s Feng Hanqiu to enter Spirit God Palace, but he ended up being replaced by someone from the Inferno Phoenix Clan. Furthermore, the Inferno Phoenix Clan had even gained a God King and a God King realm pinnacle cultivator in succession over the last few hours...

There was no way he could have been happy about it.

“That’s right.” The head of the Inferno Phoenix Clan, Feng Yuanchi, nodded.

Feng Hanxue turned to look at Zhang Xuan, and he found that the latter’s soul was indeed unfathomably deep. Despite being a God King, he was actually unable to see through the young man’s soul cultivation.

This made him even more stifled, but it would not be appropriate for him to kick up a fuss. So, he waved his hand impatiently and said, “Let’s start the trial. Let me say it in advance. The Trial of Conferment is very dangerous, and the slightest carelessness can result in your soul getting crushed!”

Feng Yuanchi nodded before turning to Zhang Xuan and discreetly sending him a message through zhenqi telepathy. “Your goal is just to test if you have the potential to push for a breakthrough to Conferred God King. That will put us in a better position to demand more resources from the other two clans for you. So, if you find yourself reaching your limits, back down right away. Don’t force yourself to persevere through it, alright?”

Zhang Xuan nodded before asking, “How does the trial work?”

“Do you see the stone phoenix sculpture ahead? Behind the sculpture, you will find a constellation map of the Sky of Spirit Origin. Through channeling your soul energy into the stone phoenix sculpture, you’ll be able to light up the stars in the constellation map. If you can light up a star, it shows that you have potential. If you can light up a hundred stars, it means that you have the right to become a Conferred God King,” Feng Yuanchi said as he pointed ahead.

Zhang Xuan glanced over, and right outside Spirit God Palace, there was indeed a massive stone phoenix sculpture. Behind it was an even larger constellation map with countless stars twinkling on it, numbering in the tens of thousands at the very least.

Looking at it from afar, it looked like a massive phoenix soaring in a boundless sky.

To only need to light up a hundred stars on the constellation map in order to qualify as a Conferred God King... was it not a little too easy?

Feng Yuanchi saw through Zhang Xuan's thoughts and explained with an awkward chuckle, "Don't underestimate the trial. The stone phoenix sculpture has His Sovereignty's will infused within, so you'll experience a tremendous amount of pressure as you attempt to infuse your soul energy in. In other words, you will need to overcome His Sovereignty's will while lighting up the stars, making it an extremely difficult trial. I, together with the other two clan heads, have tried the trial before, but in the end... we couldn't even light up a single star!"

"I see..." Zhang Xuan nodded.

If it was that easy to become a Conferred God King, there would not be just three of them in the entire Sky of Spirit Origin.

The three clan heads had already discussed this matter beforehand, so there were no issues hindering them.

Zhang Xuan walked up to the stone phoenix sculpture and placed his hand on it.

As soon as his palm touched the sculpture, he immediately felt a powerful pressure coming from within the sculpture. Without any hesitation, he began to channel his soul energy into the sculpture.

Hong long!

Zhang Xuan's soul rattled a little under the pressure, and vaguely, he could see a massive phoenix appearing before him. In comparison to this massive phoenix, his soul energy appeared to be no more than a speck of dust in the midst of a desert.

Do I have to overcome this phoenix in order to clear the trial?

Things were indeed not as easy as he had expected.

The pressure coming from the phoenix was simply too great. Even though he had made a breakthrough in his soul

cultivation, it still would not be easy for him to overcome it.

I should still give it a try anyway...

He was already there, so no matter how difficult it might be, he should not give up without at least putting up a fight.

Above the God Kings were the Conferred God Kings. If he wished to become a God Monarch like Kong shi, this was a route that he had to take. Since that was the case, there was no reason for him to run away from it.

So, he swiftly gathered his soul energy before directing it toward the phoenix before him.

Hmm? This isn't right...

Zhang Xuan soon realized that something was amiss.

Given the tremendous pressure weighing down on him, he thought that it would get progressively harder for him to push his soul energy forward. Yet, as he got closer to the phoenix, he oddly felt a sense of intimacy.

Instead of getting repelled, he was able to easily channel his soul energy past the phoenix to reach the constellation map.

Zhang Xuan was not too sure what was happening, but he was just glad that he was able to bypass the phoenix for the time being. So, he directed his soul energy toward one of the stars.

Hu!

As if someone had flicked on the switch, all the stars lit up simultaneously to radiate a brilliant light.

Zhang Xuan was stunned. It's all lit up... Is it supposed to be so simple?



# 2214 The Deathless Monarch

Should it not have been difficult to light up even a single star on the constellation map?

Why would everything suddenly light up together when he had not really done anything?

While Zhang Xuan was still trying to make sense out of this abnormal situation, the three clan heads behind were rubbing their eyes again and again, fearing that their eyes were playing tricks on them.

Lighting up a hundred stars meant that one possessed the ability to receive the conferment of a God Monarch. If all the stars lit up... did it mean that the conferment was not a big deal to him at all?

“How could this be?”

The three clan heads found themselves incapable of accepting such an outcome.

It was not just about the young man lighting all the stars up but how fast he was able to do so!

It had only been ten breaths since he came into contact with the sculpture, and all of the stars were already releasing brilliant glows, as if they were desperate to outshine one another.

Even the old ancestors of their clans, full-fledged Conferred God Kings, would not be able to do something like that!

“Could it be that the constellation map is malfunctioning?” Feng Hanxue asked doubtfully.

“His Sovereignty’s will is inside. How could it possibly be malfunctioning?” Feng Yuanchi immediately shot down that notion.

This was a constellation map of the entire Sky of Spirit Origin, and the will of the Deathless Monarch was infused within it. The very idea that it could malfunction was ridiculous!

The only possibility, as difficult as it might be to believe it, was that the young man had cleared the test with his true skills.

Meanwhile, Zhang Xuan reassessed the stone phoenix sculpture before him.

Since the pressure coming from the phoenix had finally alleviated, he could not help but notice that the aura it emanated was extremely familiar. It was something that he had felt many times before.

This is... Little Chick's aura? Zhang Xuan thought with clenched fists.

Was his previous conjecture correct? Was that fellow really the Deathless Monarch of the Sky of Spirit Origin?

With this thought in mind, Zhang Xuan quickly sent a telepathic message to Little Chick. "Hey, come out and see if you recognize this phoenix..."

Hu!

Little Chick materialized right in front of Zhang Xuan.

Looking at the sculpture before it, it cocked its head to the side as saliva started dripping from the corner of its lips. With dazed eyes, it muttered beneath its breath, "Hungry..."

Without any warning, it leaped into the air.

Hu!

In a single mouthful, it swallowed the whole sculpture.

"You... What are you doing!" Feng Yuanchi and the others were taken aback by this abrupt development.

That sculpture had the will of their God Monarch in it, and a chick had swallowed it whole.

Zhang Xuan was also horrified.

I only called you out here to take a look so as to see if you are able to remember anything, but you actually swallowed the other party whole...

How am I supposed to explain this to the clan heads?

They will dice me into pieces!

Zhang Xuan's head slowly creaked in trepidation to look behind him, and just as he had thought, there were three heads with infernos blazing in their eyes directed toward him.

The stone phoenix sculpture was clearly something of great significance to the Sky of Spirit Origin, possibly on the level of a national artifact, so watching someone else swallow it right before their eyes was like a huge slap to their faces.

There was no one in their position who could tolerate something like that!

“Feng Xuan, hand that chick over right now!”

“You are courting death...”

The three clan heads bellowed furiously as powerful auras burst forth from their bodies. They were going to make their moves.

But before they could really make a move, the ground began trembling intensely.

The stone phoenix sculpture was the centerpiece of Spirit God Palace, and its disappearance dealt a fatal blow to it. The spiritual energy harnessed within the palace began dissipating into the surroundings, and chunks of the buildings began falling to the ground.

The three clan heads had to struggle for a brief moment before they regained their balance.

Boom!

As if an earthquake had struck the massive Spirit God Palace, an entire half of it immediately collapsed inward. Furthermore, with spiritual energy continuously leaking from it, it looked like the palace would collapse from the sky at any moment.

“T-this...” Zhang Xuan was on the verge of tears as he watched the destruction unfold before his eyes.

He had heard from his direct disciples that back when he was still on the Master Teacher Continent, there were quite a few people who called him the God of Destruction.

Back then, he had felt a little confused about why other people addressed him like that. After all, he had never intended to destroy those things; it was always due to a series of unfortunate coincidences!

But he had never thought that the day would come when he ended up tearing down his girlfriend's home as well.

It was like a son-in-law was visiting his father-in-law for the first time, but before the father-in-law could open the door, the son-in-law had already thrown a stick of dynamite in to blow the house into pieces.

Oh dear heavens, why did you have to play such a prank on me?

Zhang Xuan wanted to cry out loud that it was not his fault, but it was a fact that Little Chick was his tamed beast, and he was the one who had summoned it out.

There was no way he could explain himself like that.

“Wait a moment. I know that all of you are very agitated now, but as fellow members of a civilized society, let's talk things out and not resort to violence. You see, I don't think that Little Chick intended to do that either. There must be a good reason for that, so let's listen to its explanation, alright?” Zhang Xuan said as he quickly formed a barrier around him in case the three clan heads made a move.

He was setting up the barrier not to fend off the three clan heads' attacks but to protect them from being harmed by Little Chick! As adorable as Little Chick might appear to be, looks were deceiving. It was actually a very dangerous animal that would not hesitate to gobble a person whole.

If Little Chick really devoured the three clan heads as well, he would really be in deep trouble.

“Humph! You can slowly tell us all of the reasons you have once we have taken you down!”

The three clan heads bellowed furiously as they gathered their strength to tear apart Zhang Xuan's barrier. At this moment, however, a resounding voice suddenly boomed deafeningly in the air.

“What happened?”

Three more silhouettes appeared right before the crowd. There was a cold glint in their eyes.

“Paying respects to the old ancestors...”

The three clan heads immediately bowed down to pay respects to the three silhouettes.

They were the three Conferred God Kings of the Sky of Spirit Origin, the Fire Feather Conferred God King, the Glacier Feather Conferred God King, and the Tempestuous Feather Conferred God King!

These three old ancestors had been alarmed when they sensed the instability of Spirit God Palace.

“Let’s first stabilize Spirit God Palace before dealing with this...”

A portion of Spirit God Palace had already collapsed, and the formation sustaining it was swiftly losing energy.

Without any hesitation, the three Conferred God Kings immediately channeled their energy together in order to form a large sphere around the floating Spirit God Palace. The destruction slowly ground to a halt, and the dissipating spiritual energy was trapped within the sphere as well.

The collapsed portions had not been repaired yet, but at the very least, they had prevented the worst from occurring.

Once that was done, they turned their gazes back to the three clan heads, and the Fire Feather Conferred God King ordered, “Explain yourselves.”

“Old ancestor, Feng Xuan here is the most formidable genius among the younger generation of our clan...” Feng Yuanchi quickly began explaining how things came to be.

This included how Zhang Xuan’s soul cultivation had reached God King realm pinnacle despite his young age, how he had lit up all the stars on the constellation map, and the sudden appearance of a little yellow chick that swallowed the sculpture of the God Monarch.

“You managed to light up all of the stars on the constellation map?”

The three Conferred God Kings stared at Zhang Xuan with incredulous expressions.

Even they would be unable to pull off a feat like that.

“I was lucky.” Zhang Xuan clasped his fist. “Little Chick is my tamed beast, and it didn’t intend to swallow the God Monarch’s sculpture. I ask of you to pardon it...”

The Fire Feather Conferred God King harrumphed as he looked at the little yellow chick with cold eyes. “It’s an act of blasphemy to treat His Sovereignty’s sculpture in such a manner, as well as a show of grave disrespect toward the Sky of Spirit Origin. This warrants the death penalty!”

The Glacier Feather Conferred God King glanced at Zhang Xuan and said frostily, “Even though it wasn’t your primary intention for this happen, it doesn’t change the fact that the chick is your tamed beast. You have to take responsibility for its mistakes...”

“Let’s not waste time and do it,” the Tempestuous Feather Conferred God King said.

The three Conferred God Kings raised their hands, and the entire world began trembling uncontrollably. It was almost as if the Armageddon was happening right before their eyes.

At this moment, an impassive voice rumbled from Spirit God Palace behind them, causing the world to turn even darker.

“The three of you wish to kill me? The gall of you!”

Right before everyone’s eyes, a humongous silhouette of a black phoenix appeared behind the adorable little yellow chick. Its wingspan was large enough to rival the size of Spirit God Palace, and there was no being that could not appear insignificant in its presence.

“God Monarch...”

The three Conferred God Kings gasped in astonishment, and they quickly kneeled on the ground.

# 2215 Little Deathless

The silhouette of the black phoenix flew out of Little Chick's body and towered before everyone in the sky. Even Spirit God Palace appeared to be small before it.

“That is... the Deathless Monarch?” Zhang Xuan's body trembled as he looked at Little Chick with a complicated expression.

He had thought of such a possibility before, but he could not help but be shocked witnessing such a sight before him.

It was no wonder the little yellow chick kept mentioning that it was a legendary beast that had ruled over the lands when it was still a gourd. For a very long time, he had thought that the other party was bragging... but to think that it was one of the Nine God Monarchs!

It was no wonder it sensed a feeling of familiarity back in the City of Collapsed Space, and the air of degeneration was completely ineffective on it. In the end, it was actually Little Chick's city!

To have accepted a God Monarch as his tamed beast...

No, that isn't right...

All of a sudden, a new thought arose in Zhang Xuan's mind that caused his body to jolt in shock.

Little Chick is a new will that was born after the death of the Deathless Monarch, which is also why it submitted to me so easily. The black phoenix in the air comes from the previous Deathless Monarch. If he refuses to acknowledge our relationship, I will be in grave danger...

He had not figured out the secrets behind the Deathless Monarch's resurrection yet, but if one thing was clear, it was apparent that Little Chick's memories had been sealed, and it did not know a thing.

From the black phoenix's point of view, it would appear as if he had taken advantage of its weakness to turn it into his tamed beast... Would it go on a rampage for that?

And as if his worst worries were coming true, the massive black phoenix in the sky suddenly turned its eyes toward him.

While it did not attack him, Zhang Xuan could feel an overwhelming pressure weighing down on him. It almost felt as if the sky was collapsing down on him.

Even with his recent breakthroughs in his soul cultivation, he was still completely powerless before such pressure. His body slowly shriveled together as he shuddered weakly in the face of the pressure.

No...

Zhang Xuan hurriedly drove his zhenqi to ward off the pressure, and his bent body slowly straightened up bit by bit again.

"My moniker as the Deathless Monarch doesn't mean that I have fully transcended death. My soul can dissipate, and my body can die, but in due course, I will rise from ashes and return to life," the black phoenix said with a voice devoid of feelings.

"In order to protect myself during my resurrection, my body seals off its own memories until my cultivation reaches up to par. Yet, you exploited my weakness to turn me into your tamed beast. Such reprehensible and dishonorable creatures humans are... There's no one in the world who is worthy of becoming the master of the Deathless Monarch!"

Boom!

As the black phoenix spoke, the space seemed to compress inward, squeezing the air out of the lungs of those present.

Zhang Xuan felt as if he was carrying a massive mountain on his back, and the sheer weight of it caused his spine to bend once more. He felt like he would succumb very soon.

Even the world would be shattered in the face of a God Monarch's rage.



“That person actually dared to exploit His Sovereignty’s weakness during his resurrection to tame him?”

“How brazen! How could someone think of something as ridiculous as that?”

“Even if His Sovereignty hasn’t regained his strength, he still harnesses the Aura of a God Monarch within him! Isn’t that fellow afraid of suffering the backlash?”

The three Conferred God Kings stared at the young man in disbelief.

The Nine God Monarchs had reached the peak of evolution in the world. Even if the Deathless Monarch was still in his weakened state from his resurrection, his bloodline would still be beyond what any ordinary human could withstand. Just how foolish must that fellow be to have taken the Deathless Monarch as his tamed beast?

More importantly... just how foolish must the will of the resurrected God Monarch be to agree to something like that?

In any case, knowing that this concerned the honor of the Deathless Monarch, they decided to hold their tongues.

“I am Little Chick, not the Deathless Monarch! He’s my master! None of you are allowed to touch him!”

Boom!

Just as Zhang Xuan was reaching his limits, a roar suddenly echoed in the air. The little yellow chick was struggling with all its might to stop the black phoenix.

“You...”

The black phoenix stared at the little yellow chick with a complicated gaze.

No matter what, the other party was still born from him.

How could it possibly be so foolish?

How could a God Monarch acknowledge a mere Celestial God as its master? This was disgraceful!

However, this was a huge problem. If the little yellow chick rejected it, it would not be able to do anything at all.

If things were left to develop as they were, he would be bound to the young man, forced to serve him!

Realizing how dangerous the situation was, the black phoenix forcefully held Little Chick in place as it yelled, “Kill that fellow right now!”

Hearing those words, the three Conferred God Kings immediately got to action. They flitted forth and encircled Zhang Xuan without any hesitation.

They knew clearly where their loyalty lay, and they would not defy the will of their God Monarch.

“How dare you...” Little Chick bared its teeth as it cried out with reddened eyes.

It had not awoken its memories yet, so the feelings it felt were not aligned with those of the black phoenix. To it, the closest kin it had was its master, so there was no way it would allow its master to be killed.

“You and I stem from the same origin. I might just be a mere will, but you are not strong enough to defy me yet...” The black phoenix harrumphed as he sealed the movements of Little Chick tightly.

The black phoenix retained all the memories of the Deathless Monarch, so he knew of the secrets and means that Little Chick possessed. With such knowledge, it was not too difficult for him to restrain it.

Despite being surrounded by three Conferred God Kings who bore hostile intentions toward him, Zhang Xuan did not appear worried in the least. Instead, he looked at them calmly as he said, “This is a personal matter between me and your God Monarch, so I advise you not to get involved in this. If you kill me today, do you think that Little Chick will spare you once it regains its full strength?”

“This...”

The three Conferred God Kings could not help but hesitate upon hearing those words.

The young man was right.

The ‘Deathless Monarch’ that was commanding them was no more than a sliver of the old Deathless Monarch’s will. It was only a matter of time before it dissipated.

On the other hand, Little Chick was the newly resurrected God Monarch!

If they killed Little Chick’s master, once it regained its strength and returned to its throne, it would surely kill the three of them in vengeance!

This was something far greater than they had imagined. Their decision would seal their fates.

“Hurry up and kill him!” the black phoenix bellowed in fury. “Do you think that I will still acknowledge a man as my master after I regain my memories?”

And those words caused the three Conferred God Kings to waver yet again.

They had known the Deathless Monarch for over ten thousand years, and they were familiar with the latter’s temperament. Having been in a lofty position for so long, how could the great Deathless Monarch possibly acknowledge a mere high-tier Celestial God as his master?

This was a joke in itself!

Boom!

The three Conferred God Kings finally made up their minds. They gathered their powers together to form an energy sphere around Zhang Xuan to prevent him from escaping.

Seeing that these three Conferred God Kings were really intent on dealing with him, Zhang Xuan shook his head.

Since Little Chick had been curbed by the black phoenix, he could only rely on himself to deal with those three.

While his soul cultivation had reached God King realm pinnacle, his zhenqi cultivation was still at high-tier Celestial

God. It would be hard for him to face a Conferred God King face-on, let alone three of them.

“It looks like I can only rely on my golden page once more then...” Zhang Xuan sighed deeply.

There was no other way around this. He could only hope that he could deal with all three of them at once with his golden page.

It was just that there was a problem regarding that...

In order to encircle him, the three Conferred God Kings had taken positions all around him, so if he brought his golden page out to deal with all three of them at once, he would be caught within its attack as well.

He would have to find a way to make the three of them get closer together first...

Tzla!

Just as Zhang Xuan was still thinking about how he could pull that off, a surge of sword qi suddenly flew in his direction. Taken aback, he quickly tilted his body sideways to dodge it, but his robe ended up getting torn in the process of doing so, causing the crimson pendant that Luo Ruoxin had given him to be revealed.

Weng!

The crimson pendant buzzed lightly as it began to heat up once more.

It was at this moment that the black phoenix in the sky saw the crimson pendant.

Shocked beyond words, it released Little Chick as it slowly descended from the sky to stand before Zhang Xuan. Then, it lowered its body and cried out, “Your tamed beast, Little Deathless, pays respects to master...”

# 2216 Luo Ruoxin, God Monarch Lingxi!

“Ah?”

The three Conferred God Kings who were in the midst of attacking Zhang Xuan froze in place.

What is happening now? Should we continue attacking, or should we stop?

Didn't the will of the Deathless Monarch tell us to kill that fellow?

So why would it suddenly fly over here and act all cutesy, calling itself Little Deathless...

Why does it feel like something is really, really off about this?

Are you really our lofty and merciless God Monarch?

However, before they could remain fazed for too long, they suddenly found the eyes of the black phoenix glaring at them in displeasure.

“What do you think you are doing, raising your hands against my master? Are you asking to be killed? Despite having lived for tens of thousands of years, is violence the only thing that you have in your heads? Don't you know what a peaceful resolution is? Just because you have the power to destroy doesn't mean that you should! Do you know that each time you destroy something, it takes others a great deal of effort to conduct reparation work?”

Boom!

The space quivered a little before the attacks of the three Conferred God Kings dissipated into the surroundings, as if it had never appeared before.

The three Conferred God Kings were utterly frenzied.

It could not be that the Little Chick had possessed the black phoenix, could it?

They were not the only ones who were flabbergasted by this turn of events. Little Chick and Zhang Xuan were also shocked.

Earlier, when the black phoenix heard Little Chick calling Zhang Xuan its master, it had been so furious that it looked as if it would unleash hell upon the world. Yet, in the blink of an eye, it became the most subservient servant that one could ever imagine.

When did the Deathless Monarch become a comedic relief character?

Or is this actually the Deathless Monarch's true temperament? Zhang Xuan wondered as he recalled just how unreliable the Little Chick could be at times.

Considering that Little Chick was the reincarnation of the Deathless Monarch, they should be pretty similar in terms of character. If so, it was understandable that the black phoenix was so shameless.

However, there was still one thing that baffled him.

Why would the black phoenix suddenly recognize him as his master all of a sudden?

Could this have something to do with the crimson pendant?

Now that he thought about it, it was shortly after the pendant started heating up that the attitude of the Deathless Monarch began changing.

Had the Deathless Monarch recognized the crimson pendant?

As this idea surfaced in Zhang Xuan's mind, he hurriedly turned to the black phoenix, held up the crimson pendant, and asked anxiously, "Could it be that you recognize this pendant? Then... do you know where Ruoxin is?"

He had traveled all the way to the Sky of Spirit Origin and competed for the right to enter Spirit God Palace just to find Luo Ruoxin. However, even after causing such a huge

commotion, Luo Ruoxin was still nowhere to be found. That could only mean one thing...

She was not there at all!

“Ruoxin?” the black phoenix asked in incomprehension.

“I am referring to the owner of this pendant!” Zhang Xuan exclaimed in agitation.

“That is blood of the...” The black phoenix nodded in realization. “I think I get it. The Ruoxin you are talking about must be referring to God Monarch Lingxi!”

“God Monarch Lingxi?” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

That name was very familiar to him. Back when they were on the Master Teacher Continent, when he took on the persona of Luo Tianya, the name that Luo Ruoxin took on... seemed to be Lingxi!

Back then, he had even clapped in delight, saying that no matter how far apart they were, their hearts would be connected with one another.

“Yes, the person I am looking for is indeed God Monarch Lingxi! Do you know where she is?” Zhang Xuan asked anxiously.

He had been guessing all this while that Luo Ruoxin was a fake name, and it was indeed just as he had thought...

But the truth was that she had told him her real name as well, but she could only reveal it under the guise of a fake name!

How could he have missed such an important clue all this while?

“God Monarch Lingxi is the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom, so it goes without saying that she is in the Sky of Freedom,” the black phoenix replied with a doubtful on his face.

You have already accepted me as your tamed beast, but you don’t even know the names of the Nine God Monarchs?

“Sky of Freedom?” Zhang Xuan’s face stiffened as he muttered to himself. “No, I should have known...”

He had already learned about the names of eight of the God Monarchs from Fu Jiangchen, and the only one that remained a mystery to him was the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom. He should have known as soon as he heard the title ‘God Monarch Lingxi’.

In the end, the person he was seeking was not in the Sky of Spirit Origin but at the centermost Sky of Freedom.

Seeing Zhang Xuan’s reaction, the black phoenix suddenly recalled something and said, “There is going to be a life-and-death duel between God Monarch Lingxi and the Heaven Subjugation Monarch on the night of the next full moon...”

Even though he had only been a sliver of a will trapped within the stone phoenix sculpture, he was still aware of the happenings around the Firmament, especially the upcoming fight between the two God Monarchs.

“Life-and-death duel on the night of the next full moon? That is... in five days?” Zhang Xuan’s body shuddered as he narrowed his eyes in shock.

He had heard of this duel shortly after he arrived in the Firmament, and all this while, he had not been paying any attention to it. He thought that Kong shi would surely emerge victorious in the battle.

But he did not think that the opponent would be Luo Ruoxin!

And to make matters worse, it was actually a life-and-death duel!

Did that not mean that one of them would not walk out alive of the battle?

“Yes. So far, the battles between God Monarchs have never gone to the extent of life and death, but those two made the decision to proceed like that. I believe that there’s a deeper reason behind their decision, but I’m afraid what I know is quite limited,” the black phoenix replied.

“I need to head to the Sky of Freedom and stop them,” Zhang Xuan murmured beneath his breath.



Luo Ruoxin was the only person he had ever harbored romantic feelings for, and while he had never met Kong shi, he had heard many things about the latter, and he carried the deepest respect for him.

He could not stand the idea of anything happening to either of them!

“Stop them? The two of them have already made up their minds, so who could possibly stop them?”

The black phoenix gazed down at Little Chick and shook his head. “I wouldn’t have been a match for either of them even when I was at my peak, let alone in my current state...”

At this point, Zhang Xuan suddenly paused as another thought came to his mind.

Given the ruckus that he had caused in the Sky of Linglong, it would be safe to assume that Luo Ruoxin, as a God Monarch, had heard of the matter. Yet, there was no movement from her.

Was this a sign that she was reluctant to meet him?

But why would that be the case?

Did it have something to do with her upcoming battle against Kong shi?

And this brought him back to the very first question.

Why did they need to have a life-and-death duel with one another?

The reason Ruoxin descended to the Master Teacher Continent was to claim the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. That is an artifact that Kong shi devoted many years to forging, and it’s highly likely that he has infused the power of the Heavens’ Order into it...

Even though Luo Ruoxin had never explicitly told him about the reason behind why she descended to the Master Teacher Continent, he was still able to guess as much.

Right after she got her hands on the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, she broke open the dimension barrier and left

shortly after. It would not take a person too much to figure out as much.

All along, Zhang Xuan had been wondering why someone from the Firmament like her would pay such a heavy price to descend to the Master Teacher Continent to obtain the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. After all, there were far more powerful artifacts here!

But looking at it once more, it was clear that she was preparing for the upcoming fight against Kong shi!

“Why does she have to kill Kong shi then?” Zhang Xuan muttered.

All the questions filling up his mind made him feel as if his head was going to explode.

Just as the black phoenix had mentioned, Kong shi had challenged the other eight God Monarchs so far, and they had all been friendly spars. To date, the other God Monarchs were still living perfectly well.

So, why did the final match with the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom have to be a life-and-death duel?

“Even if I can’t stop them, I need to at least find out the reason behind it,” Zhang Xuan said with clenched fists.

Given his current strength, he was indeed in no position to interfere in a fight between God Monarchs, but so what?

No matter how impossible it was, he would still give it a try. Even if it did not work out, he should at least find out what the hell was going on!

# 2217 The Truth of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe

Having seen through Zhang Xuan's intention, the black phoenix in the sky advised, "Master, you'll require the strength of a God Monarch at least if you wish to head over to stop them. Without that much, you won't be able to do anything."

"You're right. I need to grow stronger in order to have a greater say in matters. Otherwise, I might not even be able to meet them at all," Zhang Xuan said grimly.

There had to be a compelling reason behind why Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin had made such a decision, so it was unlikely that his words would somehow be able to magically convince them out of it.

If he wanted to make a difference, he needed to have the strength to make it happen.

But alas, his rate of cultivation was still too slow!

He had been in the Firmament for a month now, but his soul cultivation had only reached God King realm pinnacle thus far.

If he could become a God Monarch on par with Kong shi within the next five days, would he be able to stop the battle?

But Zhang Xuan knew that this was impossible.

He had not even comprehended a God King realm cultivation technique yet, so it was clearly impossible for him to make so many breakthroughs within such a short period of time.

Zhang Xuan felt a deep sense of helplessness weighing down on him.

"Master, it's indeed nigh impossible for your cultivation to reach the level of a God Monarch within the next few days... However, you still have Little Deathless here with you," the black phoenix said shyly.

Zhang Xuan's eyes immediately lit up as a spark of hope appeared right before his eyes.

Indeed, it was practically impossible for him to become a God Monarch within the next five days, but he could help Little Chick recover its strength as the Deathless Monarch.

Even if its strength was beneath that of Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin, at the very least, it felt like he would be able to do something with a God Monarch on his side.

“Forty years ago, when I was defeated at my peak, Spirit Origin Royal City ended up collapsing inward, resulting in the deep abyss that we see beneath the floating city today. If we can find the collapsed city and retrieve my powers from it, it shouldn't be too difficult for me to recover my memories and return to my peak!” the Deathless Monarch said.

Zhang Xuan trembled upon hearing those words.

It just so happened that he knew where that collapsed city was—the Azure's City of Collapsed Space!

As long as they could find a way to get there, they would be able to retrieve Little Chick's powers and allow it to return back to its peak!

But there was a problem.

There was a dimension barrier between the Azure and the Firmament, so how could they descend to the Azure?

“You are a God Monarch, so you should at least know a thing or two about how God Monarch Lingxi was able to descend to the lower worlds, right?” Zhang Xuan asked the black phoenix.

“I don't really know the details. My will is quite weak at the moment, so I spend most of my time sleeping. However, not too long ago, God Monarch Lingxi paid me a visit and borrowed my Seal of Supreme Monarch, which is an insignia representing my identity as the Spirit God,” the black phoenix replied.

“Seal of Supreme Monarch?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

As it would turn out, it seemed to be something similar to how the ‘royal seal’ worked in his previous world. Whenever the God Monarch passed down their edict, they would use their Seal of Supreme Monarch as their insignia.

In other words, it was a token that represented their unparalleled authority.

“The person who holds my Seal of Supreme Monarch will be able to represent me, the Spirit God, and the Sky of Spirit Origin,” the black phoenix said.

“This...” Zhang Xuan’s eyes widened in realization. “Could it be that Ruoxin borrowed your Seal of Supreme Monarch in order to relay an edict to the people of Spirit Origin Royal City who are currently living in the Azure and the Master Teacher Continent? That’s how she was able to have them conduct a ritual to open up the dimension barriers for her descent...”

He recalled a past conversation with Du Qingyuan, and the latter had mentioned that they had not heard anything from the Spirit God for the past several thousand years. It was only some time ago that the Spirit God suddenly contacted her and instructed her to hold a ritual to allow her to descend to the lower worlds.

It did not sound like a big deal when he first heard about it, but that was only because he did not know just how resilient the dimension barrier of the Firmament was. One must know that even God Monarchs were not able to breach the dimension barrier!

This was probably the only loophole that one could exploit in order to get to the lower worlds.

That would also explain why Luo Ruoxin was known as the Spirit God on the Master Teacher Continent and the Azure!

At the same time, this verified his conjecture about the Otherworldly Demons being the people of Spirit Origin Royal City that had fallen from the Firmament. It was likely that their bodies were tainted by the impure spiritual energy of the lower worlds, causing their cultivation to regress and their nature to become warped.

Going through the chain of events once more, forty years ago, disaster struck Spirit Origin Royal City, causing it to fall to the Azure and become known as the City of Collapsed Space. A portion of the Semi-Divinities that had fallen along with the city survived and founded Starchaser Palace. Meanwhile, a number of the survivors fell into the cracks of space and ended up on the Master Teacher Continent as Otherworldly Demons.

This was why Starchaser Palace and the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe shared similar altars, and they possessed the exceptional ability to communicate across worlds.

That would also explain why Little Chick, despite being the resurrected form of a God Monarch, had ended up in the Master Teacher Continent.

Most likely, Kong shi had found it in the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe and sealed it in the vicinity of the Sanctum of Sages. In the end, Luo Qiqi had ended up finding it through a map and told Luo Xuanqing about it.

Forty years ago on the Firmament, four thousand years ago on the Firmament, and forty thousand years ago on the Master Teacher Continent... The timeline fit!

Most likely, the key to breaking the dimension barrier was the Spirit God's Seal of Supreme Monarch!

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan turned to the black phoenix and asked, "Where is your Seal of Supreme Monarch? Did Ruoxin... no, I mean, did God Monarch Lingxi return it after using it?"

"It's with me now. She returned it shortly after using it."

The black phoenix opened his beak wide, and a token roughly the size of a round plate flew out of his mouth.

As the round plate revolved quietly in the air, Zhang Xuan felt as if all the energy within the Sky of Spirit Origin was swaying along with its movements.

If the Conferred God Kings governed over the territories within the Sky of Spirit Origin, this seal effectively granted one authority over the entire Sky. This included not just the land but the sky as well.

“Can you lend it to me?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Of course! Everything that Little Deathless has is yours, master!” the black phoenix replied with a fawning smile.

With a flap of his grand wings, the seal immediately flew into Zhang Xuan’s palm.

Taking a closer look at the seal, Zhang Xuan’s body trembled in agitation.

He could see countless inscriptions carved on top of the round seal. These inscriptions were a miniature version of what he had seen on the altars of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe!

Previously, he could not really understand what these inscriptions meant, but after spending some time in the Firmament, he had become rather familiar with the geography of the Nine Skies. As such, he was able to tell that these inscriptions were actually the landscape and constellation map of the Sky of Spirit Origin!

The seal was created based on a fusion of those two.

All this while, the rituals of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe were not directed at any specific individual but the Sky of Spirit Origin itself!

Had he not seen the map of the Sky of Spirit Origin before, he would not have been able to figure out all of this.

“Let me give it a try and see if I can use it to communicate with the Azure!”

Taking in a deep breath, Zhang Xuan drove his energy toward the Seal of Supreme Monarch.

Weng!

A brilliant light escaped from the seal, a sign that it had been activated.

Seeing this, Zhang Xuan began speaking in an obscure language. It was the same language that Du Qingyuan used for her rituals.

He had learned it back in his time on the Master Teacher Continent and the Azure.

“That’s the God Monarch’s Deathless Celestial Phoenix Language,” the Fire Feather Conferred God King said grimly.

Other people might not be able to comprehend this language, but as a Conferred God King, one of the strongest existences of the Sky of Spirit Origin, he could tell what it was.

It was the Deathless Celestial Phoenix Language of their God Monarch, and its reputation in the Firmament was equivalent to that of the Eight Notes of Heavenly Dragon!



# 2218 Descending Into the Abyss

The seal released a buzz for a moment before the light gradually dimmed.

Seeing this, Zhang Xuan frowned.

Based on his theory, he should have been able to communicate with Du Qingyuan and the others through the altar via this ritual, but for some reason, he was unable to reach them. It felt like there was something hindering him, preventing him from delivering his message.

If that was the case, how did Luo Ruoxin communicate with them?

“Would it easier if we head to that distorted space from before?” Little Chick, who had been silent all this while, suddenly proposed.

It had been with Zhang Xuan through the Azure, so it was able to tell what Zhang Xuan was planning to do.

“The distorted space...” Zhang Xuan repeated before nodding excitedly in agreement.

Indeed!

If his previous conjecture was correct, the abyss beneath Spirit Origin Royal City should be linked to the Azure. Even if there was still a dimension barrier there, it should be much thinner compared to elsewhere.

Perhaps this was how Luo Ruoxin was able to successfully descend to the Azure and enter the Master Teacher Continent.

“Let’s head there to take a look,” Zhang Xuan said.

Little Chick nodded as it spat out the stone phoenix sculpture that it had swallowed earlier.

Without any hesitation, the black phoenix immediately entered the sculpture once more. It was already in a feeble state due to its earlier exertion, and it looked like it would not be able to last too long.

Seeing how even the will of the old Deathless Monarch had acknowledged Zhang Xuan as his master, the Fire Feather Conferred God King and the others did not dare utter a word of objection. They bowed deferentially to send Zhang Xuan off.

Descending from Spirit Origin Royal City, Zhang Xuan was just about to enter the abyss when he was suddenly joined by Luo Qiqi.

“Bring me with you,” she said with a determined gaze.

Understanding Luo Qiqi’s intentions, Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

If they descended to the Azure, Luo Qiqi would be able to return to the Master Teacher Continent and meet Luo Xuanqing and her other family members. This was one of her greatest regrets all this while, so it would be good if she could resolve it.

The two humans and a chick quickly descended the passageway of the abyss, and about an hour later, they were finally standing before the spatial vortex.

“I’ll be heading down first!”

With the previous experience, Little Chick unhesitatingly dived into it.

“I’ll give it a try, too!” Luo Qiqi added with a chuckle.

Before her body even fell into the spatial vortex, the space around her had begun warping to mimic the movements of the spatial vortex. As a result, she was able to maneuver freely within the spatial vortex without sustaining any injuries.

As the spirit of the Dimension Silencer, she was extremely sensitive to the manipulation of spatial laws. Furthermore, her cultivation had already reached God King realm pinnacle. With that, it was not too difficult for her to pull off this feat.

“I guess I’m the only one left,” Zhang Xuan muttered as he took a deep breath.

Unlike the last time he was there with Feng Jiuge, his soul cultivation had already reached God King realm pinnacle, and he had the Spirit God’s Seal of Supreme Monarch in his possession.

It should not be too dangerous for him to enter the spatial vortex.

Thus, he channeled his soul energy to form a massive barrier around him before leaping into the spatial vortex while clutching the Seal of Supreme Monarch tightly.

Weng!

As soon as his body touched the spatial vortex, he began to twist as if he was a noodle.

Despite having straightened his body, he could still see his feet warping like a reflection in a distortion mirror. He was unable to control his body.

Luo Qiqi swam over to his side and said, “The space within a spatial vortex is actually not too different from normal space. Don’t believe what you are seeing through your own eyes.”

“Don’t believe what I’m seeing through my own eyes?”

“Our eyes and senses perceive what we see and sense in normal space to be right because it is what we are accustomed to. So, in an area of distorted space, we must view the world from a distorted perspective in order for it to make sense to us...” Luo Qiqi explained the unique properties within the spatial vortex to him.

As the spirit of the Dimension Silencer, she was able to grasp the secrets of the spatial vortex shortly after entering it.

After hearing Luo Qiqi’s words, Zhang Xuan quickly adjusted his point of view, and he could finally perceive the world in the same way that he was used to.

Seeing that Zhang Xuan was finally adapting to it, Luo Qiqi gestured forward and said, “The spatial vortex is not the same throughout. The degree of distortion can change very quickly

as we move from place to place, such that even Conferred God Kings will have trouble trying to venture too deep.”

Looking in the direction that Luo Qiqi was gesturing toward, Zhang Xuan saw the world ahead of him distorting in countless bizarre ways. There were some areas that were incredibly broad and some areas that were almost as thin as a needle.

It was as if the laws of the world had suddenly collapsed within this area.

To make matters worse, the space was flowing nonstop, such that what he saw a moment ago could become drastically different a few breaths later.

With such vast changes in the spatial laws, even the Conferred God Kings would face grave danger in there.

It was not to say that Conferred God Kings were not strong enough, but the laws that governed this spatial vortex were very different from those of the Firmament. Their conferred powers would not work in this area, so they could only wield the strength of a God King in there. That would mean that they would not be any stronger than Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi.

The two humans and the chick advanced through the spatial vortex for roughly two hours, but in order to adapt to the distorted space, they actually only managed to advance five hundred meters within this period of time!

The spatial vortex ahead of them stretched on and on, and it could possibly be hundreds and thousands of li. If they were only able to cover five hundred meters within two hours, how long would it take for them to get to the end of it?

Most likely, they would still be wandering around there even after Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi had finished their duel!

“This isn’t working!” Zhang Xuan said with a deep frown.

He had been trying to use the Seal of Supreme Monarch all this while, but he still was not able to establish a connection with the Azure. The dimension barrier was still too strong.

“I’ll lead the way. Follow closely behind me and make sure that you don’t lag behind,” Luo Qiqi said.

“Hmm?” Zhang Xuan was surprised.

He was just about to ask what she was going to do when she suddenly morphed into the round form of the Dimension Silencer.

She released an aura that caused the distorted space to freeze, as if someone was forcefully holding it in place.

“Let’s go!” Luo Qiqi exclaimed.

Zhang Xuan and Little Chick quickly followed her and darted ahead.

With the Dimension Silencer stabilizing the space, they were able to progress swiftly ahead. Four hours later, after covering tens of thousands of li, a dark gray screen appeared before them.

Swirls of gray currents rippled on the surface of the screen, and they emanated a pressure that made it difficult for one to breathe.

Hu!

Luo Qiqi reverted to her human form as she gasped desperately for air. Her face was pale from overexerting herself. It was clear that the earlier flight had depleted her energy greatly.

Zhang Xuan quickly passed a pinnacle God Essence Pill to her so that she could replenish her energy. Roughly an hour later, her face finally regained its glow once more.

“Something is really weird about these gray currents of energy,” Luo Qiqi remarked as she examined the sight before her contemplatively.

“It is weird...” Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

The gray currents of energy were what Feng Jiuge had absorbed into his body previously. He had thought that there were just little traces of it around the abyss, but who could have known that they would form a massive wall further in?

Luo Qiqi moved toward the gray wall and reached toward it.

Seeing her action, Zhang Xuan immediately exclaimed with a horrified face, “Don’t do...”

However, before he could finish his words, the young lady had already gotten afflicted with the gray energy.

With its ability to devour energy, Luo Qiqi’s cultivation swiftly fell from God King realm pinnacle all the way to God King realm primary stage within a few breaths, and it was continuing to fall further.

# 2219 God King 1

“Don’t use your zhenqi to fend off the gray energy!”

After the experience with Feng Jiuge, Zhang Xuan knew that the gray energy had the ability to devour the zhenqi within one’s body. He quickly rushed over to Luo Qiqi’s side and placed his palm behind her back.

Not even the Heaven’s Path zhenqi was able to stop the gray energy, let alone other zhenqi. The more a cultivator tried to use their zhenqi to fend off the gray energy, the faster they would deplete their zhenqi.

Channeling the Pathos of Heaven zhenqi into Luo Qiqi’s body and circulating it through her meridians, Zhang Xuan was able to quickly seal off the gray energy that had seeped into her body earlier.

After that, he had Luo Qiqi quickly swallow some medicine to recover her vitality. At the same time, he quickly drove the Heaven’s Path Divine Art to create some Heaven’s Path zhenqi to infuse into the young lady’s body.

The clash between the Heaven’s Path zhenqi and the gray energy produced a brilliant green light. It took a while, but the gray energy was eventually fully neutralized.

That allowed Luo Qiqi to slowly recover her cultivation, but her face remained pale with fright. For a moment there, she had thought that she was going to die.

If not for Zhang Xuan’s swift reaction, she had a feeling that the gray energy would have corroded her soul. She might even have turned into an Otherworldly Demon just like the Semi-Divinities of Spirit Origin Royal City.

Back then, Feng Jiuge had been afflicted with it while he was still a distance away from the distorted space, and that had caused him to suffer for two years straight before being kicked out of his clan.

This time, the gray swirls of energy rippling across the wall were at least a thousand times more concentrated, making it a far more frightening force.

“Don’t cultivate or absorb anything here. It’ll be extremely difficult to deal with if the gray energy seeps into your body!” Zhang Xuan instructed.

Luo Qiqi and Little Chick quickly nodded.

After the previous encounter, they came to realize just how frightening the gray energy was.

Even with the Little Chick’s regenerative prowess, it would still be unable to deal with it properly once it was afflicted with the strange energy.

“The Pathos of Heaven zhenqi is unaffected by the gray energy, so I might just be able to fend off the gray energy with it.”

From the looks of it, it seemed like all energies that were beneath the level of the Firmament’s heavens would be unable to ward off the gray energy. However, his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi had already surpassed the level of the heavens, which was likely the reason that the gray energy was unable to faze it upon contact.

Most likely, they would have to rely on his zhenqi in order to overcome this obstacle.

To test out this theory, Zhang Xuan wreathed his arm in his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi and slowly placed it on the gray wall.

The gray energy swirling in the area was pushed away, and his arm remained completely unharmed.

“It does work...” Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply.

With a smile of relief, he turned to Luo Qiqi and Little Chick and said, “Stay close to me. We’ll be traveling past the gray wall right now.”

Luo Qiqi and Little Chick moved over to his side, and he quickly covered them with his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi.

Then, they began making their way into the gray wall together.



Tzzzzzzzz!

The gray energy swirls within the wall relentlessly threw themselves against the three intruders, and the furious hissing of corrosion echoed all around them. Yet, they were unable to breach the protective sphere formed by the Pathos of Heaven zhenqi.

After taking a few steps, Zhang Xuan glanced backward to check on Luo Qiqi and Little Chick's statuses, and it seemed like they were doing fine. So, he continued ahead.

But less than a minute later, he halted and started to retreat backward.

"What's wrong?" Luo Qiqi asked.

After leaving the gray wall, Zhang Xuan released the protective sphere of energy around the three of them and gasped for air.

In just three short minutes, he had expended all of his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi!

While the gray energy was unable to faze the Pathos of Heaven zhenqi, there were simply too many swirls around. This put a huge strain on Zhang Xuan, causing his zhenqi to deplete swiftly.

The key problem was that he had not been able to restore the amount of zhenqi he had back to its maximum capacity all this while. In his current state, it would be difficult for them to pass through this region.

Sighing deeply, Zhang Xuan sat down and cultivated for roughly an hour before he finally restored his zhenqi.

"I need to find a way to fill up my dantian once more. If I could raise my zhenqi cultivation to the God King realm, that would be even better..."

Zhang Xuan rubbed his glabella in distress.

His dantian had originally been filled with an ocean of zhenqi, but it had all dissipated as green light after clashing with the gray energy, causing it to become completely empty. If he wished to pass through the gray wall, he would have to either

increase the amount of zhenqi within his dantian or find a way to continuously replenish his zhenqi so that he would not run out of it.

Otherwise, if he ran out of zhenqi halfway through, they would be doomed.

The only problem was that he had only received three pinnacle God Essence Pills from Fu Jiangchen, and he had given the last one to Luo Qiqi. Furthermore, even if he had the luxury of having an unlimited number of pinnacle God Essence Pills to squander, it was unlikely that he would be able to restore his zhenqi fast enough to match his rate of depletion.

If it comes down to it, I should just eat the Pill King!

Currently, the most potent pill he had with him was the Pill King. It was a treasure that could move even a Conferred God King. He would certainly be able to replenish the zhenqi in his dantian by consuming it, and there was a good chance that he could push for a breakthrough to the God King realm as well.

The only issue was that...

He still had not comprehended a God King realm cultivation technique yet!

The Pill King was his trump card for making a breakthrough, and it would be a huge waste to use such an invaluable pill just to replenish his zhenqi.

For the Pathos of Heaven, I have already comprehended the ties between a subordinate and a master, the camaraderie between brothers, and the relationship between a teacher and a student... If my gut feeling is not off, the next realm probably should be the sentiments of a parent...

Zhang Xuan sat on the ground and began thinking it through.

He had been an orphan in his previous life, and he did not have anyone around him that could be considered a parental figure. In his current life, he was privileged to have found his parents, but the time he had spent with them was very short.

His inability to fully comprehend familial ties made him unsure about how he should carry on, and he had ended up

putting it off again and again.

But he could not do that anymore. No matter what, he had to give it a go.

Closing his eyes, he began to think about all the time he had spent together with the Xingmeng Sword Saints.

In order to find him, his parents had gone through a lot. Even as the whole world told them time and time again that he was already dead, they had persevered for the sake of the slim chance that he might still be out there in the world.

For him, they were willing to cast aside their lives.

The sentiments that they carried for him were nobler than anything in the world.

But... while Zhang Xuan could understand all of that rationally, he was unable to connect to those feelings emotionally.

Sitting quietly on the ground, he tried his best to stand in their shoes and grasp their feelings, but the willful emotions simply would not obey human will. Sighing deeply, he raised his head to look at Luo Qiqi and asked, "Say, what do you think are the feelings that a parent would feel toward their child?"

Luo Qiqi was taken aback by Zhang Xuan's abrupt question. Her face reddened a little as she replied, "I... can't really tell either. I-I guess only those who have a child can understand those feelings..."

Emotions were experiences, not explanations.

The two of them were only in their twenties, and they had not had their own children yet. Without being in that position themselves, they would not be able to comprehend such sentiments.

Seeing that Luo Qiqi had misunderstood him, Zhang Xuan scratched his head awkwardly. He was just about to explain the reason behind his question when Little Chick suddenly tucked its head beneath its small fluffy wings and said, "Isn't it easy enough if you want to have a child? There's no one else here anyway. You are a man, she is a woman, and all of your

physical functions are working perfectly fine. Just make one here. Don't worry, I'll cover my eyes and not peek..."

"..." Zhang Xuan's lips twitched.

He knew that he should have fried this darned chick back then.

Zhang Xuan quickly turned to look at Luo Qiqi, only to see that her face had turned so red that it looked as if it was going to burst.

Zhang Xuan sighed deeply and said, "I'm not messing with you. I am asking this question so that I can make a breakthrough to God King and get us through the gray wall!"

"What do you mean by that? Does it look like I'm joking around? How can you understand the feelings of a parent without having a child?" Little Chick replied indignantly. "Since the both of you are here, why don't you just make one? Once you have a child, you'll surely come to have a deep understanding of the sentiments that come with being a parent!"

Seeing how this fellow was still shamelessly spouting bullsh\*t, Zhang Xuan kicked him flying before harrumphing. "Can't you talk properly?"

Even if they really did it then, they would still need ten months of pregnancy and years of raising the child before they could truly comprehend the feelings of a parent.

But they did not have that much time to spare!

## 2220 God King 2

“Hey, I’m talking properly, too! If you are worried that there isn’t enough time or you don’t want the commitments that come along with it, you can do it in a dream. You will be able to make as many babies as you want right away as long as you create the right environment,” Little Chick replied.

The God Monarchs had the ability to create transient dreams through formations.

That kind of formation would place an individual within a dreamscape where time was accelerated. It would only take a few hours for one to live an entire lifetime within the dream.

Hearing this, Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

To be frank, it was a plausible solution. It was a dream anyway, so it should not count as anything.

But he was only twenty years old. If he lived a lifetime in a dream at such an age, he would be a completely different person by the time he returned. He would have lost his youthful spirit and his hot-bloodedness.

Furthermore, once he had a wife and a child in a dream, regardless of whether it was a dream or not, it would be unfair to Luo Ruoxin.

So, he shook his head and asked once more, “Do you have any other ideas in mind?”

“Tsk.” Little Chick clicked its tongue in annoyance before replying. “How troublesome. Well, you might not have any children, but you do have quite a lot of disciples. As they say, a day as a teacher, a lifetime as a father. Your sentiments for them can probably rival those of their parents, so it might work if you can comprehend it from such a perspective.”

It really could not stand that blockhead of a master.

He has such a beautiful young lady who’s devoted to him, but he simply refuses to grasp the opportunity. It serves him right

to be single! Humph!

Ah, wait a moment, I'm also a single chick... At least this darned fellow has someone who likes him, but I don't even have a chicken or duck that is into me...

Little Chick sank to the ground in depression.

Meanwhile, Zhang Xuan's thoughts were triggered into action after hearing those words. "A day as a teacher, a lifetime as a father..."

He was unable to comprehend the feelings of a parent because he was without a child, but there was no denying that he cared and doted on his students quite a lot.

He was willing to do anything just so that they could lead a better life, and he would not hesitate to stand up for them if anyone dared take advantage of them. Despite that, there was not a single moment when he thought that he was sacrificing himself for their sake.

On the contrary, as long as they were doing well, he felt fulfilled and content.

Were these the feelings that parents had toward their children?

As Zhang Xuan thought of this, the smiles of the Xingmeng Sword Saints surfaced in his mind.

There were many times when they had stood in front of him to protect him from danger, even when they were weaker than him. Nothing could shake their conviction to keep him safe, and they would do anything for his sake.

Those were the sentiments of a parent, the deepest and noblest love in the world.

The act of humbly supporting their child, not expecting anything in return.

Thread in the hand of a compassionate mother, clothes on a wanderlust son. Just before his departure she sewed closely, in her mind worrying about his late return. How could the inch-high grass ever repay the nourishing sunshine of spring?

An emotion rippled through Zhang Xuan's heart as his zhenqi began circulating throughout his body along with his words. At the same time, sword qi began to form and revolve around his body, slicing through the distorting space.

"He is comprehending his cultivation technique and sword art together?" Little Chick remarked in bewilderment.

Having followed its master for quite some time now, it knew that its master would usually comprehend his cultivation technique first before figuring out the corresponding sword art. Yet, he was actually comprehending both together this time.

The wind batters unceasingly on the unwilling tree, a son seeks to be filial, but time slips through his fingers...

His sword qi was filled with both indignation and melancholic longing.

In his previous life, his parents had died prematurely, so he had never been able to meet them before. In this lifetime, he had been so wrapped up by everything around him that the time he spent together with parents was miserably limited.

He could not fully understand what it was like to be a son, but he could imagine his parents' worry for him.

It would be similar to how he felt for his students.

His eleven students were divided across the Nine Skies, and it would be a lie if he said that he was not worried about them. By taking on such a perspective, he could see just how worried and conflicted they must feel about him.

They did not wish to tie down their child and limit his future, but at the same time, they could not bear to see him braving so many dangers.

This was the contradictory feeling of a parent, the sentiments they felt for their children!

Hu!

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan took out the Pill King and swallowed it.

Rich medicinal energy flooded his body. Through circulating the medicinal energy around his body, he refined it into Pathos of Heaven zhenqi and deposited it into his dantian.

The Pill King contained the purest medicinal energy contained within the Grass of God Kings, harnessing almost as much power as a real God King. His dantian, which had emptied out due to the depletion of his Heaven's Path zhenqi, filled up at an incredible pace.

Kacha!

As his dantian was filled up, he finally overcame the bottleneck in his zhenqi cultivation and rose to the level of a God King.

Zhang Xuan's aura surged like a majestic dragon rising from the seas, transforming into something deeper and stronger.

Some time later, the fluctuations of his energy finally came to a halt.

Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply before rising to his feet.

He had successfully reached the God King realm, but he was only at primary stage. He had simply depleted too much energy before, and the Pathos of Heaven's requirement on the purity of the spiritual energy was also too steep. If he wanted to reach God King realm pinnacle, he would need at least several pills on the level of the Pill King.

The fact that the Pill King was able to fill his massive dantian and allow him to raise his cultivation to the God King realm was evidence of its rich medicinal energy.

I should keep the three remaining God King Breakthrough Pill for my parents and Sun Qiang, Zhang Xuan thought with a smile.

It would indeed raise his cultivation if he swallowed them, but the effects would not be too apparent. It might not even be enough for him to reach God King realm intermediate stage. They would be put to better use with his parents and Sun Qiang!



Zhang Xuan examined the changes in his body as a result of his breakthrough, and he found that his zhenqi had become even purer. At the same time, his zhenqi capacity had also increased considerably.

He would not have to worry about running out of zhenqi quickly anymore.

“Let’s go!”

Knowing that there was no need to worry anymore after making a breakthrough, Zhang Xuan took out the God King Sword and swung it lightly.

It swiftly generated several surges of sword qi that warped around their bodies to form a protective barrier.

This was the God King realm sword art that he had comprehended from the Pathos of Heaven—Filial Piety.

The sword art contained the emotions of regret and longing.

So what if his cultivation was high? So what if he was rich?

It was easy to put his parents in second place in his list of priorities in order to pursue all else, but it would be too late by the time he finally wanted to accompany them.

This was simply how humans were. They always put off things that they should be doing until it was too late, and they blamed themselves regretfully for not cherishing what they had.

...

Hu!

Little Chick and Luo Qiqi entered the barrier of sword qi as well, and the three of them began venturing through the gray wall.

The gray currents of energy ahead of them were sliced apart by Zhang Xuan’s Sword Intent, allowing them to venture forward without any issues.

They had to travel for almost an hour before they were finally out of the gray wall. It was also at this point that they came to a halt.

They had come to the end of the road, and there was nowhere else to advance to. The space ahead of them was utterly sealed.

“Let me see if I can reach the Azure from here,” Zhang Xuan said as he took out the Seal of Supreme Monarch.

He infused his consciousness into it, and the inscriptions carved on the seal swiftly lit up. Energy quickly surged through the entire seal.

“It’s working!” Zhang Xuan exclaimed in delight.

He could already sense Du Qingyuan answering from the Azure.

“Have Du Qingyuan conduct a ritual for my descent.”

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan immediately sent a set of instructions over to the other side.

Azure, here I come!

## 2221 Returning to the Azure

It did not take long for a peculiar force to emanate from the Seal of Supreme Monarch. It felt reminiscent of a guiding beacon that led one to one's destination.

I see... In between the Firmament and the Azure lies an area of chaotic space that prevents one from traveling from one side to the other. The ritual serves not to teleport a person from one side to another but to provide specific coordinates so that one won't lose one's way...

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization. He had thought that the ritual would allow them to teleport straight to the Azure, but it seemed like he was overthinking it.

Teleportation between worlds was a highly difficult feat that even the Spirit God's Seal of Supreme Monarch was incapable of pulling off.

But even if I have the coordinates, can I really just travel there like that? What about the dimension barrier?

Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

With a contemplative look on his face, he walked over to the sealed space ahead of him. Channeling all his zhenqi into the God King Sword, he tried to slice an opening in the sealed space.

Fshhh!

To his surprise, even though it took him a great deal of effort, he managed to make a small opening in the sealed space. He quickly beckoned for Luo Qiqi and Little Chick to slip through opening with him.

I thought that it would be impossible to break the dimension barrier, but maybe the key is to not teleport through it and to breach it physically. This seems similar to how it is easier to pass through the dimension barrier when you are ascending to a higher world as compared to when you are descending to a lower world...

This could be the design of nature to avoid an imbalance of the world.

Beyond the sealed space was a chaotic space filled with spatial turbulence. The spatial turbulence struck relentlessly on the barrier that Zhang Xuan had created around them, swiftly whittling it down.

Zhang Xuan could feel the zhenqi in his body depleting swiftly. He tried to quickly head in the direction of the coordinates signaled by the Seal of Supreme Monarch, but he realized that he was hardly able to move.

Chaotic space was reminiscent of a spatial vortex, but it was in an even more disorderly state. The space in the area was all flowing in different directions, making it difficult for even a God Monarch to travel in a straight path.

If not for Zhang Xuan's superior zhenqi, their bodies and souls would have been torn into shreds as soon as they entered the area, let alone venturing through it.

"I have been through this place before," Luo Qiqi said. "Tell me the location, and I'll bring you there."

"Alright!"

Knowing that Luo Qiqi's powers over space far surpassed his, Zhang Xuan quickly described the coordinates that the Seal of Supreme Monarch was pointing toward.

Nodding, Luo Qiqi took a step forward and morphed back into the Dimension Silencer.

Hu!

She froze the chaotic space and swiftly advanced forth.

I really wonder what tier the Dimension Silencer is as an artifact, Zhang Xuan thought curiously as he looked at the steady passageway that was crafted through the abilities of the Dimension Silencer.

Be it a spatial vortex or chaotic space, as long as it was something related to the spatial laws, the Dimension Silencer would be able to handle it easily. This was a feat that not all God Monarchs were necessarily capable of pulling off.

He could not help but wonder about Luo Qiqi's origin. It was no wonder she had risen all the way to God King realm pinnacle within a month after arriving in the Firmament, and she had hardly met any bottlenecks in her cultivation.

He had really made the right choice bringing her along. Otherwise, even with his God King realm sword art, Filial Piety, it would have been difficult for him to pass through the spatial vortex and chaotic space to arrive at the Azure.

Traveling through monotonous surroundings, it was hard for Zhang Xuan and the others to discern the passing of time accurately. They simply flew on and on until Luo Qiqi finally came to a halt. She morphed back into her human form before gesturing forward. "We have arrived."

Zhang Xuan realized that the coordinates he was receiving from the Seal of Supreme Monarch were just right ahead of him.

"Let's head in," Zhang Xuan said.

He was just about to head right in when he suddenly realized that the entire world had started shaking violently due to his attempted entry. It looked as if it would really shatter if he forced his way in.

"The space in the Azure is simply too weak. It's similar to a thin layer of ice above the winter river; it might be able to handle the weight of a child, but it'll succumb as soon as an adult tries to step on it," Luo Qiqi said. "Our powers as God Kings far surpass what the heavens of the Azure can withstand. If we force our way through, we might cause the heavens to shatter and the entire world to collapse."

Zhang Xuan nodded. "You're right. It seems like we'll have to lower our cultivation accordingly."

When he first became a God, he had also sensed the heavens of the Azure rejecting his presence. As a God King, he was tens of thousands of times stronger than before, so naturally, his presence would be even harder for the heavens of the Azure to withstand.

So, he took a deep breath and reined in his zhenqi within his dantian.

Kacha! Kacha!

His cultivation began to plummet.

In just a few moments, his cultivation had already fallen to the level of a Semi-Divinity.

Other than his zhenqi cultivation, he also made sure to suppress his physical prowess and soul cultivation as well. So, other than his comprehension of cultivation having reached the level of a God King, he appeared to be nothing more than a Semi-Divinity. Even a God Monarch would not be able to see through his disguise.

Luo Qiqi quickly did the same. She sealed her powers using her spatial abilities, causing her cultivation to fall all the way to that of a Semi-Divinity.

As for Little Chick, it hesitated for a moment before saying, “I think you should just pass my gourd over to me...”

Zhang Xuan had been holding onto the shells of the gourd that it had been sealed in ever since it hatched.

“Alright then.”

Receiving the gourd, Little Chick slipped into it and reverted to its form as the Dongxu Gourd. This act effectively sealed off its cultivation as well.

After everything was prepared and ready to go, the two humans and a gourd quickly made their way over to where the coordinate was.

Tzzz!

An overwhelming spatial pressure crushed down on them, and innumerable heavenly lightning bolts surrounded them.

Even though they had tried their best to lower their cultivation, it seemed like the heavens of the Azure had still identified them as intruders and were trying their best to resist them.

Under the relentless offense, the three of them ended up sustaining quite some damage before they were able to

overcome the lightning tribulation to enter the Azure.

It was then that they found Du Qingyuan and Wu Chen standing above a vast ocean with pale faces. Not too far away from them, an altar was releasing a light glow.

Looking around, they were at the Vacant Sea, where Luo Ruoxin had descended the previous time. Back then, she had entered grievously wounded, causing her blood to scatter into the ocean and soak the stones around the area.

Only at this moment did he finally realize why even a God Monarch like Luo Ruoxin would sustain such severe damage entering the Azure.

In order to avoid the heavens of the Azure from shattering, she could only lower her cultivation, and that made it difficult for her to overcome the lightning tribulation that came from entering the Azure as an intruder.

“Paying respects to Young Master!”

“Paying respects to Sect Leader Zhang!”

Du Qingyuan and Wu Chen bowed deeply.

The news they had received was that the Spirit God was going to descend among them, so they did not expect to meet Zhang Xuan instead.

When did he become the Spirit God?

“Let’s head to Starchaser Palace first.”

Without any hesitation, he tore apart the fabric of space and traversed straight to Starchaser Palace.

Even though his cultivation was only at Semi-Divinity, through his deeper comprehension of space and more refined control over his zhenqi, he was still able to tear open and traverse through space.

After arriving at Starchaser Palace, Zhang Xuan took a swift look around and found that there were far more Pseudo Immortals, True Immortals, and High Immortals. He nodded in approval at this sight.

“It seems like the Azure has been developing swiftly...”

“Over the past ten years, we have had thirty cultivators reaching the Semi-Divinity realm and over two hundred cultivators reaching the High Immortal realm. As for the other realms, their numbers are even higher,” Du Qingyuan replied with a smile.

It had only been slightly more than a month in the Firmament, but ten years had passed for the Azure.

Ten years was usually insignificant in comparison to the long lifespan that cultivators enjoyed, but due to Zhang Xuan defeating Kong shi’s clone, the resources that had been hoarded by the Ethereal Hall were reorganized and distributed among the Six Sects. On top of that, the Hall of Gods was no longer guarded by any powers.

As such, the number of Semi-Divinities and High Immortals increased swiftly within this period of time.

The absolute number of experts that had appeared over the past decade was more than the number of experts that the Azure had produced for the four thousand years prior.

Nodding in response, Zhang Xuan extended his Spiritual Perception toward Starchaser Palace, and a moment later, he widened his eyes in astonishment. “Is that Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao?”

A pair of familiar figures appeared within his perception, and they were none other than Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao from the Master Teacher Continent.



## 2222 Old Acquaintances

The two of them were standing atop a towering cliff, and their light-red robes fluttered along with the wind.

Hu!

All of a sudden, the two of them moved simultaneously. Flitting from one point to another with incredible nimbleness, they traded heavy blows with one another.

Luo Qiqi moved over to Zhang Xuan's side, and it did not take her too long to notice the two ladies as well. Her eyes lit up in excitement as she exclaimed, "It's Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao!"

Yu Fei-er had been her closest friend ever since their time on the Master Teacher Continent, but when she left for the Firmament, Luo Qiqi had never expected to see her ever again. She never would have thought that the other party would ascend to the Azure, and on top of that...

Both Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao had become Semi-Divinities!

"Yes, they are sparring with one another," Du Qingyuan said. "The two of them are very hardworking. They've spent practically every single day over the past decade cultivating, and it's due to their diligence that they've been able to grow so much stronger within such a short period!"

There was no cultivator in the world who could rise to the top without working hard.

Even for someone like Zhang Xuan, he had still put a great deal of time and effort into cultivating in order to get to where he currently was.

...

After sparring for a moment, the two red-robed ladies finally concluded the duel and rested by the side of the cliff. Their beautiful faces were marred with a hint of dejection.

"Don't bother wasting your effort. Without the Aura of Divinity, we won't be able to overcome our bottleneck and

ascend to the Firmament!” someone said.

Following that, a thirty-year-old man leaped to the top of the cliff as well.

Luo Xuanqing!

The current Luo Xuanqing had also reached the Semi-Divinity realm, and he was no weaker than the two ladies.

“I know, but... is there really no way?” Yu Fei-er clenched her fists tightly in indignation.

“That’s why I said that we should just forcefully barge our way through. It might be dangerous, but at least there’s still a sliver of hope. If we just continue waiting here, it’ll really be an eternal farewell!” Luo Xuanqing said.

“Eternal farewell...” Yu Fei-er muttered in desolation.

The gap between the Azure and Firmament was unlike that between the Azure and the Master Teacher Continent, which one could cross with a little bit of effort. Furthermore, even if they successfully reached the Firmament, there was no saying whether they could endure the hundred times increase in spatial pressure.

“I don’t know the cultivation realms in the Firmament, but those who are in that world are all the most talented cultivators and geniuses of the myriad worlds. Despite so, we don’t see any cultivators from the Firmament here, which only goes to show how difficult it is to breach the dimension barrier from the Firmament. No matter how talented my younger sister or Zhang Shi are, they will need at least hundreds or even a thousand years to reach that level,” Luo Xuanqing said. “And a hundred years in the Firmament is already equivalent to ten thousand years in the Azure. We will have long passed away by then!”

Even Semi-Divinities were only able to live for a thousand years in the Azure. Any longer than that would really be pushing the limits.

The darned difference in time meant that their paths would never cross ever again. By the time those who had gone up to

the Firmament were strong enough to head down to meet them, they would have already turned to ash.

“I understand as much as well,” Yu Fei-er said with a conflicted expression, “but...”

“Why are you hesitating?” Luo Xuanqing exclaimed. “We are in the same position as one another, and you and I both know that it’s impossible to advance any further than Semi-Divinity realm pinnacle. The only choice we have is to forcefully attempt to enter the Firmament. No matter how dangerous it is, we have to give it a try!”

Yu Fei-er was quiet for a long while before nodding slightly. “Let’s do it then...”

“Fei-er, Palace Master Du has told us that we have to reach the level of the gods in order to enter the Firmament, or else we’ll face certain death!” Hu Yaoyao interjected with a frown.

Ever since the three of them reached Semi-Divinity realm pinnacle, their cultivation had simply refused to advance any further. They had tried everything that they could, but soon, they realized that they would not be able to take the final step forward without the Aura of Divinity.

If they could not become gods, they would not be able to enter the Firmament. This was the paradox that chained down all cultivators in the Azure, preventing them from reaching greater heights.

“I missed him once back then. If I can’t even follow him now, I don’t see much point in living any further,” Yu Fei-er muttered with gritted teeth.

If she had chosen the same footsteps as Zhao Ya and the others, she might have been in the Firmament right now. She would not have been left there, working in futility for a possibility that was just so, so far away. Even meeting that fellow once more seemed nothing more than a dream.

“Since you two have made up your minds, I’ll join you. I must say that the horrible fellow has a bizarre charm that really draws people in,” Hu Yaoyao said with a smile.

Back then, Zhang Xuan had been far weaker than her in terms of cultivation. She could still remember how she had tried to tease the young man back then, only to have the tables turned on her.

She had been so infuriated, but thinking about it brought a smile to her lips.

There had never been a deep tie between the two of them, but for some reason, she could remember her every encounter with him extremely clearly. It was as if he was deeply imprinted in her mind, and she simply could not shake free of him no matter what she did.

If it had been in the past, she could not have imagined that she would go so far for someone.

“Since we have come to a decision, let’s choose a day and get to it!”

Seeing how he had finally managed to convince these two, Luo Xuanqing heaved a sigh of relief.

All of a sudden, someone stepped onto the peak of the mountain.

It was none other than Wu Chen.

“Someone asked me to pass this to you,” he said as he threw three jade bottles to them.

“For us?” Luo Xuanqing asked doubtfully as he caught the jade bottle, only to nearly drop it due to its sheer weight.

The jade bottle was far heavier than he had expected!

He was a Semi-Divinity realm pinnacle cultivator, one of the strongest experts of an Azure, and yet, he had nearly failed to catch a bottle...

This was more than enough to show that there was something special about the jade bottle.

With a perplexed look on his face, Luo Xuanqing uncorked the bottle and looked at its contents. Lying quietly within the bottle was a droplet of blood.

“A droplet of blood can actually weigh that much? Wait a moment... is this the blood droplet of a god?” Luo Xuanqing narrowed his eyes in bewilderment.

It would make perfect sense if the droplet of blood within the jade bottle belonged to a god. Infused with great amount of vitality and power, the blood of a god was far heavier than that of ordinary cultivators. This was known within the upper echelons of the Azure.

“The blood droplet contains the Aura of Divinity. We’ll be able to rise to the levels of the gods right after consuming it,” Luo Xuanqing remarked as his body began trembling in agitation.

Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao were also taken aback by this abrupt gift, and they swiftly came to a realization.

Only a god could possibly gift them the droplet of a god, which meant that...

Yu Fei-er immediately turned to Wu Chen and asked anxiously, “This is his blood, isn’t it? Where is he?”

She could sense it. Her intuition was telling her that it was so. The blood droplet within the jade bottle belonged to that man whom she was looking for!

“He has already left,” Wu Chen replied. “He instructed me to relay this message to you. ‘See you in the Firmament’.”

“See you in the Firmament?”

The three of them shuddered.

That meant that he had descended to the Azure from the Firmament.

They had thought that it would be impossible for them to meet each other again after hearing that they had already ascended to the Firmament, but who could have known that their paths would cross like that?

In just ten short years, no, it would only be a single month in the Firmament, they had grown strong enough to breach the dimension barrier and travel back to the Azure.

“Xuanqing, this is a gift that a person told me to relay to you. He also left a message for you,” Wu Chen said as he passed an object over.

Perplexed, Luo Xuanqing took the object from Wu Chen’s hand, and with just a look at it, his body immediately jolted in astonishment. “This is Qiqi’s possession... Where is she?”

The object that he had just been given was nothing more than a cheap, light-blue hairclip. It was a gift that he had prepared for his little sister back when they were younger.

Holding the hairclip tightly, Luo Xuanqing asked anxiously, “What did she say?”

“He said that he has already accomplished what you entrusted to him, and if you wish to see him or your little sister, you should quickly make a breakthrough and head over to the Firmament!” Wu Chen said.

“The Firmament, is it? Hahaha! Very well, let’s meet one another in the Firmament. He seems to have grown a little stronger over the past month, but I’ll catch up to him soon enough. When we finally meet again, I’ll make sure to punch all of the teeth out of his mouth!” Luo Xuanqing burst into hearty laughter as his eyes reddened a little.

“We’ll be meeting each other very soon...”

Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao glanced at one another before lowering their gazes to the jade bottles in their hands. Clutching onto them tightly, the excitement and anticipation on their faces could hardly be concealed.

Just you wait, Zhang Xuan! We are coming right after you!

# 2223 The Return of the Deathless Monarch

“Is this the City of Collapsed Space you mentioned earlier?”

Looking at the decrepit city before her, Luo Qiqi could not help but look at Zhang Xuan doubtfully.

This city was completely in ruins, and there was not the slightest hint of life to be seen at all. It was hard for one to believe that such a place had been the prosperous Spirit Origin Royal City.

Initially, Luo Qiqi had intended to meet Luo Xuanqing and the others, but in the end, she had chosen to hold herself back.

She felt that it would be more appropriate for them to meet in the Firmament instead.

Even if they had met, it would only be a short reunion. It might even cause them to lose their fighting will to advance further.

So, after much hesitation, she had decided to leave without meeting them, just like Zhang Xuan. She believed that the day of their reunion was not too far away.

Instead, she headed down to the Master Teacher Continent and reunited with her family members first before heading back to the Azure.

Due to the time difference between both worlds, even as she spent more than half a day with her family members, it was only slightly more than an hour in the Azure.

However, more than a hundred years had passed on the Master Teacher Continent since their departure, and many things had already changed. Many people and things she remembered had become things of history.

The only thing that had remained unchanged was the reverence that the people had for Zhang Xuan.

In the present era of the Master Teacher Continent, Zhang Xuan's influence and standing exceeded that of even Kong Shi. The legend of how he was able to rise from a humble teacher in the Tianxuan Kingdom to the strongest expert of the Master Teacher Continent within two short years had been passed down from generation to generation.

Countless books and records had been created about him in order to ensure that his deeds would never be forgotten.

That being said, what most people remembered him for was still his impressive love life.

As someone who could even take down the Spirit God of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, he had become the idol of many young men of the Master Teacher Continent. It had almost become a ritual where young men would offer incense to him before confessing to the lady whom they fancied...

When Luo Qiqi heard of all of that, she was rendered speechless for a whole five minutes.

As someone who had been close with Zhang Xuan back in those days, she was extremely familiar with his personality.

Love life? Did such a thing even exist in that blockheaded idiot's dictionary? He is someone who replied to my confession with 'I like you too with everyone else'! With EQ of his level, how could he possibly have a love life?

Over the past hundred years, the Zhang Clan had grown more and more prosperous, such that it had become a first-class power that possessed influencing surpassing that of the Master Teacher Pavilion.

The Luo Clan and the Jiang Clan had developed considerably as well, but they could not come close to comparing to the Zhang Clan.

Well, all of that did not matter much to the current Luo Qiqi. She was extremely glad to find that her father was still alive, and she helped him make a breakthrough in his cultivation before bringing him to the Azure. After that, she regrouped with Zhang Xuan.



“Well, this is it.” Zhang Xuan nodded. He flicked the gourd in front of him and said, “Come out and take a look around. Your grave and missing power should be somewhere around here.”

Previously, he had found a bizarre black skeleton within the City of Collapsed Space, obtained the Aura of Divinity from the other party’s hands, and successfully made a breakthrough to godhood. Due to that, he had managed to defeat Kong shi’s clone.

But when he returned there once more, the skeleton had already disappeared and was nowhere to be found.

While he was unable to find the black skeleton, Little Chick, as the Deathless Monarch, might just have a way to sense him.

“Have you ever seen anyone looking for their own grave?”  
The gourd shook its bottom lazily.

“Fine fine, I’ll find it then,” Zhang Xuan said in exasperation.

With a flick of his wrist, he took out the Seal of Supreme Monarch.

The black skeleton might have had the ability to hide from him previously, but if he summoned it through the seal, the other party should have nowhere to hide.

Weng!

As soon as the Seal of Supreme Monarch appeared, a series of spatial ripples immediately appeared around them. The next moment, they were already standing before a grand hall.

Standing at the entrance of the hall was a skeleton, who, upon seeing the item floating in front of Zhang Xuan, hurriedly fell to its knees.

“The space in here is much more stable than out there. The heavens should be unable to perceive this area, so you can come out now,” Zhang Xuan said as he patted the gourd.

The previous time that he was there, he could not help but notice that this area was isolated from the rest of the world. Even after becoming a God, he was still unable to find this place.

It was for this reason that he was confident that Little Chick would not come under the tribulation of the heavens even if it showed itself there.

Kacha!

Upon hearing those words, Little Chick finally broke free from the gourd, allowing its God King realm prowess to flow freely from it.

“Your Sovereignty, you are finally awake...” the black skeleton cried in delight.

Overwhelmed with agitation, the black skeleton also revealed his strength. It was at this moment that Zhang Xuan realized that the other party was actually a God King just like him!

It was no wonder he had been unable to sense the depth of the other party’s cultivation the previous time he was there.

There had really been on two completely different levels back then.

“I wish to recover my strength,” Little Chick said.

It had not recovered its memories yet, so it was unable to tell whom the black skeleton before it was.

“I have already prepared everything. Your Sovereignty, as long as you step into the hall, you’ll be able to absorb the power you have lost and return to your peak!” the black skeleton replied in agitation.

“Good!” Little Chick nodded before waddling over to the hall in big strides.

The doors opened itself before Little Chick, and unimaginable power pulsed with the depths of the hall. It felt like an entire world of energy was harnessed inside there.

“Little Chick...” Zhang Xuan suddenly cried out just as it was about to enter the hall.

Understanding Zhang Xuan’s concerns, Little Chick turned around and said, “I know what you are worried about, but there’s no need. I am myself and no one else.”

Zhang Xuan nodded quietly after hearing those words.

Little Chick was a new will that was born after the resurrection of the Deathless Monarch. He was afraid that it would turn into someone else once it regained its strength and memories, spelling the death of the adorable Little Chick that he knew.

The words that Little Chick said reassured him that it would not turn into someone else as a result of this.

It was no longer the Deathless Monarch of old. It was someone else with a new will.

Little Chick entered the hall, and the doors closed once again.

Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi waited outside, and just like that, three months passed.

“Little Chick, continue doing your best. We need to return to the Firmament now. If you can make it in time, you know where to find us...”

Almost five days had passed in the Firmament, and if they did not head back, they would not be able to make it in time before Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin’s duel.

Even though it was nigh impossible for them to stop the duel without the assistance of the Deathless Monarch, Zhang Xuan could not allow himself to continue waiting there without doing anything.

“Let’s go!” Zhang Xuan beckoned for Luo Qiqi before turning around to leave.

Boom!

At this moment, a crisp buzz echoed in the air, and the hall began to shake intensely.

Cracks began appearing all over the grand buildings

Huala!

The walls began to collapse, causing dust to fill the area. Amid the veil of dust, a massive phoenix could be seen rising from the rubble.

The mere power it emanated was enough to keep others at a distance away from it.

“This is the Deathless Monarch?” Zhang Xuan murmured with widened eyes.

The strength of the phoenix before his eyes far exceeded his imagination. It was much stronger than the Conferred God King and the will of Fairy Linglong that he had encountered before.

“So, this was the strength of the God Monarch?”

It was no wonder no Conferred God Kings dared oppose a God Monarch. They were truly beings of vastly different levels.

“The resurrected Little Chick might be even stronger than the previous Deathless Monarch.”

Every single time Little Chick resurrected, it would get stronger than before. Perhaps it would be the same this time.

If that was the case, they might just be able to stop the duel between those two!

# 2224 The Visitation of a Monarch

Some time later, the pressure emanated by the massive phoenix finally subsided. The massive phoenix morphed into a young man, who walked out to the rubble to appear before Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi.

Looking to be around sixteen or seventeen, the young man had a tall but slightly thin figure. Contrary to what Little Chick had been exclaiming all this while, his face did not look heaven-defyingly suave. Instead, he appeared to be more youthful.

It would be hard to think of this youthful man as the highest being in the Sky of Spirit Origin, one of the God Monarchs of the Firmament.

“You are... Little Chick?”

“Master,” the young man replied with a slight smile.

Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

It looked like what he had feared the most did not happen in the end. The other party was still the haughty and boastful Little Chick who had followed him from the Master Teacher Continent.

“Master, I have just recovered my powers, so I need some time to reinforce my cultivation. I’ll cultivate here for a little longer so as to save time. For the time being, you should return to the Firmament. Once I’m done, I’ll head over to meet up with you right away!”

“Alright.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

If they were going to face two of the strongest God Monarchs of the Firmament, they would definitely have to be in their best condition, or else their efforts would only end in futility. Time in the Azure flowed a hundred times faster than in the Firmament, so it would be much better to cultivate where he was.

“Feng Yao, thank you for guarding me all this while. I shall restore your body and your powers now.” The young man turned to the black skeleton and tapped his finger lightly in the air.

A droplet of blood flew forth from his hand and seeped into the forehead of the black skeleton.

Tzzz!

Flesh and blood began growing out of the black skeleton before the piercing call of a phoenix echoed in the air. The black skeleton suddenly burst into flames, and a large phoenix rose out of the flames.

The large phoenix quickly transmogrified into the form of a middle-aged man in a golden helmet and armor.

He was one of the most loyal guardians of the Deathless Monarch, guarding his grave for the past thousands of years, awaiting his return.

“Let’s head back...”

Knowing that nothing would happen to Little Chick there, Zhang Xuan called for Luo Qiqi once more. They quickly traversed through space and returned to the Azure.

Heading to a higher world from a lower world was much easier than the other way around. The two of them slowly released the seal of their cultivation, and soon, they caught the eye of the heavens of the Azure and were expelled into the chaotic space.

It was then that Zhang Xuan finally released his full cultivation as a God King, and he immediately sensed the summoning of the Firmament. Without any hesitation, they followed the summoning to head to the Firmament.

...

Half a day later, with a sudden jolt, the two of them landed on the ground.

Looking around the area, Zhang Xuan realized that they were at the Grand Spirit Mountain, the place where he had first arrived in the Firmament with Zhao Ya and the others.

“Where are we going now?” Luo Qiqi asked.

“We’ll first be heading to Drifting Specter Royal City before teleporting to the Sky of Freedom via the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation!” Zhang Xuan said.

Possessing the strength of God Kings, they no longer needed the City Lord Token to use the Minor Displacement Teleportation Formation. Soon enough, they arrived at Drifting Specter Royal City.

This time, instead of leaving right away, he led Luo Qiqi over to his residence.

He wanted to pass the God King Breakthrough Pill that he had forged a while back at the Sky of Linglong over to his parents and Sun Qiang so that they could quickly become God Kings. This way, they would be able to protect themselves.

Not wanting to cause a huge commotion, he discreetly made his way over to his residence without incurring anyone’s notice.

“Young Master!”

As soon as Zhang Xuan entered the residence, Sun Qiang rushed forward to welcome him with an agitated look on his face.

Over the past few days, Sun Qiang’s cultivation had reached middle-tier Celestial God. It was clear that he had been working hard in order to raise his cultivation realm this quickly.

“Where are my parents?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“They are currently in the courtyard chatting with a guest,” Sun Qiang replied.

“A guest?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

Gedeng!

Feeling a bad premonition, he quickly rushed over to the courtyard, and there, he saw his parents sitting together with a guest sipping on fine tea.

The guest was a young man in his early twenties. He had a well-defined face that showed hints of unshakeable resilience. There was an aura of cool rationality around him, and his eyes felt deep, as if they were gazing into the future.

What really left Zhang Xuan unnerved was how he was unable to sense the depths of the young man's cultivation.

Behind the young man stood an elder whose back was slightly lowered. He stood firmly in his position, not moving or saying anything at all.

“Is he... a God Monarch?” Zhang Xuan's eyebrows shot up in horror.

After hearing Sun Qiang's words, he used the Spiritual Perception to scan the entire courtyard, but he could only sense his parents' presence. If not for the fact that he was seeing the young man with his own two eyes, he would not have known that the other party was sitting there!

Based on this alone, it was clear that the young man's strength far exceeded his.

He might just be a God King at the moment, but with the Pathos of Heaven's cultivation technique and sword art, he would be able to put up a fight against Conferred God Kings. If he had to face Baiye Qinghong once more, he would be able to crush her easily without relying on the golden page.

Yet, despite his strength, he did not think that he would be a match for the young man sitting before him.

To make matters worse, his parents were actually sitting at the same table as him. How could he not be horrified?

Upon seeing him, Sword Saint Meng immediately said with a smile, “This is my son, Zhang Xuan!”

It appeared that she was oblivious to how powerful the young man seated before her was.

With a nod, the young man shot a glance over. It was just a look, but Zhang Xuan felt as if there was a sword severing through space to crush his soul.



In fact, even the Library of Heaven's Path was trembling nonstop, as if it was fearful of the existence before it.

“Are you the God Monarch of the Sword Hut?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Based on what he had heard so far, there were two elusive individuals among the Nine God Monarchs. One of them was God Monarch Lingxi of the Sky of Freedom, and the other was the God Monarch of the Sky of Heavenly Sword.

Even if the Sword Hut did not seek talented geniuses and confer new God Kings, there was still no God Monarch who would dare wreak havoc in the Sky of Heavenly Sword.

Clearly, the God Monarch of the Sword Hut possessed strength that struck fear in the hearts of the other God Monarchs.

“Take a seat,” the young man said.

Zhang Xuan knew that he would not be able to stop the young man if the latter really made a move against him. Thus, he quietly walked over and took a seat.

The elder behind him gracefully took a step forward and served him a cup of tea.

Zhang Xuan accepted the cup of tea while feeling a little jittery inside. “If it's not too rude, may I know the reason behind the God Monarch's visit?”

If a God Monarch wanted to meet him, he could have just sent a Conferred God King over to invite him to his palace. Yet, this God Monarch had gone all the way over to his residence, and from the current looks of it, it felt like not even the Qiankun Demon Monarch of the Sky of Drifting Specter had noticed his presence.

This was really a little worrying.

The young man did not respond to Zhang Xuan's question. Instead, he began to assess Zhang Xuan as if he was trying to evaluate the worth of a treasure, and soon, a conflicted look surfaced on his face.

A moment later, he put down his teacup and asked, “Can you demonstrate the sword art that you’ve just comprehended for me?”

“Sword art?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

Was the God Monarch of the Sword Hut there just to watch his sword art?

Well... that might just be the case!

Due to the limitations of his strength, the sword art he had comprehended was probably still nothing much to the God Monarchs. However, there was no denying the fact that it was a battle technique that had surpassed the heavens, making it one of the finest sword arts in the Firmament.

As a renowned sword practitioner of the Firmament, it was not too surprising for the God Monarch to want to see and analyze it.

With that thought in mind, Zhang Xuan finally heaved a sigh of relief.

# 2225 Crimson Heaven Sword

Since the God Monarch of the Sword Hut was there to watch his sword art, it should be safe to assume that he did not bear any malicious intentions toward them.

Those who were obsessed with martial arts tended to have a pure and straightforward personality. They were less likely to beat around the bush, and they would not hurt others that easily.

With such thoughts in mind, Zhang Xuan stood up and took out the God King Sword.

The elder standing behind the young man raised his hand, and the courtyard was immediately surrounded by an isolation barrier, preventing others from seeing what was happening within.

Seeing this sight, Zhang Xuan's eyebrows twitched a little.

He was able to create isolation barriers on the spot as well, but the elder was able to do it with far greater ease, and he even infused spatial laws into the barrier to further reinforce it.

From this feat, it could be seen that even though the elder was not a God Monarch, the strength he wielded still far surpassed that of most Conferred God Kings. At the very least, Zhang Xuan knew that he would not be a match for the elder.

Nevertheless, as long as the young man did not bear any ill will toward them, there was no point in thinking too deeply into this. Holding his God King Sword tightly, he allowed his consciousness to become one with the sword.

Hula!

The sword moved.

A slight wind blew, and water ripples emerged on the surface of the nearby pond.

With movements as smooth as flowing water, Zhang Xuan executed the four sword arts of the Pathos of Heaven one after

another. His movements carried strong sentiments, bringing the onlookers into the conceptualization he had in his mind.

The young man looked at the execution of the sword arts silently, seemingly enjoying the performance.

Finally, Zhang Xuan retracted his blade, and the sword qi that he had released swiftly surged back into his sword. He clasped his fist and said, "It would be a delight if you could offer some pointers on my swordsmanship."

The young man before him was known as the strongest sword practitioner in the Firmament. Even a word of advice from the other party would surely benefit him greatly.

"The sword art you have comprehended is truly extraordinary..." A smile finally appeared on the cold face of the young man as he spoke. "I don't think that there are any pointers I can offer you. You are paving your own way forward, so there's very little that I can help you with... I did notice something, however. Your sword carries a lot of yearning, and in return, it lacks resilience and protection."

"Resilience and protection?" Zhang Xuan asked.

Thinking about it, most of what the sentiments he had comprehended so far were indeed related to the idea of yearning. However, the sword art of the Pathos of Heaven was based upon the sentiments he carried toward those around him, so it was bound to carry some hints of yearning.

"Let me put it another way. If your loved ones are caught in a disaster and are in a life-threatening situation, what would you do?" the young man asked.

Slightly perplexed by the abrupt question, Zhang Xuan hesitated for a moment before replying, "Well, I would do my best to protect them from danger."

"And that's what I mean by protection. It's the act of shielding a person of danger regardless of the cost. However, I don't sense such sentiments within your sword art," the young man replied.

Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

Indeed, his sword art was lacking such sentiments.

“A sword of sentiments shouldn’t just carry yearning; it should carry the responsibility that comes along with it as well. Take your last sword for example, I could sense your yearning for your parents and the regrets of being unable to treat your loved ones better, but have you thought about the responsibilities that you should take on so as to avoid these regrets?” the young man asked.

“I think I get what you are saying.” Zhang Xuan nodded slowly. “My swordsmanship is filled with past sentiments; it focuses on what has already happened instead of trying to influence what is going to happen. Subconsciously, I have been placing myself in a passive position all along...”

“Indeed. If we wish to reach for higher heights, our eyes must be set in the future. Wallowing in emotions of self-reproach and yearning will only slow your footsteps,” the young man replied.

“You’re right.” Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

Emotions could be classified into two types, those that helped people grow and mature and those that caused their footsteps to screech to a halt.

A sorrowful experience could either be a reason to despair or a reason to drive one to work even harder.

If we allow our emotions to bog us down, our lives will simply pass us by like a fleeting cloud. It will appear as if everything has been transient and meaningless.

To give our life meaning, we have to continue marching forward even during times of hardship.

Suffering is simply a part and parcel of life, be it ageing, illness, death, parting, envy, hatred...

We must learn to take pain in stride, and we must also learn how to let go of things.

That’s simply how life is.

No matter how bitter things became, we would have to grit our teeth and force ourselves to look forward.

“Thank you for your guidance...” Zhang Xuan said with a deep bow.

He felt like he had just grasped something really important. Even though it was still very abstract, he felt like it could change the trajectory of his cultivation for good.

It had been a short exchange, but he had benefited greatly from the guidance of the young man.

“I’m impressed that you managed to get it so quickly. It looks like you are the right person after all,” the young man said with a smile before rising to his feet. “I’ll have to get going now. You only have yourself to rely on for the road ahead of you, so I can only wish you all the best.”

“You’re already leaving?” Zhang Xuan was surprised.

He had thought that there would be some deeper intent behind the young man’s visit, but the latter had only seen his sword art and given a few pointers, and he was already going to leave. Or did this mean that the young man had made his way there just to give him some pointers?

The young man glanced at the elder behind him and said, “Jian Yao, give him the Crimson Heaven Sword[1]!”

“Yes!” The elder nodded.

With a flick of his wrist, the elder presented a sword respectfully to Zhang Xuan.

As soon as the sword appeared, dimension rifts began appearing around the area. Even the God King Sword in Zhang Xuan’s hand struggled free of his grasp to pay respects to the sword in the elder’s hands.

Such a sight made Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shoot up in astonishment.

The God King Sword, just as its name suggested, was a God King realm artifact. It was the strongest weapon he had ever wielded. Yet, it had bowed down to the Crimson Heaven Sword without any hesitation.

How strong must the Crimson Heaven Sword be then?

“I can’t accept such a heavy gift from you!” Zhang Xuan quickly clasped his fist and rejected the sword.

“There’s no need to stand on ceremony. This is a sword that I forged specially for you several decades back. Take it, it belongs to you,” the young man said without turning back.

Several decades back? Zhang Xuan was baffled. I am only in my early twenties this year, and most of it was spent on the Master Teacher Continent. If I translate it into time in the Firmament, I have only lived for slightly more than a month now.

Yet, you said that you forge this sword for me several decades back?

Nevertheless, seeing how the other party was determined to have him accept the gift, Zhang Xuan clasped his fist and said, “Thank you!”

Following that, he stretched his hand forward to grab the Crimson Heaven Sword.

As soon as he closed his hands on it, he could sense that it had already become his. The frightening pressure that it had emanated a moment ago vanished altogether, causing it to appear no different from an ordinary sword.

The first thing Zhang Xuan noticed about the Crimson Heaven Sword was that it had no weight or sword spirit at all. Strangely enough, he did not feel any discomfort holding the sword. It was as if the sword itself was nothing more than an extension of his arm.

He felt like he could easily unleash devastating strength through this sword.

If he executed the Pathos of Heaven with this sword, even the massive face that was created by Fairy Linglong’s will would be no match for him!

Feeling deeply agitated within, Zhang Xuan quickly bowed deeply once more in order to express his gratitude. It was then that he suddenly thought of something, and he said with anticipation gleaming in his eyes, “Pardon me for my

insolence, but I am very interested in sword arts. If it isn't too much to ask, it would be an honor to see your sword art!"

He felt like he could deepen his understanding of sword arts by looking at the other party's techniques.

[1] The Crimson Heaven Sword, otherwise known as the Chixiao Sword, is a sword used by Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty. It is also known as the Sword of Ascendancy.



# 2226 The God Monarch's Sword Art

Instead of replying, the young man turned around and beckoned with his finger lightly.

Huala!

The tea inside the teacups on the stone table gathered in the air to form a sword.

“Use your sword art to attack me.”

“Alright.”

Tzla!

With a flick of Zhang Xuan's wrist, the Crimson Heaven Sword tore through the air and filled the surroundings with surges of sword qi.

A Heart of Intertwined Threads!

The young man took a step forward, and without any excessive actions, he raised the liquid sword in his hand and pierced forth.

For an instant, Zhang Xuan thought that he had been locked down by a beast, rendering him unable to move. He felt like if he made an excessive movement, he would surely be struck down by the other party.

Despite the simplicity of the young man's swordsmanship, Zhang Xuan could feel an air of valiance from his movements. It was the determination to tear down everything that stood ahead of him, as if he could not back down because his kin and family members were right behind him.

“This...”

Zhang Xuan knew that he would surely be cornered if he did not change his move, so he maneuvered his sword to execute his fourth sword art instead.

It was the move carrying the conceptualization of indignation and yearning.

However, the young man did not back down because of it. He continued to push his attack forward with indomitable momentum, like a sharp sword that would cut down anything in its path.

Peng!

The sword qi that had gathered was sliced in two, and Zhang Xuan himself was slammed into the pillar behind.

Hula!

The sword made of tea fell back to the ground as droplets.

“I lowered my cultivation to the same level as yours, God King realm primary stage,” the young man remarked.

“Yes, I noticed...” Zhang Xuan nodded as he struggled to his feet.

The God Monarch of the Sword Hut did not use his superior cultivation to suppress Zhang Xuan. He had lowered his cultivation to God King realm primary stage, and with his own skill, he had subdued Zhang Xuan while he was wielding the Crimson Heaven Sword and using the Pathos of Heaven sword art!

In the same cultivation realm, even when he was equipped with a powerful weapon, Zhang Xuan was still unable to defeat the other party!

Ever since he started cultivating, he had only lost to his clone when they were in the same cultivation realm.

This was the first time he had encountered such a powerful opponent.

“I hope that you are able to grasp the differences between the two concepts. How you interpret it and adapt your sword art is up to you,” the young man said before turning around to leave.

“Please wait a moment!” Zhang Xuan called out.

The young man halted his footsteps.

“Elder, if I’m not mistaken, given your strength, you should be able to match the Heaven Subjugation Monarch and God Monarch Lingxi easily. Is it possible for you to stop the duel between the two of them?” Zhang Xuan asked.

He had no idea how powerful the other God Monarchs were, but without a doubt, the young man before him was an extremely formidable expert. He could not imagine the young man being anywhere weaker than Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin.

If he could somehow convince the young man to interfere in the duel and stop the two of them, everything might work out fine.

As slim as the chances were, he had to give it a try!

“Everyone has their own fate that they have to fulfill, and even God Monarchs are not spared from that. The duel between the two of them can’t be stopped, and it mustn’t be stopped. That is an inevitability,” the young man replied calmly.

“Must one of them die?” Zhang Xuan asked desperately. “Is it not enough to just determine a victor between the two of them?”

“There’s no way around it,” the young man replied with a grim voice. Then, he turned around and said, “Your parents have a decent comprehension of swordsmanship. Send them over to the Sword Hut after they reach the God King realm; I’ll guarantee their safety if anything happens.”

After saying those words, the young man and the elder’s silhouettes began to fade before vanishing.

“Elder... Elder!” Zhang Xuan called out, but there was no response. Knowing that the young man had really left, he could not help but sigh deeply.

The words that the young man had said before he parted really left him with a horrible premonition.

The other party mentioned that in the duel between Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi, one of them had to die. If even someone as powerful as the young man was unable to stop them, what could he possibly do to change the situation?

Just what kind of fate was there between the two of them?

Why did things have to come to this point?

Luo Ruoxin was his girlfriend, and he had come all the way from the Master Teacher Continent to the Firmament in order to find her.

Kong shi was a person whom he had looked up to ever since his time on the Master Teacher Continent, and it would be no exaggeration to say that the other party was the one who had guided him thus far.

Those two people were extremely important to him, and he could not stand the thought of seeing something happen to them.

“Everyone has their own fate to fulfill... What is fate then?” Zhang Xuan muttered with an anxious expression on his face.

“Xuan-er...”

Just as Zhang Xuan was feeling flustered inside, he suddenly heard his mother’s worried voice. He quickly snapped out of his state, raised his head, and smiled. “I’m fine... Right, how’s your cultivation going?”

“With the cultivation technique and the pills you have provided us, your father and I have managed to reach high-tier Celestial God realm pinnacle,” Sword Saint Meng said with a smile as she revealed her strength.

“So fast?” Zhang Xuan blinked in surprise.

He could understand the two of them raising their zhenqi cultivation quickly, but it should have been much harder for them to raise their soul cultivation. He had only managed to advance his soul cultivation so quickly due to the steady inflow of Anima of Yearning from the sales of the Beauty Pill and the Breakthrough Pill.

How did his parents manage to raise their soul cultivation so quickly?

“Sun Qiang bought quite a few medicinal herbs and pills that allowed us to advance our soul cultivation quickly,” Sword Saint Meng explained.

The sales of the Breakthrough Pills and Beauty Pills were bringing in a great deal of money to them every day. Through this great fortune and the unwavering support of the Qi Clan, they were able to easily source and purchase pills that hastened the growth of one's soul cultivation.

It was due to this that they had been able to raise their cultivation all the way up to high-tier Celestial God realm pinnacle swiftly.

“I have three God King Breakthrough Pills for each of you. If you feel like you are ready to push for a breakthrough, it should provide you with the impetus you require to reach the God King realm,” Zhang Xuan said as he passed the pills over.

In the first place, he had prepared those specifically for them, so there was no need to hold onto them.

“Sun Qiang, we'll be heading over to the Sky of Heavenly Sword right now. I want you to find a quiet place over there for my parents and you to cultivate in. Once all of you manage to become God Kings, head straight over to the Sword Hut to find the young man whom we met earlier.”

Even though he was in a rush to head over to the Sky of Freedom, he could not let his guard down when it came to his parents' safety.

If they traveled manually to the Sky of Heavenly Sword, over the long journey, someone might just try to go after his parents in order to uncover the secret behind the Beauty Pill and the Breakthrough Pill. After all, it was a lucrative business that would solve the financial problems faced by any major power.

It would be far safer if they took the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation instead.

With his recent growth in his cultivation and Luo Qiqi's ability to control space, they should be able to ensure his parents and Sun Qiang's safety while making the trip over.

So, they quickly headed over to the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation. Zhang Xuan passed the token over to Sun Qiang, and with him escorting his father and Luo Qiqi

escorting his mother, the five of them quickly made their way over to the Sky of Heavenly Sword.

Fortunately, while it was not easy for them to protect someone while traveling through the teleportation formation, they managed to pull it off without a hitch.

Before bidding his parents farewell, Zhang Xuan entrusted the God King Sword to his father, Sword Saint Xing, and helped him tame it.

With their swordsmanship and the God King Sword, they should be able to defeat even an ordinary God King with ease, so there was no need to worry about their safety.

“Let’s head to the Sky of Freedom!” Zhang Xuan said.

Together with Luo Qiqi, they entered the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation once more.

Even if it was going to be hard, he was determined to stop the battle between Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi!

For this, he was willing to put his life on the line!

# 2227 Sky of Freedom

Freedom Royal City was built in the middle of a massive mountain range.

Unlike the Royal Cities of the other Skies, which were bound strictly by rules, it had no city walls nor guards. Due to that, it did not feel as stifling as the other cities.

There were all sorts of vegetables, tamed beasts, weapons, and pills on sale at the market square. There were pots filled with salted meat and pickled vegetable.

If Zhang Xuan had to use one word to describe the city, it would be that it was chaotic.

“In the Sky of Freedom, everyone is free to do whatever they wish. There are no rules tying them down,” Luo Qiqi explained as they walked through the streets.

Unlike the rest of the Nine Skies, there were no rules, no guards, and no armies in the Sky of Freedom, and yet, none of the other Skies dared to provoke it in any way.

From one perspective, it could be considered a paradise.

Chaotic as it might be, there was still some sort of indescribable and invisible order in place.

Zhang Xuan nodded.

The Sky of Freedom was very different from any place he had ever seen. The cultivators lived much more comfortable lives than those from the other Skies, and they were determined to protect their way of life. Anyone who tried to destroy their haven would have to face their wrath.

Just like that, in its own unique way, the Sky of Freedom towered over the rest of the Nine Skies.

Zhang Xuan entered one of the larger markets, stopped a high-tier Celestial God, and asked, “Pardon me, but do you know where God Monarch Lingxi resides?”

Sensing the powerful auras that Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi were emanating, the high-tier Celestial God replied without any hesitation, “Based on what I know, Her Sovereignty usually spends her time cultivating on Lingxi Mountain over there. However, it might not be that easy to get there...”

“Thank you!”

Looking at the direction the high-tier Celestial God had pointed out, Zhang Xuan saw a mountain peak shrouded in a layer of fog in the distance.

So, the two of them quickly made their way over.

At first, the mountain appeared to be relatively close, but no matter how the two of them tried to fly toward it, they were not able to get close to it at all. Despite having flown for an hour now, it did not seem like they had gotten any closer to the mountain at all. It felt like they would never reach it at this rate.

In a sense, it felt similar to how no matter how hard one tried to head toward the sun, it would simply look as large and brilliant as it always did. Even if a person walked for their entire life, they would never be able to reach it.

Knowing that it was futile, Zhang Xuan raised his head and shouted, “Luo Ruoxin, I know that you knew that I would come. I want to meet you!”

Without a doubt, the other party must have done something to prevent him from ever reaching the mountain.

Since that was the case, he might as well get straight to the point.

Hu!

As expected, right after he said those words, a series of spatial ripples appeared before him, and a woman appeared from them.

She appeared to be around seventeen or eighteen, and she was dressed in green.

“Young Master Zhang Xuan, please return!” The green-robed lady bowed deeply as she spoke. “Our Young Mistress is



currently preparing for her battle with the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, and she can't afford to allow her concentration to waver at a moment like this. If you really care for her, I'll have to ask you not to disrupt her at such a critical time. In a clash between experts, the slightest opening revealed can result in disastrous consequences."

"I..." Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly.

In a fight between experts, the slightest lapse in concentration could easily result in a calamity. If his sudden appearance affected her battle with Kong shi, he would never be able to forgive himself.

But...

He could not give up. He could not allow anything to happen to Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi!

"Is there no way to prevent this fight from happening?" Zhang Xuan asked with gritted teeth.

Even though he had already heard the responses of the Deathless Monarch and the God Monarch of the Sword Hut, he still could not give up.

The green-robed lady shook her head. "There's no way to stop this fight from occurring."

"Why?" Zhang Xuan asked. "I want to hear the answer from her personally!"

"Young Master, please don't make things hard for a servant like me. What our Young Mistress needs at a moment like this is a person to support her, not someone to add to her stress and pressure. If she wins the battle, she'll naturally explain everything to you in due time. And if she loses... everything will be over. There will be no need for her to explain anything," the green-robed lady replied with a lowered head.

"Fine then, I'll wait for her explanation!"

Seeing how determined the green-robed lady was, Zhang Xuan knew that it would be impossible to change her mind. Thus, he turned around and left.

If Luo Ruoxin was determined not to meet him, there was nothing he could say that would make any difference. He would only be wasting his breath.

Luo Qiqi quickly caught up with Zhang Xuan as she asked, “Are we giving up just like that?”

They had already come all the way to the Sky of Freedom in order to stop the duel! It was not like Zhang Xuan to stop just because of a person’s words.

Even though she knew that the person whom Zhang Xuan really loved was God Monarch Lingxi, and their reunion would only reinforce their feelings, she could not stand seeing Zhang Xuan in such a state.

The person she loved was a person who would stand haughtily in the face of the world, as if there was nothing in the world that could trouble him!

“Of course not! Since she isn’t willing to meet me, I’ll meet the Heaven Subjugation Monarch instead,” Zhang Xuan replied.

It was clear that Luo Ruoxin was determined to avoid him till the duel started.

Since that was the case, he would look for Kong shi. Just like how two hands were needed to clap, a duel was also a fight between two people. He just needed to meet one of them in order to understand the reason behind the fight.

Understanding Zhang Xuan’s intentions, Luo Qiqi asked with a confused tilt of her head, “But where are you going to find him? We don’t know where he is at the moment!”

The Nine God Monarchs governed the Nine Skies, but the Heaven Subjugation Monarch was a God Monarch who had only risen to power forty years ago. He did not have any territory of his own, so no one knew where he resided. Unless the latter decided to appear, there was almost no way they could know where he was.

“Given that the duel is just around the corner, there’s a good chance that he’s already in Freedom Royal City at the

moment,” Zhang Xuan said. “As long as we look around, we should be able to find him.”

So, the two of them quickly returned to Freedom Royal City.

However, looking at the massive expanse of buildings all around her, Luo Qiqi exclaimed, “How can we find him among so many people within Freedom Royal City?”

In the first place, there was probably no one who would be so foolish as to reveal the whereabouts of a God Monarch of their own accord.

If they looked around the city by themselves, how long would it take for them to look through the hundreds of millions of people within the city?

“Well, we can try Freedom Royal City’s Master Teacher Pavilion first,” Zhang Xuan said.

Luo Qiqi was stunned for a moment before nodding in realization.

Indeed!

Since the Master Teacher Pavilion was a power under Kong shi, it should have a way to get in contact with him. So, as long as they headed to the Master Teacher Pavilion, they should be able to figure something out from there.

The Master Teacher Pavilion was a power that had risen to prominence over the past few decades, so it was not too difficult to figure out where they were located. It did not take long before the two of them arrived at their destination.

The Sky of Freedom had no rules, so there were no restrictions on the development of an occupation. As such, many guilds had chosen to base their headquarters in Freedom Royal City.

Compared to the Master Teacher Pavilions the other Skies, Freedom Royal City’s Master Teacher Pavilion was bustling with huge crowds. There were many cultivators who were visiting the Master Teacher Pavilion in order to find a teacher to study under.

Entering the building together with the crowd, Zhang Xuan saw quite a few master teachers lecturing within.

It was starting to take the shape of what he had seen many times back on the Master Teacher Continent.

Looking at the crowds that were continuously passing them, Luo Qiqi turned to Zhang Xuan and asked, “Are we looking for their pavilion master?”

If they wanted to get in contact with the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, they had to at least get in contact with the pavilion master.

“That would be too much trouble,” Zhang Xuan replied.

He took a deep breath before bellowing with a deafening voice, “Zhang Xuan has come to challenge the head of the Master Teacher Pavilion. I ask you to come out and meet me!”

## 2228 The Meeting Between Kong and Zhang

“A person has come to challenge the pavilion master? Hah, is he here to crash the pavilion?”

“He must be courting death to dare crash our Master Teacher Pavilion!”

“Hold on a moment—did you hear his name? He called himself Zhang Xuan, right? Is he the apothecary behind the Beauty Pill and Breakthrough Pill?”

“That’s the only Zhang Xuan in the Firmament that I know of...”

“I heard that he killed Conferred God King Baiye Qinghong of the Sky of Linglong just a few days ago...”

...

A commotion broke out in the surroundings.

The master teachers who had charged out in hordes to protect the reputation of their Master Teacher Pavilion, upon hearing that even Conferred God King Baiye Qinghong had not been a match for the young man, faltered a little. They quietly inched back as they waited for someone with greater authority to deal with the situation.

A person who could kill even a Conferred God King was definitely beyond their ability to deal with.

“I am the head of the Freedom Royal City Master Teacher Pavilion. Apothecary Zhang, this way please!”

A gray-bearded old man walked out from the corridors and ushered Zhang Xuan in.

His cultivation felt condensed and powerful. Just like Zhang Xuan, he was a God King.

Nodding, Zhang Xuan followed him into the inner halls of the Master Teacher Pavilion.

After walking a distance, the old man took a glance behind him, and after ensuring that there was no one around, he halted his footsteps and turned to face Zhang Xuan.

“Apothecary Zhang, I was anticipating your visit. I’ll lead you over to where His Sovereignty is right away.”

“You’re aware that I’m here to meet the Heaven Subjugation Monarch?” Zhang Xuan was surprised.

He had thought that he would have to fight a battle before forcing the other party to bring him to the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, but who could have known that he would hear such words from the other party?

“His Sovereignty instructed me to take you to him directly if you came here,” the old man replied with a smile.

With a wave of his hand, a Teleportation Formation appeared before the two of them.

“Let’s go!”

After saying those words, the old man stepped into the Teleportation Formation, and Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi quickly followed him.

Weng!

With a burst of light, the two of them were brought to an ordinary-looking room.

Sitting on a chair right in front of him was an elder with an amicable look on his face.

It was none other than Kong shi!

There were a group of God Kings and Conferred God Kings standing in rows by the two sides of the room.

Taking a glance around, Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows shot up.

There were actually quite a few whom he recognized.

Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, Ancient Sage Bo Shang, Ancient Sage Zi Gong...

The Ten Apostles and Seventy-two Sages were actually among them!

Even the weakest of them was a high-tier Celestial God.

There were more than ten of them above the God King realm, meaning that Kong shi's influence was nowhere weaker than any of the Nine Skies.

Just that... had he not seen the corpses of Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and a few others prior to entering the Azure? Why were they completely unharmed?

While Zhang Xuan was perplexed, he knew that this was not the time to be asking questions. So, he walked to the center of the room, bowed deeply, and said, "Junior Zhang Xuan pays respects to Kong shi."

With just a look, he could tell that the other party was indeed the revered World's Teacher. There was no way to fake it this time.

"You are finally here," Kong shi said with a faint smile. He glanced at his disciples around the room and said, "The rest of you should take your leave."

"Yes, Teacher!" Ancient Sage Zi Yuan nodded before ushering the others out.

"Qiqi, you should wait outside for me, too," Zhang Xuan said.

"Alright. If there's anything you need me for, call for me right away," Luo Qiqi replied with a nod.

Soon, only Zhang Xuan and Kong shi were left in the room.

"Take a seat!"

With a wave of Kong shi's hand, a chair flew over and landed right behind Zhang Xuan.

However, the latter did not settle down on the chair right away. Instead, he lowered his head apologetically and said, "Kong shi, I am indebted to you for guiding me while I was still on the Master Teacher Continent, but due to several circumstances, I ended up capturing your clone."

With a flick of his wrist, Zhang Xuan released Kong shi's clone, which he had captured back in the Azure.

"He is something that I have severed from my will, an existence that was born from me. I thought that I had him suppressed in the Azure, but I didn't think that he would be able to overcome the seal with time," Kong shi replied.

He seemed to be aware of the happenings in the Azure, and he was not displeased with Zhang Xuan's actions at all.

With a flick of his finger, his clone was reduced to a wisp of green smoke before vanishing altogether.

After that was done, Kong shi smiled quietly before remarking, "I was intending to send a sliver of my will down to the Azure to suppress him, but I dropped that thought after I saw you entering the Azure. Your deeds there really didn't disappoint me."

"You... are aware of my actions in the Azure?" Zhang Xuan was surprised.

The Azure and the Firmament were severed by the dimension barrier, making it nigh impossible to travel or communicate between the two worlds. Yet, Kong shi knew of what had happened in the Azure?

In response to his question, Kong shi replied, "Just like you, I came here from the Master Teacher Continent and the Azure. I left my will and a few hands in those two worlds in case of emergencies. While it's indeed highly difficult for me to descend to the lower worlds from here, I'm still able to keep track of what's happening in those two worlds to some extent!"

With his current cultivation realm, not even God Monarch Lingxi would dare claim that she was stronger than him. Naturally, he also possessed means that matched his strength.

"That makes sense." Zhang Xuan nodded.

Even though Deathless Monarch came nowhere close to matching God Monarch Lingxi and Kong shi, he was still able to send messages down to Du Qingyuan through the Seal of Supreme Monarch.



Kong shi was known for his exceptional proficiency in a multitude of occupations, and his students were all overflowing with talent. Given so, it should not be too hard for him to achieve that.

“Within such a short period of time, you have risen to prominence across numerous worlds, shining even brighter than me,” Kong shi said as he stroked his beard with a heartening smile.

All this time, he had been observing Zhang Xuan’s actions.

Initially, he had thought that the young man was like a fleeting shooting star that only shone splendidly for an instant, but he continued to accomplish feat after feat that amazed those around him. In just two short years, he had ascended from the Master Teacher Continent to the Firmament, and now, the young man was standing before him as a God King.

He never would have thought that it was possible for someone to grow so quickly.

“You are gracious with your compliments,” Zhang Xuan replied with a hint of redness on his face.

He felt like the reason he could grow this quickly was due to a predecessor standing in front of him, showing him the way.

If not for Kong shi founding the Master Teacher Pavilion and cultivating techniques such as the Saint Ascension Decipher, there was no way he would have been able to grow that quickly. He might not have been able to come so far.

“Alright, let’s drop the pleasantries and get straight to the point, shall we? I understand the reason for your visit,” Kong shi said. “You are worried about the duel I am going to have with God Monarch Lingxi, and you’re here to talk me out of it, right?”

“Yes, that’s indeed my intention.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He did not think that he would be able to hide his thoughts from Kong shi, so he decided to get straight to the point.

“I’ll give you a clear answer—that’s impossible. The duel is inevitable. I am unable to avoid it, and the same goes for you,”

Kong shi replied with a shake of his head.

“The same goes for me?” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

This was supposed to be a duel between the Heaven Subjugation Monarch and God Monarch Lingxi. How was he involved in this matter?”

Kong shi mused over his words for a moment before asking, “You have comprehended the ability of the Heavens’ Imperfections, right?”

“Yes, I have,” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

“The ability that I have comprehended is the Heavens’ Order. I believe that you should be aware of that as well,” Kong shi said.

Zhang Xuan nodded once again.

He had learned about that from the will Kong shi had left behind in the Azure’s Hall of Gods, so it was no secret to him anymore.

“Be it the Heavens’ Order or the Heavens’ Imperfections, they are all a part of the heavens. They are an integral part to the heavens,” Kong shi said as he gazed at the sky outside of the room with a faraway look in his eyes.

Gedeng!

Zhang Xuan’s heart suddenly jolted as a thought came to him.

“Could it be that Ruoxin... God Monarch Lingxi also possesses a fragment of the heavens?”

Could this be the inevitability that everyone had been talking about all this time?

Was that why he was attracted to Luo Ruoxin despite being incapable of feeling any romantic feelings for anyone else?

Was that why Luo Ruoxin seemed to know about the existence of the Library of Heaven’s Path right from the start?

Perhaps, the fragments of the heavens were able to sense each other’s existences instinctively, and they were drawn to one another.

## 2229 War of the Heavens

“It’s just as you have thought. It is the War of the Heavens!” Kong shi replied. “It’s a fight that cannot and must not be avoided. All forces of the world congregate and disperse with time; this is a natural and inevitable cycle. No one can escape it. If I win, I’ll become the new overseer of the heavens. If I lose, my soul will dissipate, and everything will end right there.”

“The War of the Heavens...” Zhang Xuan’s face paled. “Then, she and I...”

Did that not mean that he would have to eventually fight Luo Ruoxin as well?

Would they have to compete for supremacy, too?

Was this the reason she was unwilling to accept him when he fell in love with her, even coming up with all sorts of excuses to reject him?

Back then, he had thought that there was some compelling power behind her that prevented them from getting together, but that was not the case at all.

In the War of the Heavens, there could only be one survivor.

Back when they were on the Master Teacher Continent, he had asked her many times for her real identity, but he had never been able to receive a concrete answer.

Thinking back, it was not that she had been unwilling to speak; she simply could not do so. If she had revealed her true identity to him in advance, there was no saying how the heavens would have reacted to the divulging of the secret.

They might even have had to fight one another in a life-and-death battle prematurely!

“If I win, the enemy you will have to face in the future is me. If I lose, it will be you and her battling one another. This is

fate, and there's nothing we can do about it," Kong shi said with a composed voice.

Even though it was his life and death that they were talking about, he was still able to remain completely rational about it.

"Are the heavens you are referring to the heavens of the Firmament?" Zhang Xuan asked. "Is there really no way to avoid it?"

"There isn't." Kong shi shook his head.

"But... isn't the Firmament still functioning fine? Cultivators can rise through the ranks, and life is still thriving! If the heavens are really severed into fragments, that shouldn't be the case!" Zhang Xuan exclaimed.

If the heavens of the Firmament were really divided among the three of them, the world should have been in utter chaos. Yet, that was not what Zhang Xuan had seen.

"Thriving?" Kong shi shook his head bitterly. "The Firmament stopped thriving forty years ago. The spiritual energy started receding, and many plants and beasts went extinct. Cultivators were forced to live within cities, and most of the population can't acquire the Aura of Divinity they require to make a breakthrough. There is a huge strain on the supply of cultivation resources. We might have survived till now, but give it another several hundred years or so, and everything would be utterly barren. Life might not even exist then..."

"This..." Zhang Xuan fell silent.

He knew that the other party was right.

It had only been forty years since the receding of spiritual energy began, but a huge part of the Firmament had already turned inhospitable. Innumerable lives had been lost as a result of that.

Many cultivators, due to the scarcity of resources, were unable to raise their cultivation anymore.

With the resources accumulated in the Firmament throughout the innumerable years since its creation, the Firmament was

still able to continue functioning. However, how long could its resources last?

When all the Celestial Gods from forty years ago met their end, how many Celestial Gods would there be to replace them?

What about God Kings and Conferred God Kings?

As the spiritual energy in the air grew scarcer and scarcer, how many people would eventually die of starvation?

He did not even dare imagine that!

Was this the effect of the fragmentation of the heavens?

“Isn’t there the Flood of Spiritual Energy?” Zhang Xuan asked. “I heard that it’s possible to acquire plenty of resources during that period.”

The Flood of Spiritual Energy was a natural phenomenon of the world that had happened once every decade since the receding of spiritual energy. Each time it happened, it would bring innumerable resources over to the Firmament, allowing the withering plants in the barren lands to continue surviving.

For that reason, even though the Grand Spirit Mountain had been deprived of spiritual energy for a very long time, there were still many plants that still persisted to this day.

“If you view the Firmament as a building, the heavens are the pillars propping up the building,” Kong shi said. “Right now, the pillars are divided between you and me. It’s only a matter of time before the building collapsed at this rate.

“The Flood of Spiritual Energy is nothing more than temporary support structures put in place. While it can slow the rate of the collapse, it is nothing more than a temporary stopgap measure the world has put in place, and it can’t be sustained for too long.

“Furthermore, a huge disruption occurs each time the Flood of Spiritual Energy occurs. Cultivators resort to any means necessary to obtain more cultivation resources. While it looks like it’s the force maintaining the stability of the Firmament, it’s actually hastening its death. Do you know many Gods,

Celestial Gods, and God Kings die in each Flood of Spiritual Energy?”

Those words left Zhang Xuan in deep thought.

These were the secrets of the Firmament. The figures were not recorded in any of the books that he had read previously.

“There is no way to count the number of Gods and Celestial Gods, but before the Floods of Spiritual Energy began, there were more than three hundred Conferred God Kings and one thousand God Kings in the Firmament!”

“Three hundred Conferred God Kings and one thousand God Kings?” Zhang Xuan’s body jolted.

Based on what he knew, there were only thirty Conferred God Kings and one hundred God Kings around...

In other words, the Firmament had already lost ninety percent of its strongest experts.

If so, how many Celestial Gods and Gods had died over the years?

“The heavens of the Firmament cannot remain incomplete any longer. If we allow it to remain fragmented, the situation will only continue to worsen over time. The world will be further destabilized, and all beings will suffer,” Kong shi said grimly.

He could not simply sit still as the world was torn into pieces.

“Is there no choice but to sacrifice one of us in order to save the rest of the world? Is it... not possible to sustain the heavens together?” Zhang Xuan asked.

If the heavens could be divided, was there a chance that they could govern each jurisdiction of heavens separately and ensure that everything continued running as normal?

“Of course not! The heavens are an integrated existence, and it is sustained by a delicate harmony. The only way to stabilize it is to merge it back together as one. It’s impossible to control the heavens separately through the fragments,” Kong shi replied. “It’s similar to a series of cogs within a system. They are useless if we tear them apart and use them separately.”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan suddenly thought of something and asked, "If that's the case, Ruoxin already knew that I controlled a fragment of the heavens during our time back on the Master Teacher Continent, so why didn't she kill me? And it's the same for you, Kong shi. If you wanted to, you could kill me right away and grab my fragment of the heavens. Wouldn't it be in your interest to do so?"

Zhang Xuan was not so arrogant as to think that he would be more important than the entire Firmament combined. If killing him could save the entire Firmament, it was hard to understand why Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin had not made a move yet.

After all, when he first met Luo Ruoxin at the Master Teacher Continent, he was no more than an ordinary mortal from a lower world. There were no feelings between them. There should have been no reason for Luo Ruoxin not to make a move.

For Kong shi, if he could obtain the Library of Heaven's Path, he could become even stronger, thus increasing his chances of surpassing Luo Ruoxin and defeating her in the upcoming battle. Why was he not doing so?

Putting aside everything about saving the Firmament, being able to control the heavens meant gaining supreme dominance over the world. This was a great temptation that hardly anyone could resist.

"Kill you?" Kong shi looked at Zhang Xuan with a glint in his eyes before sighing deeply. "If I could save the rest of the Firmament by killing you, I would bear the sin for doing so. However, that wouldn't work. At the very least, it isn't time yet."

# 2230 Night of the Full Moon

“Why?” Zhang Xuan asked in confusion.

He did not understand what the difference between him and Luo Ruoxin was.

The two of them possessed the fragments of the heavens, so why could his fragment of the heavens not be snatched? Was it because he was too weak?

“You haven’t become a God Monarch on par with us yet,” Kong shi replied. “Only upon reaching this level can the fragment of heavens inside you be said to have fully matured. Otherwise, the imbalance in power would make it impossible to fuse the two fragments together, possibly causing a collapse in harmony instead.”

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

If one viewed the different fragments of the heavens as separate powers, it would be of paramount importance to ensure that those powers were on par with one another before fusing them together. Otherwise, it would just lead to one power suppressing the other, resulting in internal disharmony within the body.

If so, instead of saving the world, he could very well be harming everyone instead.

“The Firmament and the heavens, huh?” Zhang Xuan muttered with a bitter look on his face.

It was no wonder everyone said that it was impossible to avoid this life-and-death duel. He could see what was going on now.

This was the fate that was destined for the three of them. If they attempted to defy this fate, it would only spell the end of the world.

“Is there really no other way?” Zhang Xuan asked silently.

All along, he had been grateful that he had the Library of Heaven’s Path with him. However, rather than a blessing, it



turned out to be an obligation instead.

“I have been thinking hard over the years, and I did manage to come up with an idea. However, I don’t know whether it’s truly feasible or not. You are very fortunate to be walking on a different path from mine. Perhaps you will reach heights that I’ll never be able to,” Kong shi said with a gentle smile.

It felt like he had really seen through life and death, paying nearly no heed to it at all.

“A different path from yours?” Zhang Xuan asked in confusion.

“Well, the secrets of the heavens mustn’t be divulged, or else it could lead to unintended consequences. It’s all up to you... In any case, God Monarch Lingxi and I have already done everything that we need to. As for how far you can go, that’s up to you,” Kong shi said.

Seeing how the other party was unwilling to talk about this matter, Zhang Xuan knew that it was pointless for him to continue probing. So, he asked about another matter instead. “Kong shi, I have comprehended the Heavens’ Imperfections whereas you have comprehended the Heavens’ Order. Do you know what God Monarch Lingxi has comprehended?”

That was the one thing that he had been curious about all this while.

If the heavens had been split into three fragments, what was it that Luo Ruoxin had comprehended?

Why could Luo Ruoxin sense him whereas he was unable to feel anything at all?

“I am also quite curious about that!” Kong shi replied with a shake of his head.

“You don’t know either?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

In order to investigate Kong shi, Luo Ruoxin went all the way down to the Master Teacher Continent in order to uncover his abilities, and yet, Kong shi did not even know what kind of abilities Luo Ruoxin possessed.

How was he intending to win the duel like that?

“Over the past forty years, I have spent my time comprehending the nature of the heavens of the Firmament. Despite its deficiency, it was still able to sustain itself without completely collapsing. It felt like there was some sort of power working in the background to protect the lives in the Firmament,” Kong shi suddenly remarked.

There were many things that he could not talk to his direct disciples about, and his relationship with the Nine God Monarchs was poor. In the end, it turned out that the only person he could really confide in was Zhang Xuan.

“Do you mean to say is that the power that is working in the background has something to do with Ruoxin? So, has she comprehended something along the lines of the Heavens’ Protection?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Despite the uncompassionate nature of the heavens, it still provided the environment that allowed countless lives to thrive within it.

For example, the environment of his previous world had been so intricately designed to shelter the life living on it from most harm, be it the ozone layer or the elements that make up each habitat.

This could be the way in which the heavens protected the world.

Could this be the final fragment of the Firmament?

“It’s possible, but what I have in mind is different from that,” Kong shi said with a shake of his head. “I believe that the ability she has comprehended has something to do with the Heavens’ Nature. Due to that, the people of the Sky of Freedom highly respect autonomy and freedom. As for the Heavens’ Protection, I think that it is a notion embedded within the idea of the Heavens’ Nature.”

“I see...” Zhang Xuan nodded.

“It’s all conjecture on my part at the moment. It’ll take some looking into in order to figure out the truth,” Kong shi said with a smile.

Zhang Xuan was silent for a moment before he asked, “How confident are you in the fight?”

“Not very. However, it won’t be that easy to bring me down,” Kong shi replied with a composed yet deeply confident tone.

He had come a long way to reach where he currently was. He had founded the Master Teacher Pavilion and the Ethereal Hall, and he had singlehandedly challenged eight of the God Monarchs, allowing his reputation to echo all over the world.

He was confident that no matter what kind of adversities stood in his path, he would be able to overcome them eventually.

Seeing this, Zhang Xuan could not help but sigh once more.

There was no way to get around this.

If Kong shi won, it would spell Luo Ruoxin’s death, and vice-versa. There was no way to circumvent it!

But after hearing Kong shi’s words, he knew that it was futile for him to struggle to stop this duel.

The War of the Heavens was a fight that they would not be able to escape. It was their responsibility and obligation to see the fight to the end!

“There’s no need to worry. I...”

Sensing Zhang Xuan’s worries, Kong shi chuckled softly beneath his breath. But just as he was about to say something, the spiritual energy in the air suddenly began trembling, swiftly becoming frighteningly violent.

At the same time, the earth also began to tremor.

Both Zhang Xuan and Kong shi quickly walked out of the room, and looking at the dark sky, they saw a full moon. Its brilliant silver light shone coldly upon the lands.

“Teacher...”

The disciples whom Kong shi had gestured to leave earlier had gathered once more, and they looked at their teacher with eyes reddened in agitation.

The night of the full moon had come, and the battle was about to begin.

“We have walked a long journey together, and you know my temperament. Life and death are part and parcel of life. Once autumn sinks in, unfortunate as it may be, leaves will be shed, and flowers will wither. However, that is all in preparation for a new spring,” Kong shi said. “If I fail to return from the duel, you are to serve Zhang Xuan as your new leader. With him around, you’ll be safe from danger.”

“I understand,” Kong shi’s direct disciples replied.

“Me? Everyone here is my senior, so how can I take on this responsibility?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

Be it Ancient Sage Ran Qiu, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, Ancient Sage Bo Shang, or Ancient Sage Qiu Wu...

They were all his seniors, and he had benefited greatly from their guidance in the past.

It did not seem appropriate for him to become their leader.

“As someone who has a fragment of the heavens, you should be more confident in yourself,” Kong shi said with a wave of his hand.

“But my strength is still lacking...”

His cultivation was only at God King realm primary stage, and it would likely take him a long time before he could reach the pinnacle stage, let alone Conferred God King.

Given that Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others were all stronger than him... he could not help but feel deeply pressured becoming their leader.

“Your strength is only temporary. You have comprehended a cultivation technique that surpasses the heavens, so it’s only a matter of time before you become a transcendental existence,” Kong shi said with a smile. “You don’t need to worry too much about it. I am only saying this if the worst-case scenario comes to be. If I come back alive, the final duel will eventually be between you and me...”

Zhang Xuan was speechless for a moment before nodding in resignation. “Alright, I’ll take good care of the Master Teacher Pavilion.”

It would be unbecoming of him to turn down the request of someone who could very well lose his life in the duel.

Nodding with a satisfied smile, Kong shi said, “The duel is about to begin. I’ll be heading off now. Farewell...”

Hu!

Right after saying those words, Kong shi leaped into the air and swiftly flitted toward the full moon.

“Kong shi, take me there as well!” Zhang Xuan quickly shouted.

This was a duel that involved Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin. Even if he could not stop it, he wanted to witness it with his own eyes.

However, Kong shi had already completely vanished from sight, seemingly having missed his words.

## 2231 Above the Moon

“Zhang shi, watching the fight between two God Monarchs is very dangerous. The shockwaves of their clashes could easily claim your life. You might be harmed if you head over recklessly,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

But toward those words, Zhang Xuan simply shook his head.

How could he possibly not know that?

But this was a fight involving those two. He could not simply sit there doing nothing at all!

He dashed into the air as well with his flight ability as a God King, but he realized that his movement speed was simply too slow. By the time he reached the battlefield, it would have ended.

“Young Master, am I late?”

Just as Zhang Xuan was panicking, a voice suddenly echoed behind him. Turning around, he saw a young man looking at him with a smile.

Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up upon seeing the young man, and he exclaimed anxiously, “You came at the perfect time! Take me to the battle!”

It was none other than Little Chick, who had been reinforcing his cultivation back in the Azure.

It had been roughly half a day since Zhang Xuan returned to the Firmament, but for the Azure, more than two months had passed. This period was more than enough for him to fully reinforce his cultivation and return to his peak.

“Let’s go!”

With a nod, Little Chick slit through the fabric of space and pulled Zhang Xuan in with him. In the blink of an eye, the two of them had vanished from sight.

“It’s too dangerous for them to watch a fight between the two God Monarchs!”

Ancient Sage Zi Yuan was going to stop them, but he was not able to make it in time. He could not help but frown upon seeing what had happened.

On the other hand, Luo Qiqi chuckled and said, “There should be no need to worry if that young man who appeared earlier is accompanying him.”

“Who is...” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan turned his gaze to Luo Qiqi, but halfway through his words, realization suddenly struck him, and he narrowed his eyes in astonishment. “It can’t be that... he is the Deathless Monarch?”

His teacher had fought with most of the God Monarchs of the Nine Skies, so Ancient Sage Zi Yuan was able to recognize most of them. The only ones whom he had never met before were the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom and the Deathless Monarch.

Luo Qiqi nodded in response to those words.

“But the young man earlier addressed Zhang Xuan as... Young Master.”

Kong shi’s direct disciples were dazed.

To be honest, they were a little dissatisfied with their teacher abruptly telling them to take Zhang Xuan as their new leader, but out of respect for their teacher, they had chosen to follow his orders.

But who could have known that the young man would actually have a God Monarch as his servant?

They knew full well just how powerful the God Monarchs were, so they could not imagine what the young man could have possibly done to tame a God Monarch.

This was ridiculous!

“Even though he has the protection of the Deathless Monarch, a battle between the God Monarchs is still extremely dangerous. Zhang shi won’t be able to do anything there, so

he'd be much better off waiting here for the results," Ancient Sage Bo Shang said.

"Indeed. If the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom learns that he's our teacher's successor and tries to hold him hostage, that could very well throw our teacher off-guard and expose him to unnecessary danger," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

The key problem was that Zhang Xuan could be a liability to Kong shi once the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom knew about their relationship. All the other party had to do was intentionally utilize a sliver of her strength against Zhang Xuan in order to put their teacher in a disadvantageous position.

"Your worry is unfounded." Knowing what Kong shi's direct disciples were worrying about, Luo Qiqi shook her head bitterly. "The God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom would never make a move on him."

"Why's that?" Ancient Sage Zi Yuan asked with a frown. "You shouldn't underestimate what humans will do when they are in danger. Rules and morals become secondary concerns in such a situation."

The God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom had gone to the extent of finding a way to descend to the Master Teacher Continent in order to figure out their teacher's abilities. Given how determined she was to win the duel, how could one be certain that she would not use a hostage to force Kong shi to submit to her?

In a life-and-death duel, the only thing that mattered was winning. After all, it would be the end of everything once one lost.

"I would still have second thoughts if it was any other God Monarch, but when it comes to the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom, there's no way that she would hurt Zhang Xuan. That's because..." Luo Qiqi sighed deeply. "That's because she's Zhang Xuan's girlfriend!"

"Girlfriend?"



Ancient Sage Zi Yuan, Ancient Sage Bo Shang, and the others were all stunned.

The young man was the successor of their teacher, the Young Master of the Deathless Monarch, and he was the girlfriend of God Monarch Lingxi too?

What the heck was wrong with that young man? Why in the world did he have so many identities?

...

With a flicker of space, Zhang Xuan found himself appearing above a flat, empty space that extended all the way to the horizon.

There was not a sliver of spiritual energy or vitality in the air. It was an utterly desolate environment.

“Where are we?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

If not for his cultivation having reached the God King realm, he would probably have found it hard to survive in such an environment, let alone watch the battle.

“We are above the moon!” Little Chick replied.

“Moon?” Zhang Xuan repeated in bewilderment.

It was also at this moment that he realized that the land he was standing on was emanating a silvery shimmer. There were brilliant stars all around him, and the massive Firmament floated some distance away.

They were indeed on the moon.

He did not think that they would come all the way to the moon in the blink of an eye.

God Monarchs sure were terrifying existences.

Looking around him, Zhang Xuan realized that there were quite a few people standing in the vicinity. Yet, for some reason, his Spiritual Perception was unable to perceive their presence clearly.

The owner of the massive face that he had seen back in the Sky of Linglong was among the crowd.

Surprisingly, he did not see the young man who had given him some pointers on his swordsmanship a while back, but the elder who had been standing behind him back then was there. Most likely, the God Monarch of the Sword Hut had teleported him there to witness the battle as his representative.

“So, they are the Nine God Monarchs,” Zhang Xuan muttered.

Those who were qualified to watch this battle were mostly the God Monarchs. They were the only ones who were able to go there so quickly in order to watch the battle, and they were also the only ones who could protect themselves from the shockwaves of the battle.

“It’s beginning,” Little Chick said.

Raising his head, Zhang Xuan saw two figures standing loftily on two mountains located several thousand li away.

One of them was an old man who had a snowy beard that drifted along with the wind, and his eyes were filled with deep compassion for the world.

The other was a young lady who had fluttering black hair and her eyes filled with the cool regality of a monarch.

Luo Ruoxin!

Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly together.

He had been thinking about her ever since they parted on the Master Teacher Continent, and he had thought up scenes of how their reunion would be many times before.

But he had never thought that this would be it.

She would actually be fighting a life-and-death duel with another person who was also important in his life.

Boom boom boom!

He could not clearly see what happened, but a crack suddenly appeared in the world. Countless lightning bolts devastated the ground, and the surface of the moon trembled nonstop.

Amid countless black rifts, the floating Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi made their moves.

Their movements were not quick, but every strike they made carried unopposable might that threatened to tear the world apart.

It felt like the moon would crumble under their might and fall from the sky.

After watching for a while, Zhang Xuan finally understood why they had chosen this place for their final showdown.

“Neither of them is able to utilize the power of the heavens on the moon...”

As cultivators who controlled fragments of heavens, if they started using the powers of the heavens, it could worsen the stability of the world, causing countless people to die.

As a result, they had decided to choose a battlefield where they had no choice but to rely on their own strength.

The shockwaves were so powerful that they swept over thousands of li to reach Zhang Xuan, but Little Chick fended them off right before they were about to reach him.

Unfortunately for the moon, it did not have someone to protect it. Cracks appeared one after another on its surface, and it swiftly became tattered under the clashes of the two formidable powers.

Zhang Xuan was not able to see through their battles given the limitations of his current strength, and he could not use the Library of Heaven's Path there either. So, he turned his sights to Little Chick and asked, “Who do you think will win?”

## 2232 I Shall Live as Myself

Instead of answering Zhang Xuan's question, Little Chick frowned as he muttered with a hint of incredulity in his voice, "It's very weird!"

"What's weird?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Since it is a life-and-death duel, I thought the two of them would give it their all, but for some reason..." Little Chick cocked his head as he pondered over an incomprehensible question. "Why does it seem like the two of them are still holding back?"

"Are they sounding each other out to find an opportune moment to strike?" Zhang Xuan asked as he watched the duel worriedly.

In most battles, the cultivators would not go all out and reveal their trump cards right from the start. Instead, they would try to sound out the other party's abilities to maximize the effectiveness of their trump cards.

The ground continued wavering under the clashes of the two, and even the mountains that they had been standing on previously had been ground to dust.

It was truly fortunate that they were not on the Firmament, or else a battle of such scale would collapse even a city as massive as Drifting Specter Royal City. Countless Gods would surely have died in the catastrophe.

"Do you think that it's possible for you to stop them with your current strength?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"That's impossible," Little Chick replied with a shake of his head. "My cultivation has grown a fair bit after my resurrection, but I'm still nowhere close to matching those two. Be it God Monarch Lingxi or the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, they are beings who have reached the zenith of the Firmament. There is no God Monarch who could compete with them."

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan sighed deeply.

He had anticipated such an answer, but still, he could not help but feel deeply disappointed after hearing Little Chick's words. It seemed like there was really nothing he could do.

Besides, even if Little Chick was able to stop the battle, it might just spell a great calamity in the near future. It would just be delaying the inevitable for a while longer.

Huhuhu!

A series of crescent arc surges of sword qi suddenly filled the surroundings.

Luo Ruoxin had finally drawn her weapon.

Her swordsmanship was extremely elegant and beautiful. It felt surprisingly familiar though, such that Zhang Xuan could not help but frown after seeing it.

It actually bore some resemblance to the swordsmanship that he had seen from the God Monarch of the Sword Hut. However, the conceptualization was a little different.

Luo Ruoxin's swordsmanship felt free and spirited, reminiscent of a person who was unbound by anything in the world.

Ruoxin has probably received advice from the God Monarch of the Sword Hut.

He could not gauge just how powerful the God Monarch of the Sword Hut was, but he had a feeling that the latter was someone who was comparable to Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi, especially since the latter was able to match him in a clash of equal power levels.

Luo Ruoxin had taken the God Monarch of the Sword Hut's swordsmanship and infused her soul into it, adapting it to become something that was hers.

Taking a closer look, Zhang Xuan noticed that on top of the desire for freedom, Luo Ruoxin's swordsmanship carried the conceptualization of protection as well.

The only problem was that these two concepts were at odds with one another. The desire of wanting to protect something was a shackle in itself, preventing one from living freely.

If she was completely free, her swordsmanship would have been far stronger...

He might be greatly lacking to them in terms of cultivation, but when it came to his eye for swordsmanship, he would not pale in comparison to them.

The fact that he could comprehend a swordsmanship that surpassed the heavens spoke volumes.

Luo Ruoxin's swordsmanship carried the desire to protect, but in the depths of her heart, what she truly craved was freedom. Even though she had already suppressed this contradiction to the bare minimum, it was inevitable that it would hinder her in a battle.

It could very well become a fatal flaw of hers when fighting someone of the same level.

If he could tell as much, Kong shi should be able to do so as well.

With his heart thumping nervously, Zhang Xuan turned to look at Kong shi and saw the latter bringing out his weapon.

It was a cane.

Having seen through the flaws in the young lady's swordsmanship, Kong shi's cane struck furiously like a torrent, making it nigh impossible to defend against.

His skills with the cane are truly formidable... Zhang Xuan was astounded.

As the World's Teacher, Kong shi was renowned not because of his superior strength but his deep comprehension of cultivation, the development of the system of master teachers, and the values that he passed down through the generations. As such, many people viewed him as a refined scholar.

Zhang Xuan had thought that he would be refined even in a battle, but after seeing this, he realized that he could not have been more wrong.

His cane lashed forth at his opponent with the might of an entire world, drawing upon might that none could withstand.

It was utterly violent and destructive.

This was at odds with his perception of whom Kong shi was.

But again, how could a person destroy the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe just by being refined?

Having followed Kong shi's footsteps, he was aware of his deeds as he rose through the worlds.

Kong shi was a person who desired to create an impartial world where everyone was strong and could stand up for themselves. In order to achieve his goals, it was inevitable that he would need to resort to violence at times.

During Kong shi's era on the Master Teacher Continent, in order to ensure the survival of mankind, he had charged into the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe alone and wreaked havoc in their midst, killing countless enemies.

In the Azure, he had subdued many opponents in order to create and establish the Ethereal Halls system, allowing the world to rise to greater heights.

There was no doubt that Kong shi was truly a terrifying individual, but his selflessness allowed him to earn the respect and not the fear of others.

Terrifying toward those who stepped beyond his bottom line, magnanimous to all who sought to learn, it was no wonder he had been able to rise up as such a respected figure during an era of chaos, remembered by the world even after tens of thousands of years later.

But again, this was yet another contradiction in itself, and this could be seen in his blows.

Despite the violence of his cane, one could still feel his gentleness and merciful intent. His strikes appeared to carry the intent to kill, but he would alter them at the last moment in order to avoid landing a fatal blow.

His principles disallowed him to kill a person who was innocent, putting him in a state of internal conflict.

Zhang Xuan shook his head. This is a flaw as well...

Luo Ruoxin craved freedom whereas Kong shi carried far too great compassion for the world.

Those were huge taboos in a life-and-death duel.

Yet, this was their very nature. It could not be changed so arbitrarily, especially not in the midst of a battle.

What about me then?

Seeing through the problems in the attacks of the two, Zhang Xuan could not help but reflect on himself.

The Pathos of Heaven that he had comprehended carried great yearning toward his loved ones. As such, his swordsmanship was extremely binding and sentimental.

However, after hearing the words from the God Monarch of the Sword Hut, he had realized that there was a problem with his swordsmanship.

There was nothing wrong with valuing one's sentiments, but it would be too shallow if that was all there was to it. Instead of wallowing in his feelings, he ought to use those sentiments as a driving force to protect his loved ones from danger!

It was just like how love would not be enough to sustain a family. One would have to devote time and effort, not just mere sentiments, in order to protect one's family and sustain relations, be it financially or psychologically.

If I were a God Monarch, I would have been able to intervene and suggest solutions out of this quandary. I wouldn't have to helplessly watch as one of them pass away in this War of the Heavens...

If I had the power to protect the Firmament, there would have been no need for them to do this...

These thoughts surfaced in Zhang Xuan's mind.

It was a huge torture for him to see the two of them fighting one another. He would find it hard to accept the results no matter who won in the end.



He regretted his own weakness. He could not even protect what he held dear to him.

Zhang Xuan sighed. I don't think I'm suited to protect at all...

It was at this moment that he realized that he was not suited to the swordsmanship suggested by the God Monarch of the Sword Hut.

Having reincarnated from his previous world, there was one thing he realized. He did not like his fate being governed in the hands of another.

Ever since his journey started on the Master Teacher Continent, he had always stood in the face of adversity without fear, pushing forward for what he believed in. He had also always wanted to protect those around him from harm, but not once had he ever thought of wanting to protect the entire world.

What he wanted was not to protect others but to live the way he wanted.

# 2233 The Demise of a Monarch

To him, living as himself meant becoming the best him.

In his journey, while his clone had been thinking of ways in which he could brag, such a thought had never crossed his mind. There were one or two occasions when he had taken center stage of his own volition, but that was also in order to become the best him.

In the depths of his heart, he had always been a humble, low profile, diligent, and honest person.

As such a thought arose in his mind, he felt like his heart had suddenly opened up.

At the same time, the sword art that he had comprehended began to change.

His sword arts, be it A Heart of Intertwined Threads or Unyielding Loyalty, carried the conceptualization of binding something, but along with the change in his state of mind, they became haughtier and more refined, carrying the will to charge ahead fearlessly.

He would do anything to protect his kin and loved ones, but he would never allow himself to become their slaves.

In the same way, it was right for a person to earn money in order to support their family, but they must not allow it to become their only reason for existence. That would be merely living for the sake of living.

To charge bravely ahead and become the best him, that was the path he had chosen.

If he could become the best him and obtain the strength and capabilities he desired, he would also gain the strength to protect those who were dear to him.

These two notions were not at odds with one another.

As the contradictions in his heart cleared away, Zhang Xuan continued to observe the battle ahead of him.

The clash between the two most powerful experts in the Firmament had made the spectating experts utterly silent. None of them were able to say a word.

“He is really formidable,” Little Chick murmured in disbelief. “In just forty years, he was able to reinforce his cultivation to such an extent. The Heaven Subjugation Monarch is really an incredible genius...”

The Deathless Monarch had lived for many years, and he had even resurrected once. Yet, he came nowhere close in comparison to the prowess of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch. This was more than enough to highlight the difference in terms of talent between the two of them.

It was to such an extent that one could not help but despair.

After lamenting, Little Chick turned to look at the young man beside him, and he shook his head once more.

If he thought about it, the Young Master’s talents did not pale anywhere in comparison to the Heaven Subjugation Monarch. In fact, if they really had to make a comparison, it felt like the Young Master had an edge over the latter.

The Young Master might just reach the same level as those two within the next decade or so...

Luo Ruoxin retracted her sword and took a few steps back before speaking with a cold voice. “Impressive. You were able to become this powerful within a short forty years. However, I still have one last move. If you are able to overcome it, it’ll be my loss.”

“I also have one last move prepared,” Kong shi replied with his usual composure. “If I lose, I hope that you can respect our previous agreement.”

“I’m not a person who would go against my words,” Luo Ruoxin replied. “I also hope that you can keep to our agreement if I lose my life.”

“Of course!” Kong shi nodded.

“Let’s not waste any time then.”

Having come to a decision, the two of them made their moves simultaneously.

An incomparably powerful Sword Intent burst into the air while a cane smashed downward with unfathomable might. The clash between the two created such blinding radiance that it outshone the glow of the moon.

For a moment, the entire Firmament was blinded by the light in the clash.

“What’s that?”

“I have no idea...”

“Is it the fight between the God Monarch of the Sky of Freedom and the Heaven Subjugation Monarch?”

“They are fighting on the moon?”

“It must be! Who else could create such a huge commotion?”

...

At the same time, countless people in the Firmament raised their heads to look at the moon, which appeared to be almost as brilliant as the sun.

Amid the blinding light, Kong shi’s cane seemed to forge a long river of time in front of him. Countless silhouettes could be seen drifting within the river, encompassing the history of the world since tens of thousands of years ago.

Each of these snapshots of history had a Kong shi in them. Some of them were furious, some of them had a gentle smile, some of them were cheerful, and some of them were sorrowful...

Put together, these ‘Kong shi’s seemed to drive the wheels of history, bringing the true powers of the temporal laws into life.

This was his strongest technique, Spring and Autumn!

A brush to dictate spring, and a brush to dictate autumn. It was a technique that tapped into everything from the past to the present.

The wills of these ‘Kong shi’s that existed across the time continuum aligned together with one another, bestowing him with strength far beyond anyone’s imagination.

It felt like the entire moon would collapse under the sheer pressure of his strength and fall to the ground.

Under the rush of history, the gray granite on the moon flashed white before shattering into dust.

There was no one, no matter how strong, who could oppose the might of time. It was a transcendental power that formed the basis of the universe.

“Ruoxin...”

Zhang Xuan did not think that Kong shi would actually have such a move up his sleeves, and he could not help but place his hands together out of sheer nervousness. Looking anxiously at the young lady, for a brief moment, he saw her glancing at him yearningly. But the next moment, she was already looking at her opponent with eyes filled with regality.

“I have been waiting for this...”

She raised her sword and pierced it right toward the river of time.

The sword froze on the spot, as if it was destined to never reach its target. Yet, the Sword Intent bursting forth from it struck through the river of time and pierced through history.

Unlike the three-dimensional nature of space, the flow of time was one dimensional. It was incapable of changing its flow and dodging Luo Ruoxin’s attack.

Her sword was directed right at the weakness of Spring and Autumn, piercing through the countless ‘Kong shi’s at once, leaving him unable to dodge.

In the end, the past was nothing more than the past. It did not have the power to dictate the present and the future!

“It’s the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. She obtained it in the Master Teacher Continent and uncovered all of its secrets,” Zhang Xuan muttered with a slightly pale face.

It was apparent that the sword art was created with the sole purpose of dealing with Kong shi. Using her as the medium, she channeled her Sword Intent toward the temporal laws to pierce through the flow of time.

There was no way she would have been able to create such a move without comprehending the secrets of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn.

And he was the one who entered the Temple of Confucius and obtained the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn for her. If Kong shi was killed, he would be an accomplice.

He turned to look at Kong shi, hoping that he would be able to avoid or overcome this attack somehow. Yet, instead of retaliating, he placed the cane in his hand down.

“Why?” Zhang Xuan shouted.

In that instant, he dashed forward, wanting to shake Kong shi to his senses, but Little Chick resolutely held him back.

“That technique causes his present self to overlap with his other selves in history. If his other selves are killed, his present self won’t be able to survive. That is the greatest flaw of this technique, so there’s nothing he could do to save himself,” Little Chick explained with a shake of his head.

“But... There must be some way... Some way...” Zhang Xuan exclaimed in despair.

Deep inside, he knew that Little Chick was right.

Time worked in a straight line. If the past him was killed, the present him could not possibly survive.

Spring and Autumn was indeed a powerful technique, but it had a terribly dangerous flaw to it.

“Don’t forget what you have promised me...”

Kong shi shot a glance at Zhang Xuan, and his voice echoed within his ears.

Then, his body began falling to the ground.

Boom!

Under the powerful surge of Sword Intent from Luo Ruoxin, the river of time was severed, and the silhouettes in there dissipated one after another.

Before the present Kong shi could reach the ground, his body had already disintegrated into a mist that carried the powers of the heavens.

The mist immediately dashed into the sky, wanting to escape from the moon.

However, Luo Ruoxin swiftly reached out and grabbed the mist tightly, preventing it from escaping.

Hong long long!

All of this happened in an instant, and the brilliant light on the moon swiftly disappeared. However, the violent energies that were caused by the clash continued to linger in the surroundings. They gathered together in the sky and fell to the ground as a heavy downpour.

It was as if the sky itself was crying.

The duel between the two God Monarchs had ended.

Kong shi was dead!

# 2234 Conferred God King of the Nine Skies 1

Grasping tightly at the mist that had come from Kong shi's body, Luo Ruoxin was in a daze.

The Heaven Subjugation Monarch had awed many people ever since his arrival in the Firmament. Even the God Monarchs had ended up submitting to him one after another.

Luo Ruoxin had walked into the battle with the resolve that she could possibly lose her life, but in the end, she was the one who had survived.

That had been Kong shi's most powerful technique. Even though she had traveled to the lower worlds to figure out his abilities and spent a great deal of time trying to devise a counter for it, everything had happened so smoothly that she could not help feeling a little dazed.

It almost felt as if Kong shi had given up on the battle at the last moment.

When she executed her very last strike, for a split second, she could see relief on Kong shi's face, as if he had finally fulfilled what he had set out to do.

After a moment of silence, Luo Ruoxin collected the mist with a flick of her finger before heaving a sigh of relief. Then, she turned her sight toward a certain someone not too far away.

The young man whom she loved dearly was dashing toward the area where Kong shi had fallen. He desperately tried to retain the remnants of Kong shi's energy, but his efforts were futile.

Knowing Zhang Xuan's feelings, Luo Ruoxin hesitated for a moment before walking toward him and saying, "This is fate. There's nothing we can do about it..."

Those who possessed a fragment of the heavens carried a fate that they could not escape from.



Zhang Xuan lowered his head for a long while before he quietly replied, “I understand...”

He did not want to accept it, but it was a fact that Kong shi was really dead!

Ever since his time on the Master Teacher Continent, Kong shi had served as a guide to him, shining light on the path that he should take. While he had never formally acknowledged the other party as his teacher, he viewed the other party as his mentor and respected him deeply.

He did not think that the other party would vanish from the face of the world shortly after their first meeting.

He could clearly remember his interactions with the old man, as if the latter was still with him. It felt unreal that he had passed away just like that.

“Is this... the path that we have to take as well? Will we have to fight it out to vie for the heavens too?” Zhang Xuan looked at Luo Ruoxin with a sorrowful look on his face.

“I don’t know...” Luo Ruoxin lowered her face, as if trying to escape Zhang Xuan’s eyes.

“You already have an answer deep inside your heart. You are just unwilling to say it out loud. Did you avoid me all this time to avoid getting entangled with me? Are you afraid that you won’t be able to make a move on me at the very end?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“I...” Luo Ruoxin could not answer his question.

Seeing this, Zhang Xuan felt as if his heart had shattered apart. He suddenly felt like he had to get out of here.

He turned around and walked away. “Little Chick, let’s go.”

If it was fate that one of them had to die at the hands of the other, he would have preferred this ill-fated romance between them to have never begun in the first place.

“Zhang Xuan...”

Watching his departing back, Luo Ruoxin closed her eyes, and when she finally opened them once more, her vision was

already blurry. With a quivering voice, she said, "I'm sorry..."  
"You don't need to apologize to me. This is simply our fate,"  
Zhang Xuan replied without turning around.

He had persevered all this while in the hopes that he would be able to see her once more. But when he finally met her once more and understood the truth behind everything... Perhaps it would have been better if he had let her go right from the start.

He could not accept that this was the only future that lay ahead of the two of them. If this was the suffering that he had to go through, he would rather not have any emotions.

Pu!

A mouthful of blood spurted from Zhang Xuan's mouth as his vision darkened a little.

As someone who cultivated the Pathos of Heaven, the desire of wanting to be emotionless was a fatal blow to him. Just the mere thought of it nearly caused his cultivation to collapse.

Weng!

The pendant hanging in around him heated up. A surge of energy flowed into his body and suppressed the chaotic flow of energy within his body.

Zhang Xuan raised his hand to grab the pendant around his neck. He wanted to throw it back to Luo Ruoxin, but at the very last moment, he released his grip, and his hand slackened by his side.

There was no use venting his anger on Luo Ruoxin. It was not her fault that everything had turned out like that.

If she had died in the duel, he would have surely reacted many times worse than he currently was.

From the very start, only one person was going to walk out of the duel alive. It was just that he simply refused to acknowledge this reality.

He slowly turned around to face Luo Ruoxin, only to see that her eyes had reddened completely.

In that moment, Zhang Xuan suddenly felt deeply apologetic.

All this while, she had been forced to live with the knowledge that such a future lay ahead of them. He could not begin to imagine just how much pressure she must have been under.

The pain that she felt was definitely no less than his.

So, he walked over and embraced her tightly. With a determined voice, he said, "I don't believe that there's no way around the War of the Heavens. I'll definitely find a way for the both of us to survive this, so wait for me."

All of a sudden, he recalled the words that Kong shi had said.

The latter had mentioned that he had been thinking about this matter all these years, and he had an idea in mind. It was just that he was not certain whether he would succeed.

This meant that they were not completely helpless. There were ways in which they could circumvent this.

They just had to find it!

Putting everything aside, during his time in the Azure, Kong shi's clone seemed to know of a way to extract the Library of Heaven's Path from his body.

Though the method would result in his death, was it possible for them to modify it in some way so that he could survive even after extracting the Library of Heaven's Path?

If they could do it, they would be able to overcome this darned War of the Heavens without the sacrifice of either one of them!

"Is that... possible?" Luo Ruoxin asked weakly.

"Yes, it is possible. It must be possible! I'll definitely find a way out of this, so trust me," Zhang Xuan said.

"But what if you can't find it?" Luo Ruoxin's voice quivered a little.

With a firm and resolute tone, Zhang Xuan replied, "At the very most, we'll just die together. Once we are gone, the fragments of the heavens will come together to repair the Firmament, but that will already be none of our business."

“This...” Hearing Zhang Xuan’s words, Luo Ruoxin was taken aback for a moment before she nodded resolutely. “You’re right. Why should we care that much after we’re dead? We’ll just be together under the same tombstone!”

“Indeed, what’s the worst that could happen? Be it the heavens or fate, nothing will tear us apart anymore...”

“Nothing will tear us apart anymore...”

With reddened eyes, Luo Ruoxin also embraced the young man tightly.

She had been hesitating and worrying all this time. She knew that it was an impossible love, but she simply could not harden her will to forsake it.

But the young man voiced her deepest wishes.

As long as they were together, death was nothing to fear!

Having cast aside all her hesitation, there was nothing holding her back!

Even if the heavens collapse, I’ll be satisfied as long as I’m with you.

Feeling the warmth from the young lady’s body, a poem suddenly surfaced in Zhang Xuan’s mind.

A pair of lovebirds we shall be in the heavens, a pair of branches we intertwine on earth. Even the heavens and earth are limited by time, but our feelings shall be eternal!

At the same time, the Library of Heaven’s Path jolted, and a cultivation technique manual materialized.

What is there to rejoice about life? What is there to grief about death?

The seas can dry up, and the stones can be ground down, but even if the world were to be obliterated, our feelings will last through time.

Boom!

Above the moon, a great surge of energy rained down upon Zhang Xuan, shrouding him within a surge of energy.

At the same time, red clouds began to congregate around the Firmament, and a massive power poured down. Dark shadows filled the land, and the earth began to tremor. It seemed like something was going to be born.

Zhang Xuan had thought that unless he received a conferment from a God Monarch, he would not be able to overcome his limits as a God King.

Yet, who could have known that he would still be able to tear through the bottleneck ahead of him without any problems?

“This...”

The eyes of the God Monarchs widened in shock at that sight. Fairy Linglong’s body trembled as she exclaimed, “Instead of being conferred by a God Monarch, he is being conferred by the world itself... This is the World Conferment? Does this mean that... there will be yet another Heaven Subjugation Monarch?”

The God Monarchs present in the area turned to look at Zhang Xuan with flabbergasted expressions, and they were not able to speak for a very long time.

# 2235 Conferred God King of the Nine Skies 2

Forty years ago, a talented genius possessing superior talent had suddenly appeared in the Firmament. Impressed with his talent, the God Monarchs had sought to take him under their wing and confer him as their Conferred God King.

A huge fight had broken out among them as a result of that.

At the end of the fight, they had come to an agreement. In order to avoid escalating the conflict, none of them would confer him.

Everyone had thought that this would be the end for that talented genius.

No one could have imagined that the talented genius would end up receiving the conferment of the world itself.

It had been the same sight back then. The entire Firmament was wrapped within red clouds, and a grand power rose from the world.

The God Monarchs had all been taken aback by the phenomenon the first time they witnessed it as they realized that something greater than them was occurring.

And just as they thought, the talented genius had eventually grown to become the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, wielding the powers to challenge even the great God Monarch Lingxi.

Forty years later, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch fell in a grand showdown with the God Monarch Lingxi, but moments later, yet another person conferred by the world appeared.

Not even the Nine God Monarchs had enjoyed such an honor during their ascension!

The World Conferment was a natural force of the world that was beyond the control of the God Monarchs, and one who

had been bestowed with such power would be truly invincible beneath the God Monarchs.

“Is this fate, too?” Little Chick murmured.

He had thought that the Young Master would require several years of accumulation to reach such a level, but he had managed to pull it off in the blink of an eye.

It was insane!

While muttering to himself in shock, Little Chick nearly lost control of his powers and reverted to a little chick.

The Cloud Dragon Monarch also had his eyes widened into large bells, and it looked as if he was on the verge of reverting to his dragon form.

Fairy Linglong was trembling in so much fear that her legs were clamped tightly together. Just thinking about how she had attempted to kill the young man previously was enough to make her blood run cold.

As powerful as they were, they were only bestowed with the powers to govern a single Sky. However, the young man before them had been recognized by all of the Nine Skies.

In other words, he was the Conferred King of the Nine Skies!

This marked the start of yet another legend.

...

Jiya!

In the firmament, the doors of a humble-looking straw hut opened, and a young man walked out. He gazed at the sky silently, but vaguely, one could see the corners of his lips edging up to form a slight smile.

“He has comprehended it far faster than I thought. Perhaps you were right all along...”

“I’ll be waiting for him to create a miracle.”

...

In the Sky of Drifting Specters, Qi Meng walked out from his seclusion to gaze at the red clouds in the sky.

“Conferred King of the Nine Skies... Who could it be?”

As the Conferred God King of the Qi Clan, he was aware of how the Heaven Subjugation Monarch had risen to power back then, and he knew about the Conferred King of the Nine Skies as well. However, he could not fathom who had sparked such a grand phenomenon this time.

“It seems like it’s the rise of yet another Heaven Subjugation Monarch... What a pity that we weren’t able to get acquainted with him in advance. Otherwise, it would have guaranteed our Qi Clan’s prosperity for years to come,” Qi Meng muttered.

The world seemed to obey a certain cycle, but the closer they came to uncovering the secrets of the world, the more erratic they found the world to be. Even with the wisdom they had accrued over thousands of years, they were unable to fathom the world’s trajectory.

If he had known whom the Conferred King of the Nine Skies was, he would have gotten acquainted with the other party in advance. That would surely have been a blessing for their Qi Clan...

But there was simply no way to predict such a thing. Not even the God Monarchs had the ability to do so, let alone a mere Conferred God King.

“I wonder who it is...”

Qi Meng thought of all the cultivators who were on the verge of reaching God King realm pinnacle in his head, but there were none that seemed to fit the criteria.

“It looks like this God King has been maintaining quite a low profile, or else there’s no way I wouldn’t have been able to guess it!”

The Conferred God King of the Nine Skies was bound to be someone who possessed incomparable talent, so it should have been easy for him to guess who it was. Yet, he was simply unable to figure the identity of the person. It could only go to say that this God King was an incredibly humble and low-profile individual.

How rare.



There were not many low-profile individuals in the Firmament anymore!

...

“Someone has managed to become a Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, just like our teacher...”

On the cliff where Kong shi resided, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan looked at the energy gathering in the sky with a solemn look on his face.

“It must be Zhang shi...”

“For Zhang shi to receive the World Conferment, doesn’t that mean that our teacher...”

“Something must have happened to our teacher. Sigh. Our teacher told us to view Zhang Xuan as our leader and wait... I believe that he has his reasons for instructing us to do so. Let’s believe in our teacher and await his return.”

“Nothing can happen to you, Teacher...”

The crowd fell silent.

For some reason, to them, it felt like the World Conferment marked the end of their teacher’s legend and the start of Zhang shi’s legend.

...

Huhe! Huhe!

Panting heavily, a young man dodged the attack of a rabbit and successfully escaped to a nearby cavern.

Within the cavern, two beautiful ladies looked at him anxiously as they asked, “How is it?”

If Zhang Xuan was there, he would have recognized these two ladies as Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao, whom he had met in the Azure not too long ago.

And the young man, naturally, was Luo Qiqi’s elder brother, Luo Xuanqing.

Having entered the Firmament through the Hall of Gods, they found themselves on the Grand Spirit Mountain, similar to

Zhang Xuan and his direct disciples.

Due to having swallowed Zhang Xuan's blood, they had overcome the spatial turbulence without sustaining too many injuries, and they had been able to quickly recover from their injuries too. Nevertheless, with their God realm primary stage cultivation, they were not able to easily deal with the threats lurking all around the Firmament.

"I couldn't beat the rabbit, and I nearly got killed by it. It's lucky that I ran away fast enough. However, it seems like we'll have to starve for tonight as well..." Luo Xuanqing shook his head bitterly.

They had thought that the Firmament would be filled with spiritual energy and all sorts of treasures, but never in their wildest dreams would they have imagined that it was actually this barren. Despite being the strongest experts in the Azure, they did not even have the strength to deal with a mere rabbit.

Just the thought of it left them feeling deeply stifled.

"The flow of time in the Firmament is so slow, and the spatial pressure is far too great... Without adapting to such an environment, it would be hard for one to even walk around." Hu Yaoyao could not help but ask, "Say, how do you think Zhang Xuan managed to break the dimension barrier to return to the Azure? How strong must he be in order to do that?"

"This..." The remaining two people fell silent.

They had expected the Firmament to be just a little more formidable than the Azure, but the gap between the two worlds was truly enormous.

With the sheer resilience of the spatial laws there, they could not imagine how Zhang Xuan could have torn open the dimension barrier to deliver the God Blood to them.

Just how powerful was he?

"When I headed out earlier, I encountered a few students who are out for an expedition," Luo Xuanqing said. "According to what I heard, it seems like the cultivation realms in the Firmament are divided into God, Celestial God, God King, Conferred God King, and God Monarch! It has only been a

month since he arrived at the Firmament, and taking into account his talent and speed of cultivation, I reckon that he should be a middle-tier God at the moment.

“As for returning to the Azure, I seriously doubt that. After all, he didn’t appear before us at all. My guess is that he might have sent the God Blood down through some sort of ritual. It shouldn’t be too difficult to do so with the powers of Starchaser Palace’s altar.”

Through eavesdropping on the conversation of the cultivators he had met earlier today, he had gained some understanding of the Firmament, and he knew how difficult it was to raise one’s cultivation there.

“This...” Hu Yaoyao pondered for a moment before shaking her head. “That fellow has always been good at achieving the impossible. I think his cultivation should be higher than that... Around high-tier God, I’d say!”

“You’re saying that his cultivation has leaped across two realms within a month?” Luo Xuanqing snorted in disbelief. “You are thinking too highly of him!”

“It is extremely difficult to do so, but I believe that he’s capable of it!” Yu Fei-er chirped in enthusiastically.

“Perhaps...”

Knowing that it was impossible to argue with these two fangirls, Luo Xuanqing shrugged before falling silent.

At this moment, the ground beneath them suddenly began to tremor, so the three of them quickly charged out of the cavern, only see with a sky filled with red clouds.

“What is that?”

“Is this some kind of skill cast by a God Monarch?”

“It feels like the world’s acknowledgement toward an individual to me. I felt the same way back when Zhang Xuan was acknowledged as a Celestial Master Teacher. I didn’t think that I would witness such a sight shortly after arriving in the Firmament. Alright then! From today on, I shall view that expert as my idol!” Luo Xuanqing declared with eyes filled

with passion. “I shall view him as my target, and I shall rise through the ranks and surpass that darned lad Zhang Xuan!”

# 2236 Kong shi Could Come Back to Life?

In the Sanctum of Sages, Luo Xuanqing had met Zhang Xuan for the first time, and they had become close friends with one another.

However, due to the matter concerning his younger sister, they had ended up turning against one another. But in the depths of his heart, he still viewed the other party to be his rival and a friend.

It was just that the other party's cultivation grew too quickly. He made breakthroughs so frighteningly quick, leaving innumerable legends in his wake.

He had thought that it would have been impossible for him to catch up with Zhang Xuan, but who could have known that there would be such a huge time gap between the Master Teacher Continent and the higher worlds?

With this, he still had a chance!

At this moment, Zhang Xuan only had a month's advantage on him. As long as he worked diligently, he should be able to catch up with the other party, and soon, he would be able to give the other party a good pummeling.

“Surpass Zhang Xuan?”

Hearing Luo Xuanqing's muttering, Hu Yaoyao and Yu Fei-er glanced at one another before shaking their heads helplessly. “Forget it, do whatever that makes you happy...”

As people who had seen how Zhang Xuan forged his legend, they did not think that Luo Xuanqing stood a chance at all. But that being said, if Zhang Xuan was really only at high-tier God at the moment, they might still be able to catch up to him and advance alongside him.

This thought filled them up with great drive.

“How beautiful it is. I reckon that the person who has been acknowledged by the world must be a great person as well...”

The two young ladies spoke as they stared at the red sky as well.

...

Paying no heed to the shocked gazes of the God Monarchs, Zhang Xuan closed his eyes as he perceived the changes that were occurring within his body.

Conferred God King realm primary stage!

Conferred God King realm intermediate stage!

...

Conferred God King realm pinnacle!

In less than a minute, his soul cultivation had already risen from God King realm pinnacle to Conferred God King realm pinnacle!

But his soul cultivation did not stop there. It continued rising beyond that point.

Just the conferment of the world was enough for him to raise his soul cultivation several stages; this was even more terrifying than the Anima of Yearning.

However, this isn't a good time for me to push for a breakthrough to God Monarch, Zhang Xuan thought as he suppressed his rising soul cultivation.

Conferred God King of the Nine Skies was equivalent to receiving the conferment of the Nine Skies simultaneously, granting him far greater powers than other Conferred God Kings. Under normal circumstances, such power should have been enough for him to become a God Monarch, but it was a pity that his physical body and zhenqi cultivation was still too weak.

If he made a breakthrough then, he would induce the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation, but he was not ready to face this cultivation ordeal yet. Without a doubt, he would be crushed.

If that happened, he would become the first God Monarch in history who died from a cultivation ordeal right after his breakthrough.

How embarrassing would that be?

For that reason, he decisively suppressed the further growth of his soul cultivation.

In any case, he had already comprehended the God Monarch realm cultivation technique that he required for his breakthrough. It would not be too late to make a breakthrough after he raised his physical body and zhenqi cultivation.

“That is a wise decision...” Luo Ruoxin heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing how Zhang Xuan was able to remain rational even in the face of such great temptation.

When it came to cultivation, it was not about making a breakthrough as quickly as possible. Instead, what was more important was building a strong foundation, and only then would a cultivator be able to exert greater strength after their breakthrough!

The person whom she fancied was indeed a person with great willpower and decisiveness!

After stabilizing the energies within his body, Zhang Xuan exhaled deeply before turning to look at the young lady beside him.

“I intend to find a way to circumvent the War of the Heavens. Do you want to stay with me, or...”

It had not been easy for him to reunite with her once more, so he did not want to part with her so quickly. However, there was no guarantee that he would be able to find a solution, and staying together could just lead to greater pain in the future. He did not want to force her for his own selfishness.

“I need to return to the Sky of Freedom for a while to settle some matters... After I’m done, I’ll head over to see you!” Luo Ruoxin replied.

There were some things that she had to settle right away.

“Alright, I’ll be waiting for you.” Zhang Xuan nodded. Then, he beckoned Little Chick over and said, “Let’s go!”

“Un!” Little Chick nodded.

With a wave of his hand, the two of them vanished on the spot.

Luo Ruoxin stood quietly for a moment before leaving the area.

Just like that, the other God Monarchs quickly dispersed.

Everything that had just happened a moment ago left them feeling a little shaken. Be it the grand battle they had just witnessed or the upcoming birth of a new God Monarch, it seemed like the Firmament would soon be undergoing massive changes.

And what had left them even more worried was that the upcoming God Monarch already held unprecedented power. Even before making a breakthrough himself, God Monarch Lingxi was his girlfriend, and the Deathless Monarch was his tamed beast.

How were they supposed to deal with such an overpowered character?

...

Zhang Xuan returned to the mountain where Kong shi and his direct disciples resided.

“Zhang shi!”

Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others quickly gathered around the area.

“Kong shi, he has...” Zhang Xuan began speaking with a solemn voice.

“It’s fine. We already know,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied with a deep sigh. “Earlier, when our teacher’s sculpture broke apart, we already knew that our teacher’s soul has dissipated...”

“My condolences.”



Zhang Xuan knew of the deep bond between Kong shi and his direct disciples. After having been together for so many years, the feelings they had with one another had probably transcended even that of kinship.

“There’s nothing to grief over. Our teacher wouldn’t leave us just like that,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied.

Zhang Xuan was slightly surprised to hear those words. “I saw his soul dissipating with my own eyes. I fear that the possibility of him returning is extremely slim...”

A cultivator who had lost their body could still find another body to house their soul, but if a cultivator’s soul dissipated, that would really be the end of them.

Yet, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others seemed to be holding onto the hope that Kong shi might still return somehow.

“In the Firmament, death doesn’t necessarily represent the end. Doesn’t the Netherworld Pool of the Sky of Drifting Specter hold the power to revive souls that have dissipated? Besides, the Deathless Monarch died decades ago, but he has also returned from his death, isn’t that so?” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

“This...” Zhang Xuan’s body shuddered a little.

Indeed!

The Netherworld Pool had the ability to restore a dissipated soul through the Anima of Yearning, and the Deathless Monarch had the ability to resurrect from death. For someone like Kong shi who possessed capabilities unmatched by anyone before him, how could he possibly not have a backup plan?

He might have already found a way to come back to life!

Just that...

“Even if he comes back to life, will he still be the same person as he was?” Zhang Xuan asked contemplatively.

The Deathless Monarch might have resurrected from death, but he had ended up becoming Little Chick. Even though they

shared the same memories, they were no longer the same person.

The same went for the Netherworld Pool.

There was no guarantee that the restored soul would possess the same consciousness as before.

“He will be,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied affirmatively.

“How can you be so certain about it?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

It was clear that Ancient Sage Zi Yuan knew something about this, or else he would not have reacted in such a manner.

“God Monarch, can you cast an isolation barrier over this house so as to prevent the will of the heavens from peering in?” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan asked.

“Very well!” Little Chick nodded.

He waved his hand and shrouded the house with his powers, isolating it from the rest of the world.

After that, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan turned to look at Zhang Xuan.

Understanding Ancient Sage Zi Yuan’s intention, Zhang Xuan said with a nod, “I’ll give it a try.”

It was not enough just to isolate the house from the heavens because Zhang Xuan possessed a fragment of the heavens inside him as well. Where the Library of Heaven’s Path was, the heavens would be able to reach.

This was shown by how the heavens had wrecked the Seer Guild back then despite the measures they had put in place.

Zhang Xuan channeled his soul energy and wrapped it around his Library of Heaven’s Path, sealing it off.

Such a thing would have been impossible in the past, but now that he had comprehended a God Monarch realm cultivation technique, it was well within his means to do so.

“Alright, it’s done,” Zhang Xuan said.

Seeing that everything was in place, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan looked at Zhang Xuan intently before asking, “Zhang shi, have you ever heard about our teacher cultivating a technique known as... Severing the Three Necrophorus?”

## 2237 Kong shi's Plan

Zhang Xuan shook his head and replied, "I've never heard of it before."

"You've never heard of it before?" Ancient Sage Zi Yuan was slightly surprised to hear that answer. With a slight frown, he asked, "Zhang shi, you met our teacher's clone in the Azure, right? Do you notice any difference between our teacher and his clone?"

"Difference?" Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before replying. "To be honest, at the very start, I was unable to discern any difference at all, be it in terms of his body or soul. I would say that the greatest difference between the two of them is their personality..."

It was not without reason that he had been fooled by Kong shi's clone back then.

If not for the other party's attempts to kill him, he might have been fooled by the other party's facade.

"Humans are born with turbidity inside of them. They undergo birth, ageing, illness, death, and all sorts of suffering. This leads to desire, envy, lust, greed, and all sorts of emotions consuming their mind, leading them to be fixated with inconsequential things," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

There was no human who was devoid of desire. Even the most selfless of saints would find it hard to transcend their desires.

Zhang Xuan was filled with many desires as well. He desired to love and to be loved; he desired to be understood; he desired to eat delicious food; he desired to be strong...

These were powerful desires that drove him.

"Severing the Three Necrophorus is a technique that severs one's unnecessary fixations and malevolent intent, thus

returning purity to one's mind and body," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan's body stiffened up a little.

Was that for real?

If this was true, the technique would really be frighteningly formidable!

"We have practiced the technique as well. Back when we were on the Master Teacher Continent, we severed our Three Necrophorus and used them to seal off the passageway between the Azure and the Master Teacher Continent," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied.

"I see! So those were your Necrophorus..." Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

He had wondered how they were all still around despite having seen their corpses back on the Master Teacher Continent. It turned out to be a side effect of a technique that they had been practicing!

The necrophorus that was severed from one's body would appear to be no different from one's real body, such that it was nigh impossible to tell the difference.

The similarity was so great that it could fool even the heavens!

"Indeed. Back while he was on the Master Teacher Continent, our teacher severed his Benevolent Necrophorus and forged it into the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. In the Azure, he severed his Malevolent Necrophorus and sealed it in the Ethereal Hall, which turned into the clone that you met. If I'm not mistaken, he used the hands of God Monarch Lingxi to sever his Ego Necrophorus," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan explained.

"Benevolent Necrophorus, Malevolent Necrophorus, and Ego Necrophorus?"

"Only through severing persisting thoughts of good and evil and overcoming one's sense of self will one be able to transcend one's fixations," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan explained.

"Our teacher was born with a fragment of the heavens within him, and every time he used it, a sliver of gray energy would

be left within his body. This gray energy was fused together with his body and his soul, making it impossible to remove it. So, he devised the technique, Severing the Three Necrophorus, in order to free himself of the gray energy in order to achieve true liberation!”

“I see...” Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

That would explain why Kong shi had been able to remain composed right from the start. It seemed like everything, from the start of the battle to his resignation in the end, had gone according to his plan.

Through using Luo Ruoxin’s strength to sever his Ego Necrophorus, he would be giving up on everything that he had been persistently holding onto thus far. As a result, he would be freed from the mark that the heavens had left on him, allowing him to achieve true transcendence.

As expected of the World’s Teacher. He was decisive in his actions, and he had everything in his grasp.

Zhang Xuan looked at his own body and saw that the gray energy within his body had grown quite a bit. It was lodged deep within his body and soul, making it impossible to remove it.

Even with his Pathos of Heaven, he was unable to do anything about the gray energy within him.

“In order to successfully Sever the Three Necrophorus, one has to fool the heavens first. As such, other than our teachers and a few of us, there is practically no one who knows of this technique. Our teacher has also never imparted it to anyone else. Furthermore, once this technique has been used, the heavens will automatically repair the flaws accordingly, making it impossible to use it a second time. It’s probably for this reason that our teacher didn’t impart it to you,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded in response.

As someone who possessed a fragment of the heavens as well, he could understand that much.

In order to be freed from the shackles of the heavens, one would have to first learn how to fool the heavens.

Zhang Xuan would eventually have to find a way to free himself from the shackles of the heavens as well, but Kong shi's method would not work for him.

After all, after the precedence from Kong shi, the heavens would surely be guarded against it a second time. If he dared attempt it, he might just end up being obliterated by the heavens in the process of doing so.

“Zhang shi, our teacher has discussed your matters with us before. He says that just like him, you have to find a way to transcend the heavens. Even though it is a different route from what he took, it seems like both he and God Monarch Lingxi have already prepared a way out for you,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

“Prepared a way out for me?” Zhang Xuan was astonished.

This was the first he had heard about this.

“Our teacher didn't tell us what God Monarch Lingxi's plan is, but I do know about what our teacher has left for you. For one, the Deathless Monarch is something our teacher prepared specifically for you,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

“This...” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

He had thought about this before. If Little Chick had descended to the Master Teacher Continent together with the Otherworldly Demons after his demise, he would have been in the otherworldly battlefield instead of being on a mountain range on the Master Teacher Continent.

And it seemed like he was right after all. It was an intentional move on Kong shi's part, but he did not realize that the latter had prepared it for him.

Thinking deeper into the matter, a unique trait of Little Chick was his ability to resurrect from death. After absorbing his blood at the Lucid Lunar Lake, he had gained a portion of his resurrection ability as well.

If he lost his life somehow, there was a chance that he might be able to come back to life after the passing of innumerable years.

Just that...

So what if he came back to life?

There was a good chance that another consciousness would arise out of him, and he would become another person altogether.

Putting everything aside, even though his clone originated from the same soul as him, his clone was a compulsive braggart, very different from the humble and low-profile person he was.

In other words, just because two beings originated from the same soul did not mean that they were identical existences. Their consciousness could vastly differ from one another, making them distinct individuals.

The hand that Kong shi had left behind only guaranteed his return to life, but it was not enough to preserve his consciousness.

If that was the case, what was the hand that Luo Ruoxin had prepared for him?

Zhang Xuan could not help but fall into deep thought.

Two objects surfaced in his mind.

First, the disguise amulet that allowed him to alter even his bloodline.

It was an artifact that was more formidable than he had initially thought; it could actually fool even Conferred God Kings. However, it did not seem to have anything that had to do with the heavens.

Is it the crimson pendant then?

There was a droplet of blood within the pendant that carried powers that he could not comprehend.

This pendant had proven to have the ability to restore composure into his consciousness whenever his mind fell into



disarray.

The first time it happened was when he suddenly realized that the Heaven's Path Divine Art was not as perfect as he thought after entering the Azure. That had nearly caused his cultivation to go berserk, but the pendant had managed to calm down the chaos within him.

The second time was when he doubted the existence of the Pathos of Heaven a moment ago.

Both times, it had shaken his consciousness awake during a critical moment. Given so, was it possible that it had the ability to retain his consciousness even after he resurrected from death?

But that did not make sense either.

Luo Ruoxin was the one who had given him this pendant, so if she already knew this much, what was she still worried about?

If they could both survive the War of the Heavens through such a method, everything was good, was it not?

## 2238 The Origin of ‘Laoshi’

“I guess I can only ask her directly...” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

On the surface, the strongest expert in the Firmament appeared to be none other than Luo Ruoxin. Yet, for some reason, he felt like they were being pushed forward by a pair of invisible hands, shoving them inside a vortex of turmoil.

“Is it possible for you to impart the Severing of Three Necrophorus to me?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Regardless of whether he could free himself from the restraints of the heavens, this technique would still grant him three additional lives, thus providing him with far greater means to protect himself.

Furthermore, he could also sever his Benevolent Necrophorus, Malevolent Necrophorus, and Ego Necrophorus. That would make it easier for him to cultivate in the future.

“In order to deceive the heavens, it was important that we did not retain memories of it in our head. Otherwise, the heavens would still be able to peer through it. We learned and cultivated the technique in the spatial turbulence while we were leaving the Master Teacher Continent, and after we were done with it, we erased it from our memories. Not even our teacher retained it in his mind, so I’m afraid that we don’t have it with us,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said with an awkward smile.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan shook his head and sighed deeply. He suddenly thought of something and asked, “This technique was created by Kong shi, right? But doesn’t that mean that he knew that there would be others who would compete with him over the fragments of the heavens?”

This was something that really intrigued him.

Even as he left the Master Teacher Continent, he had still known almost nothing about the fragments of the heavens and

the War of the Heavens. He had still been very reliant on the Library of Heaven's Path.

Everything should only come together after they reached the Firmament, where the War of the Heavens was truly held. So, was it not extremely bizarre that Kong shi had already started preparing for it while he was still on the Master Teacher Continent?

Or could this mean that the Heavens' Order granted him the power to foresee the future?

"As wise and talented as our teacher is, he isn't omniscient. He only came to know all of this because of someone else's guidance," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said.

Zhang Xuan nodded silently.

Kong shi's accomplishments on the Master Teacher Continent were simply too spectacular, such that it was hard to believe that someone could actually achieve so much on his own.

It was indeed too good to be true.

All humans would have to acquire their knowledge from something or someone.

Even someone as talented as Kong shi required someone else's guidance for his cultivation.

It was just like how, despite having the Library of Heaven's Path, he still needed Kong shi's guidance from time to time to point the way for him.

"That technique was imparted to us by our grandteacher," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan added.

"Grandteacher?" Zhang Xuan was perplexed. He had not heard of Kong shi having a teacher before.

"A long time ago on the Master Teacher Continent, we respectfully addressed those who imparted knowledge to another as 'shi'," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said. "It was only after the appearance of our grandteacher that we began to address teachers as 'laoshi'!"

"..." Zhang Xuan was utterly confused.

Why was he unable to understand what Ancient Sage Zi Yuan was saying?

“It’s similar to how people address you as Zhang shi, how you address our teacher as Kong shi, and how others address me as Yan shi... We usually use one’s surname with the character ‘shi’ in order to respectfully address a teacher. The term ‘laoshi’ is how our teacher initially addressed his teacher, and the rest of us eventually came to use the term as well. The term eventually came to be what it is now,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan explained.

Zhang Xuan was stunned for a long while before it suddenly struck him. With a doubtful look on his face, he asked, “Do you mean to say that your grandteacher’s surname is ‘Lao’? It’s for that reason that Kong shi addressed him as ‘Lao shi’, and it eventually came to be the ‘laoshi’ that we know?”

“Indeed!” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan nodded.

“There’s actually someone who goes by the surname of ‘Lao[1]’?” Zhang Xuan was speechless for a while. Then, with an intrigued look on his face, he asked, “If your grandteacher was able to impart such a formidable technique to Kong shi, he should be quite a formidable individual, right? But why have I never heard of him before?”

He was well-versed in the history of the Master Teacher Continent, and he even had Vicious, a relic of the ancient era, with him. Yet, they had never heard of this formidable expert who went by the surname of ‘Lao’!

“According to what our teacher said, our grandteacher was only on the Master Teacher Continent for a very short period of time before leaving on a green ox. Our teacher doesn’t know where he went after that, and neither do we...”

“I see...”

It seemed like he could only ask Kong shi about it after he came back to life.

Sighing deeply, Zhang Xuan looked at the crowd in front of him and asked, “By the way, do you happen to have any

pinnacle God Essence Pills or other medicinal herbs that I can use to raise my cultivation?”

His soul cultivation had already reached Conferred God King realm pinnacle, and his physical body and zhenqi cultivation were lagging behind.

He had already figured out a plan for his physical body. With the revival of the Deathless Monarch, he would be able to use the Deathless Lava Reservoir in order to temper his physical body.

As for his zhenqi cultivation, he had already comprehended a God Monarch realm cultivation technique. The only things he was lacking were pills and medicinal herbs to refine his zhenqi.

As long as he had sufficient spiritual energy, he would be able to raise his zhenqi cultivation to God King realm pinnacle or even push for a breakthrough to God Monarch!

However, the problem was that pinnacle God Essence Pills were incredibly rare. Even an apothecary as skilled as Fu Jiangchen did not have many of them in his possession. So, he was thinking that Kong shi might have accumulated a stockpile over the years that he could use.

“Our teacher forged several pinnacle God Essence Pills back then. We have eaten quite a few of them over the years to raise our cultivation, so I think there should be around a few hundred of them left at the moment. Let me go get them for you,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said with a smile before walking out of the room.

“A few hundred of them?” Zhang Xuan’s lips twitched.

As expected of Kong shi. He sure was wealthy.

Not long later, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan returned with a sack, and he threw it over to Zhang Xuan casually. “They should all be in there.”

Zhang Xuan opened the sack, and there were indeed many God Essence Pills in there. All in all, there seemed to be a few hundred of them in there.

“Do you all... really store your God Essence Pills like that?”  
Zhang Xuan’s eyebrows twitched a little.

Nearly all cultivators in the Firmament stored their God Essence Pills in jade containers or jade bottles in order to protect them, yet Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others actually just tossed them into a gunny sack as if they were trash.

Zhang Xuan could not help but wonder if the pills inside were authentic.

So, he took one out and swallowed it whole.

Gugugugu!

A burst of spiritual energy immediately gushed into his meridians.

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan popped a second one into his mouth, then a third one...

“Is that... how you eat pills?” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan’s mouth opened agape.

They did have quite a lot of pills in their inventory, but they were pinnacle God Essence Pills! Even as a Conferred God King, he would have to take quite a while to assimilate its energy, but the other party simply threw them into his mouth as if he was eating candy.

No wonder you are always short on pills!

As he watched the young man, speechless, the latter’s cultivation began to rise swiftly.

God King realm intermediate stage!

God King realm advanced stage!

...

In a few moments, his cultivation reached God King realm pinnacle before slowly coming to a halt.

“What a pity. Pinnacle God Essence Pills aren’t useful for me anymore,” Zhang Xuan remarked lamentably.

Pinnacle God Essence Pills were usually effective even for most Conferred God Kings, but due to the unique nature of the

Pathos of Heaven, the requirement on the purity of spiritual energy that he absorbed was extremely high.

The purity of the pinnacle God Essence Pills only sufficed for him to reach God King realm pinnacle. Beyond this point, no matter how many of them he ate, he would not be able to push his cultivation any higher.

“It’s fortunate that they are no longer effective for you, or else you might really have depleted our entire inventory!” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan remarked helplessly.

Lowering his head, Zhang Xuan noted that the pills in the gunny sack had already dropped by half. Chuckling awkwardly, he scratched his head and said, “Hahaha, the pills that Kong shi forged are simply too delicious. They even come in different fruity flavors—pineapple, apple, grape... I got a little addicted and ended up eating more than I needed to!”

“...” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan.

[1] Lao means old.

# 2239 The Flood of Spiritual Energy Is Here!

Having come this far with Kong shi, Ancient Sage Zi Yuan could be considered a person who had braved many storms. There were very few things in the world that could shake him.

But when it came to pinnacle God Essence Pills, even for them, they would need at least one or two months to assimilate the massive amount of spiritual energy harnessed within them. Yet, the young man swallowed a hundred of them in a single sitting without any rest...

Not only was he fine, he even gave some feedback on the taste of the pills.

The hell!

Was that even the main point?

Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others suddenly did not feel like talking to the young man.

That thing inside your body must not a stomach but a black hole!

While Ancient Sage Zi Yuan was still feeling exasperated by the situation, he noticed that the young man was staring at him intently.

“Other than pinnacle God Essence Pills, do you have any other pills that taste... I mean, harness purer spiritual energy? Such as Pill Kings or something? If you do, I am willing to buy them from you. I’ll make sure to compensate you properly after I successfully become a God Monarch.”

“We don’t have anything better than that,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied with a shake of his head.

His teacher had told them to treat Zhang Xuan as their leader, so naturally, the young man had the rights to access their pills.



It was just that they had nothing more potent than pinnacle God Essence Pills with them.

“Back then, Kong shi would have needed a great amount of spiritual energy in order to make a breakthrough, too. How did he manage to acquire the massive amount of spiritual energy that was required?” Zhang Xuan asked curiously.

He could imagine that Kong shi would have been in the same position as he currently was. Relying on just pinnacle God Essence Pills would only bring his cultivation to God King realm pinnacle.

If so, what did Kong shi make use of in order to become a God Monarch?

“He managed to become a God Monarch through the Flood of Spiritual Energy,” Ancient Sage Zi Yuan replied. “It’s a phenomenon that occurs once every decade, and each time, it brings all sorts of treasures into the world along with it. It was in the Flood of Spiritual Energy forty years ago that we and our teacher grew swiftly to our current levels!”

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

He had long heard of the Flood of Spiritual Energy, but he was unsure about the details surrounding it.

But just by looking at the sheer number of Conferred God Kings and God Kings that had died in the previous Floods of Spiritual Energy, it was not too difficult to deduce that there were amazing treasures that one could procure from it.

In fact, some of the things were at the level where even God Monarchs would lose their rationality over them.

Otherwise, they would not have gone to the extent of taking away his direct disciples. That only showed how highly they valued the Flood of Spiritual Energy.

“How long is there before the next Flood of Spiritual Energy?”

“The phenomenon happens once every decade, but it’s impossible to estimate the exact date. Sometimes, it comes a bit late; sometimes, it comes a little early. Going by past estimates, there should be still another half a year before the

Flood of Spiritual Energy arrived. However, the earlier World Conferment has shaken things up quite a bit, so I would say that there's a good chance that the Fifth Flood of Spiritual Energy will be happening very soon," Ancient Sage Zi Yuan said as he gazed into the sky.

The earlier World Conferment had caused the spiritual energy all over the Firmament to congregate together and linger in the air. Such conditions could easily induce an earlier arrival of the Flood of Spiritual Energy.

Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief upon hearing those words.

Since the pinnacle God Essence Pills were useless to him, it seemed like he would have to wait for the next Flood of Spiritual Energy to try to obtain even more potent medicinal herbs in order to make a breakthrough.

For the next two days, Zhang Xuan remained on the mountain, devoting most of his time to looking through Kong Shi's book collection. After that, he bade farewell and took his leave.

What was lagging behind was his physical body cultivation. Little Chick had told him that he could repair the Deathless Lava Reservoir swiftly once they returned to the Sky of Spirit Origin, so Zhang Xuan felt that it would be best to get it over and done with.

With Little Chick around, there was no need for him to use the Great Displacement Teleportation Formation. They could just rip through space to go wherever they wanted.

A few breaths later, he, Luo Qiqi, and Little Chick arrived back in the Sky of Spirit Origin.

"Your Sovereignty, congratulations on your return!"

Standing right in front of Spirit God Palace were Fire Feather Conferred God King and the others. They seemed to have already heard of the news, so they had chosen to stand there in wait for Little Chick's return.

"Prepare some pills that are rich in spiritual energy for me. I need as many of them as possible," Little Chick said with a wave of his hand.

“Yes!”

The Fire Feather Conferred God King and the others quickly got to action.

Two hours later, they returned with many invaluable medicinal herbs in hand.

There was no way they would dare hold back when they had received a direct order from their God Monarch. So, they practically brought every precious medicinal herb that was in their vault over to present to Little Chick.

Looking at the incredible array of medicinal herbs before him, Zhang Xuan was stupefied.

He was utterly flabbergasted by just how rich these Conferred God King clans were.

Even though there were no notable medicinal herbs that could help him advance his cultivation, what they had was more than enough to forge several hundred pinnacle God Essence Pills.

Gathering all the medicinal herbs together, Little Chick led Zhang Xuan into Spirit God Palace, and soon, they arrived before a pool of lava.

As the lava rumbled, an intense heatwave would burst forth.

With a wave of Little Chick’s hand, the medicinal herbs scattered in the air above the lava pool. They swiftly burst into spiritual energy before surging right into the lava pool.

Qiu!

With the massive influx of spiritual energy, the searing lava swiftly morphed into a magnificent phoenix of massive proportions, towering over the entire pool.

Little Chick slit his finger and dripped a few droplets of his blood essence into the lava pool.

Xiong xiong!

The phoenix grew even larger as a result of the infusion of the blood essence. Not only so, it began to emanate the unique aura of a God Monarch, creating great pressure on those that stood in the vicinity.

“Young Master, I have finished preparing the Deathless Lava Reservoir. You can enter now,” Little Chick said with a smile.

Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan quickly walked into the lava pool.

Tzzzzz!

As soon as he entered the lava pool, he could sense concentrated energy streaming into his body through his acupoints, flowing through his meridians and revitalizing his body.

Zhang Xuan quickly sat down in the middle of the pool and focused his attention on absorbing the energy.

Just like that, his physical body grew at a rapid pace.

God King realm primary stage.

God King realm intermediate stage.

God King realm advanced stage.

...

Conferred God King realm pinnacle!

Four hours later, the energy within the lava pool finally receded. At the same time, Zhang Xuan also concluded his cultivation.

“In term of the sheer strength of my physical body, I am already comparable to a Conferred God King realm pinnacle cultivator,” Zhang Xuan muttered with gleaming eyes.

His physical body had made great advancements within the past four hours, advancing all the way from God King realm primary stage to Conferred God King realm pinnacle!

Using just his physical body, he was already able to put up a fight against Conferred God King realm pinnacle cultivators and easily triumph over them!

And his strongest trump card at the moment was still not his physical body but his soul cultivation!

As a Conferred King of the Nine Skies, looking at it just in terms of soul cultivation, even nine Conferred God Kings of

the same tier would not be able to withstand his might.

After he was done cultivating, he released his clone to allow him to cultivate as well.

Soon enough, the latter's cultivation reached Conferred God King realm pinnacle, too.

As for Vicious, due to his slow rate of cultivation, it was unlikely that he would be able to grow too quickly. So, Zhang Xuan kept him sealed within the Book of Heaven's Path.

With this, his cultivation had finally reached its bottleneck. Until the Flood of Spiritual Energy arrived, it was unlikely that he would be able to raise his zhenqi cultivation any further. So, he decided to focus his attention on creating his sword art.

But the next moment, Little Chick suddenly appeared before him and said, "Young Master, the Cloud Dragon Monarch has invited the other eight God Monarchs to head to the Flooding Sea!"

"Flooding Sea?"

"Yes. It's the area where the Flood of Spiritual Energy originates. Even though the phenomenon will swiftly encompass the entire Firmament, the most valuable of items will only be found within the Flooding Sea!" Little Chick said.

"Is the Flood of Spiritual Energy going to happen soon?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Based on the new estimates, it will likely occur within the next two days." Little Chick nodded. "That's why the Cloud Dragon Monarch invited the other God Monarchs over in order to make preparations for it."

"Let's go then," Zhang Xuan said as he rose to his feet.

The Flood of Spiritual Energy was finally happening!

Perhaps he could make use of this opportunity to raise his cultivation to Conferred God King or even... God Monarch!

## 2240 Flooding Sea

“The Flooding Sea is a region where only those whose cultivation is beneath God Monarch can enter. For that reason, we usually observe from the outside. Once the area opens, the Nine Skies will dispatch the Conferred God Kings and God Kings under their command to head in and gather treasures. Under such circumstances, killing and plundering from one another is inevitable, so there are many casualties every single time. As for how many treasures each Sky manages to collect, unless the God Monarch announces the result, no one will know.”

After recovering his strength, it did not take long for Little Chick to learn all about the Flood of Spiritual Energy from the reports of his subordinates.

“Young Master, I hope that you can enter as a God King of our Sky of Spirit Origin and protect my juniors from harm. Of course, if it’s not convenient for you, you don’t need to bother about it...”

“I’ll try my best to protect them if I see any of them coming to harm,” Zhang Xuan replied with a nod.

Since the Fire Feather Conferred God King and the others were juniors of Little Chick, they could also be considered his juniors. If they faced any danger in the Flooding Sea, it was only right for him, as a senior, to help them out.

“This is an insignia representing our Sky of Spirit Origin. By wearing it on your chest when you enter the Flooding Sea, others will know which power you are from. Based on that, they will decide whether they should collaborate with you or fight against you,” Little Chick said as he passed an insignia over.

Zhang Xuan took the insignia and pinned it on his chest.

On top of the respective factions of the Nine God Monarchs, there would also be unaffiliated cultivators entering the

Flooding Sea in the hope of obtaining more resources. This insignia would prevent others from mistaking him as an unaffiliated cultivator, thus reducing the danger for him.

Even though the Flooding Sea was generally viewed as a lawless zone, individuals would still have to think twice before killing the subordinate of a God Monarch.

“The Flood of Spiritual Energy grows stronger every single time, and the treasures that appear become more and more formidable,” Little Chick said. “In fact, last time, there was an object that was useful even for the God Monarchs. Due to that, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch was able to reach a level comparable to God Monarch Lingxi within just forty years!

“I heard that the other God Monarchs have nurtured quite a few experts for the Flood of Spiritual Energy this time. They even resorted to using the Spacetime Mirror to distort temporal laws so that they would have ample time to cultivate. The battle this time around will likely be even more difficult than before. Young Master, you must be careful!”

He had heard that the God Monarchs had been focusing their efforts on nurturing a new generation of Conferred God Kings over the past month. As for the names and abilities of those Conferred God Kings, he had not had time to look into it just yet.

However, given that their rivals were well-prepared, they would have to make sure to proceed carefully to make up for their disadvantage.

It was true that Zhang Xuan was practically matchless against opponents beneath God Monarchs, but there was a good chance that the enemies would gang up on him. If he came under the encirclement of dozens of Conferred God Kings with all sorts of artifacts and formations thrown at him, even he would be placed in a perilous position!

Furthermore, it was rumored that the Flood of Spiritual Energy contained many natural traps that could threaten even a God Monarch.

Knowing that Little Chick was advising him out of goodwill, Zhang Xuan accepted his advice with a nod.

The three of them quickly tore through space to head over to the Flooding Sea.

The Flooding Sea was located at the edge of the world.

When Zhang Xuan saw the scenery before him after walking out of the dimension rift, he was unable to speak for a long while.

Near the edge of the blue sky above him, there was a massive enigmatic hole that appeared to lead to some unfathomable location. The violent energies within the fissure had been sealed by a light barrier.

However, the light barrier was extremely thin. It looked as if it would collapse at any moment now.

Little Chick looked at the pitch-black fissure in the sky with a fearful look on his face as he explained, “Forty years ago, that black fissure suddenly appeared in the midst of the sky, and like a deflated balloon, the spiritual energy within the Firmament began to gush outward. This resulted in what we’ve come to know as the receding of spiritual energy.”

“Why would the fissure suddenly appear? And... who was the one who killed you back then?” Zhang Xuan asked.

He had been puzzled by this question for a long while. Just who in the world had the ability to kill the Deathless Monarch?

Except for other God Monarchs, there should have been no one who had the ability to kill the Deathless Monarch. What in the world happened forty years ago that led to his demise?

Could it have something to do with this fissure that had appeared out of nowhere?

Thinking about it, Kong shi had also appeared in the world roughly forty thousand years ago on the Master Teacher Continent, which equated to around forty years ago in the Firmament.



The fissure in the Firmament's sky and Kong shi obtaining Heavens' Order... Could there be a link between the two?

"I seem to have lost all memories regarding my death. I have already regained my cultivation, but somehow, I simply can't recall that event. However, my intuition tells me that it has something to do with the fissure over there!" Little Chick replied grimly.

"You have lost your memories?" Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

In the entire Firmament, other than Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi, there did not seem to be anyone who wielded the ability to erase a God Monarch's memory!

"No, it's not God Monarch Lingxi or Kong shi!" Little Chick overthrew Zhang Xuan's thoughts. "When the fissure first appeared, Kong shi was still on the Master Teacher Continent, and he had just been born. On the other hand, God Monarch Lingxi was busy trying to seal off the fissure to prevent spiritual energy from leaking. She had to inform the other Skies and construct a grand formation to repair the damage... She wouldn't have had the time nor the energy to make a move on me!"

"Seal off the fissure? Are you saying that the seal on the fissure was created by Ruoxin?" Zhang Xuan asked.

"Yes, that's right!" Little Chick replied.

As he had died shortly after the fissure appeared, he was unaware of many things that had happened over the past forty years. However, he still had subordinates that would report to him about the aftermath of that incident.

Zhang Xuan frowned.

It seemed like the situation was far direr than he had thought, which was also why Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi had to complete their battle then.

This could be a side effect of the fragmentation of the heavens, which meant that his Library of Heaven's Path had something to do with this as well.

While the two of them were talking with one another, the black fissure shook and became even more glaring.

A powerful burst of spiritual energy tore through the seal and began sweeping outward like a tornado.

The sky darkened under the outburst of spiritual energy, dimming even the sun's glow. It felt like the black tornado was swiftly sweeping across the entire Firmament.

“Quick, enter!”

With a bellow, innumerable silhouettes in the area rushed into the tornado, vanishing from sight.

“Has the Flood of Spiritual Energy begun?” Zhang Xuan asked with a grim expression.

He had thought that he would still have to wait a while longer, but who could have known that everything would happen so quickly?

“It's started. The rest of them have already entered, so Young Master, you should hurry,” Little Chick replied.

With a raise of his hand, he was just about to send Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi in when...

“Wait a moment. There's still one last thing that I want to ask about. Didn't you mention that the fissure has been absorbing the spiritual energy of the Firmament? Why would it suddenly pour out spiritual energy during the Flood of Spiritual Energy?” Zhang Xuan asked hurriedly.

He could not help but feel that something was really amiss about this, and it made him feel a little unnerved.

“I don't know either. However, like the tides of a sea, the spiritual energy that comes out will surge back in after a period of time, and the amount of spiritual energy it releases isn't even a hundredth of what has been consumed thus far,” Little Chick replied.

The Firmament had simply too many secrets, so even he, a God Monarch, could not possibly know everything.

Seeing that Little Chick did not have the answers he sought, Zhang Xuan wrapped himself and Luo Qiqi within his soul energy before having Little Chick send them into the Flooding Sea.

When he opened his eyes once more, he was already standing in the middle of a barren land. His surroundings were filled with rocks and chaotic spiritual energy, and there were no plants or lifeforms to be seen.

# 2241 Reunion of Zhang Xuan's Lineage

“This is the Flooding Sea?”

Zhang Xuan was a little taken aback.

He had thought that the core of the Flood of Spiritual Energy, which was powerful enough to force the Nine God Monarchs into action, would be filled with concentrated spiritual energy, perhaps even to the extent where the spiritual energy would condense into water droplets. Yet, it turned out to be even more barren than the Firmament.

“Given the extent that the other God Monarchs went to preparing for the Flood of Spiritual Energy, there must be some treasures in here. Let's just take a look around the area.”

After a moment of shock, Zhang Xuan decided not to think about this anymore. Together with Luo Qiqi, he quickly flew toward the depths of the Flooding Sea.

...

Ten minutes earlier...

Floating above the Flooding Sea were the God Monarchs.

“It seems like it's going to start very soon,” the Cloud Dragon Monarch remarked with a glint in his eyes.

“Indeed.”

The other God Monarchs nodded in agreement.

Recalling the battle a few days ago, God Monarch Fumeng of the Sky of Adamant Gold shook his head. “All this time, I thought that the ability to become a God Monarch was dependent on one's bloodline and that it was impossible to advance any further after reaching this level. However, after witnessing the fight between God Monarch Lingxi and the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, I realized that God Monarchs

can grow stronger as well, and there is huge room for them to do that!”

All this while, they had thought that they had reached their limit and could not advance any further, so they had begun to slacken.

Yet, when they saw how much stronger the Heaven Subjugation Monarch was than them despite only having joined their ranks forty years ago, they realized that they had been sorely mistaken.

There was still something above them, and they needed to reach out in order to get there.

God Monarch Zhuoyang of the Sky of Blazing Sun laughed heartily. “In the last few Flood of Spiritual Energy, the disciples of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch have been able to claim the bulk of the treasures through their superior strength. However, without the Heaven Subjugation Monarch’s help, they won’t be able to enter the Flooding Sea anymore. With this, our chances of obtaining the treasures have greatly increased!”

There was a bizarre power surrounding the Flooding Sea that prevented God Monarchs and Conferred God Kings from entering, but through the sheer power of the God Monarchs, it was still possible for them to teleport their Conferred God Kings in.

However, with the death of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, the Conferred God Kings under his command would not be able to enter the area anymore.

All this while, God Monarch Zhuoyang’s subordinates had been suppressed by the disciples of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, and that had left him frustrated and exasperated.

But now that the Heaven Subjugation Monarch had finally met his end, it was time to usher in a new era.

The Acheron God Monarch harrumphed. “Don’t forget that young fellow beside the Deathless Monarch that day... If he joins, it’ll be hard to say who the real victor of the Flood of Spiritual Energy will be!”

The Conferred God King of the Nine Skies' soul cultivation far surpassed that of other Conferred God Kings, making him an extremely tough foe to deal with.

“As formidable as he is, the only thing he has is his soul cultivation. His physical body and zhenqi cultivation are still at God King realm primary stage. As long as we bestow artifacts to protect their soul upon our descendants, there will be nothing he can do at all,” God Monarch Zhuoyang said.

How could they remain unprepared after knowing that there was such a formidable expert coming from the Sky of Spirit Origin?

If that young man had another half a year or so, there was indeed a chance that he would grow to a level far beyond the imagination of anyone else, but within a short one or two days, the most he could do was stabilize the energy that he had received from the World Conferment!

Under the circumstances that his physical body and zhenqi cultivation remained weak, as long as their descendants were able to protect their souls, they should be able to beat the young man easily!

In the end, someone who was a Conferred God King just in terms of soul cultivation could not possibly hope to fight against a full-fledged Conferred God King!

“Zhuoyang is right. The Conferred God King of the Nine Skies might be formidable, but he hasn't reached the peak of his growth yet. The God King that I conferred not too long ago, Zhao Ya, should be able to subdue him easily!” God Monarch Fumeng laughed heartily.

The talent of the young lady whom he had devoted a lot of resources into grooming was a terrifyingly talented prodigy. Her fighting prowess was so great that she could even beat several veteran Conferred God Kings with ease.

Once she exerted her full strength, even the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies would have no choice but to submit to her!

It was impossible to borrow the power of the heavens in the Flooding Sea, so it did not matter whether the young man was acknowledged by the world or not. There was no way he stood a chance at all.

“I have heard of Conferred God King Zhao Ya of the Sky of Adamant Gold, but our Conferred God King Zheng Yang won’t pale in comparison to her at all! If the two of them get into a serious fight, I reckon that your Zhao Ya won’t be a match for my Zheng Yang!” God Monarch Zhuoyang harrumphed derisively.

“Hey hey, it’s not as if the two of you are the only ones who managed to pick up gems,” Demon Monarch Qiankun said with a grin. “Lu Chong of my Sky of Drifting Specter might not be exceptional in fights, but if he escapes after gathering all the treasures, none of your Conferred God Kings will be able to catch him!”

As one who specialized in soul arts, his fighting prowess was not too strong among the Nine God Monarchs. However, when it came to searching for treasures and evading enemies, there was definitely no one who could compete with him!

The Acheron God Monarch chirped in as well. “You lot only have a single prodigy with you, but my Sky of Acheron has Yuan Tao, Dan Xiaotian, and Bai Xiaoqing. No matter how you look at it, my chances are much better than yours!”

“My Sky of Cloud Dragon also has Kong Shiyao, Liu Yang, and Zhang Jiuxiao,” the Cloud Dragon Monarch added.

As God Monarchs, it was inevitable that they would be incredibly proud and egotistical individuals. It had not been easy for them to find successors that they were satisfied with, so it went without saying that they had to brag a bit about it.

Seeing how these God Monarchs had been kept in the dark, Fairy Linglong could not help but snicker quietly in the depths of her heart. “If your successors are so outstanding, why don’t you bring them out and have them compete against one another?”

“Sure, let’s have them fight against one another to see who’s the best!” The Cloud Dragon Monarch nodded vehemently in agreement. “Kong Shiyao, Liu Yang, and Zhang Jiuxiao, come over!”

Hu! Hu! Hu!

Two men and a lady flew over and took their places beside the Cloud Dragon Monarch. They each emanated a sharp aura that felt as if it would rip space apart.

“Zhao Ya, you come over as well!” God Monarch Fumeng beckoned with a wave of his hand.

A young lady flew over.

Seeing how the two God Monarchs had summoned their Conferred God Kings over, the others also quickly called theirs over.

Soon, eleven young men and women joined the God Monarchs at the Flooding Sea.

“They sure are exceptional youths...”

Seeing the young men and ladies before them, even though the God Monarchs did not want to admit it, the Conferred God Kings nurtured by the other God Monarchs did not pale in comparison to theirs.

Sighing deeply inside, just as they were about to remind their Conferred God Kings to continue working hard so as to not lose to others, they saw the eleven youths clasp their fists toward one another.

“Senior!”

“Junior!”

...

There were excited smiles on their faces, reminiscent of close friends who had finally reunited after a long time.

“Wait a moment... Senior? Junior?”

Other than Fairy Linglong, the other five God Monarchs stared at one another with widened eyes. Even with the wisdom they



had accrued over countless years, they were having some difficulties trying to grasp what in the world was going on before them.

I groomed you so that you can enter the Flooding Sea, defeat the other rivals, and bring the treasures within over to our Sky, yet... what does senior and junior mean?

Does this mean that... all of you actually know each other?

All of a sudden, they felt a bad premonition inside, as if they had overlooked something really important.

Unable to take it any longer, the Acheron God Monarch asked anxiously, "Yuan Tao, what is going on here?"

The other God Monarchs also immediately pricked up their ears to hear about it.

They wanted to hear what the young man had to say.

"Your Sovereignty, allow me to introduce everyone to you. Zhao Ya over here is my First Senior, Wang Ying is my Second Senior, Liu Yang is my Third Senior, Zheng Yang is my Fourth Senior, I am ranked fifth, Lu Chong is my Sixth Junior, Wei Ruyan is my Seventh Junior, Zhang Jiuxiao is my Eighth Junior..." Yuan Tao began introducing the other youths gathered above the Flooding Sea to the Acheron God Monarch.

"..."

The Acheron God Monarch, the Cloud Dragon Monarch, Demon Monarch Qiankun, God Monarch Zhuoyang, and God Monarch Fumeng.

The geniuses we have spent such a heavy price to nurture... are actually all from the same lineage?

Dear heavens, is there anyone who can tell me what is going on!

# 2242 For Whom Did We Work So Hard?

“If you are all from the same lineage, then your teacher...”

The Acheron God Monarch felt so stifled that he really felt like fainting there and then, and the other God Monarchs also had eyes widened in disbelief, as if they had seen a ghost.

They had long heard from these youths that they had a teacher back when they fetched them from the Celestial Mountain, but which cultivator did not have a teacher?

So, they did not think much of the matter at all.

After all, they could not even fathom the possibility that all eleven successors of the six of them would actually have the same teacher...

Just who in the world was their teacher?

How did he manage to gather so many prodigies?

“Ah, our teacher is...”

Yuan Tao was just about to reveal the identity of their teacher when Zhao Ya suddenly shot him a cold glare. “Shut up!”

“Y-yes!” Yuan Tao immediately sealed his mouth as cold sweat dripped down his back.

Only after hearing Zhao Ya’s shout did he remember that their teacher was humble and low profile and hated to be in the limelight.

Revealing his identity before these six God Monarchs would go against his virtue of humility, and it would be considered an unfilial act from him.

Furthermore, during this period, they had been cultivating in the Spacetime Mirror, which resulted in them being isolated from the rest of the world. As a result, they had no idea of their teacher’s current situation.

There was no saying that they might be putting their teacher in a bad position by revealing his identity.

Zhao Ya clasped her fist and replied, “Your Sovereignities, pardon us, but our teacher seeks to live a quiet and peaceful life. He’s little-known in the Firmament, and he wishes to remain as such. As his disciple, we don’t dare reveal his identity without his permission, so... I beg for your understanding.”

“To be able to groom so many outstanding disciples, your teacher must be an outstanding individual...” God Monarch Acheron said, but halfway through his words, the spiritual energy around them suddenly grew chaotic.

The Flood of Spiritual Energy was beginning!

“Since all of you belong to the same lineage, it would be too cruel to ask you to fight against one another. Let’s do it this way instead. The treasures will belong to whoever obtains them first, and no snatching is allowed!”

Even though they were caught off guard by this turn of events, what had happened had already happened. If they were not going to compete by strength, they could only compete based on luck.

Right before everyone was going to enter the Flooding Sea, the Cloud Dragon Emperor suddenly said, “Many dangers lurk in the Flooding Sea. You might be our successors, but you still need to be careful.”

Zhao Ya and the others turned their eyes over.

“Over in the Sky of Spirit Origin, there is a young man around your age. Due to his exceptional talent, he has managed to receive the World Conferment to become the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies,” the Cloud Dragon Monarch said. “If you encounter him, make sure to protect your soul well. He possesses exceptional soul cultivation, so it would be best for you to suppress him through physical means.”

“Indeed. You are all from the same lineage, right? If it comes down to it, it might be better for all of you to stay together.

That will lower the danger considerably,” God Monarch Zhuoyang added.

He might have said that his Conferred God Kings did not fear Zhang Xuan, but truthfully, he did not really mean it.

The Conferred God King of the Nine Skies...

This was a title that only the Heaven Subjugation Monarch had obtained in the whole history of the Firmament, and his fighting prowess was there for everyone to see.

They were not confident of having their Conferred God Kings moving independently, but if all eleven of them made a move simultaneously...

Even if that Conferred God King of the Nine Skies cultivated his physical body and zhenqi cultivation to the highest level, he would still be no match for all of them!

“Rest assured, we’ll look out for one another. No matter who the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies is, if he dares court trouble, we’ll make sure to return the favor to him,” Zhao Ya replied with a nod

As kin from the same lineage, they needed to take care of one another. That was how their teacher had taught them. They could not let him down.

“Good. Go in then!”

Hearing those words, the crowd heaved a sigh of relief.

The Cloud Dragon Monarch, God Monarch Zhuoyang, God Monarch Fumeng, and the others tore apart the space before them to send their respective Conferred God Kings into the Flooding Sea.

“Hahaha!”

After everyone entered the Flooding Sea, Fairy Linglong was finally unable to restrain herself any further and burst into laughter.

“Linglong, what are you so happy about?” the Cloud Dragon Monarch asked.

“Well, it’s just that I thought of something that is really interesting, so I couldn’t stop myself from chuckling,” Fairy Linglong replied as her eyes curved into beautiful crescent moons.

“Do you something? Tell us, and we can discuss it together,” the Acheron God Monarch said.

“Are you sure you want to hear it?” Fairy Linglong asked with a glint in her eyes.

The crowd nodded. “Of course!”

“Well, I guess it should be fine to tell you about this...” Fairy Linglong muttered before chuckling to herself softly. Then, she raised her head and said, “Aren’t you worried that Zhang Xuan might obtain innumerable treasures in the Flood of Spiritual Energy and become the next Heaven Subjugation Monarch?”

“Well...”

There was no one who replied to Fairy Linglong’s question.

None of them would admit it, but they were indeed worried about Zhang Xuan’s growth. Dealing with one Heaven Subjugation Monarch was enough; they did not want to witness the rise of another one.

If they were challenged and defeated one after another once more, just as the Heaven Subjugation Monarch had done... their egos would not be able to take it!

Thinking about everything that had happened over the course of the past forty years, they felt so incredibly indignant.

“Do you hope that the successors you have groomed will defeat Zhang Xuan and bring the treasures of the Flooding Sea over to you so that you can overcome your current bottlenecks?” Fairy Linglong asked once more.

God Monarch Zhuoyang lost his patience and harrumphed coldly. “Linglong, just what are you trying to get at? We all saw the battle two days ago, and I don’t believe that you weren’t moved by what you have seen!”

They might be God Monarchs, but they, too, wished to be stronger.

It was their previous negligence during the Flood of Spiritual Energy that brought about the swift rise of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, and they were not ready to allow the rise of the second one. It was for this reason that they had nurtured their own batch of experts.

“Just get straight to the point!” God Monarch Fumeng harrumphed impatiently.

“Is there any point in you playing such games with us?” The Cloud Dragon Monarch was also swiftly losing his patience.

“I was about to get to the point...”

Just thinking about how they would react to the news made Fairy Linglong chuckle beneath her breath once again. Seeing how she had managed to build up the mood to the climax, she finally embarked on the grand reveal. “Aren’t you curious who Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and the others’ teacher is? It just so happens that I know who he is!”

“Who is...” Halfway through his words, the face of a person suddenly surfaced in Demon Monarch Qiankun’s mind. His body stiffened as he asked warily, “Could it be that...”

“Indeed. It’s the person you have been worrying about all along... Zhang Xuan!” Fairy Linglong said gleefully.

After becoming God Monarchs, there were very few things that could faze them. This was the first time she had seen such a look on the faces of her old companions.

And it was all because of that young man...

To make things worse, the young man did not even know what he had done!

There was nothing more frustrating than being infuriated with a person, but the other party did not even know what he had done!

“This...”

The five God Monarchs glanced at one another as a burst of inspiration flowed into their heads. A lot of classical poems surfaced at the top of their mind.

Cities I have conquered an acre of mine none, for whom have I been working so hard?

A hundred flowers I have harvested for honey, only to have it all taken away!

How I resent the years I spent weaving golden threads, all to deliver a gown to your hands!

...

God Monarch Lingxi is your girlfriend, the Deathless Monarch is your tamed beast, and you are the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies... As if that's not enough, the successors whom we have groomed with great difficulty are your disciples too!

Feeling deeply suffocated, the five God Monarchs clutched their hearts tightly. They felt like there was something strangling them.

They had hoped that they could make use of the Flood of Spiritual Energy to rise through the ranks and become as powerful as the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, but just like that, all their hopes had shattered.

How could such a thing happen? Was there no justice in the world?

## 2243 Risk and Danger 2in1

“There sure is a lot of good stuff here!”

Advancing alongside Luo Qiqi, within just four hours of flight, the treasures that he had gathered were already comparable to what he had earned in the Firmament over the past month.

He had been selling batch after batch of Beauty Pills and Breakthrough Pills nonstop, resulting in him accruing a great fortune. Yet, he had managed to earn the same amount within four hours...

This was how valuable the treasures in the Flooding Sea were.

However, that was largely due to Zhang Xuan's powerful soul. Because of that, he was able to perceive his surroundings with greater clarity, and the area that his senses covered also far surpassed that of other cultivators.

The other Conferred God Kings surely would not be able to find the treasures as efficiently as he did.

Amid the barren land filled with shattered stones, there were quite a few precious medicinal herbs growing, and every stalk of them would be worth a fortune in the markets of the Firmament. There were also ores, metal...

By refining these items, he would be able to forge even God King realm pills and weapons.

“But these items aren't very useful to me...” Zhang Xuan shook his head.

It was true that these medicinal herbs were valuable, but even pinnacle God Essence Pills were not of much use to him anymore. Unless he could obtain something beyond that level, he would not be able to raise his zhenqi cultivation any further.

“There is land ahead...”

As they flew a little further, they realized that there was land ahead of them.



It would be tempting to call it an island, but it seemed to cover a massive area, such that they could not see the end of it.

What was different about it was that it was actually rich in spiritual energy, and lush plants thrived on the land.

“It could be that when the fissure appeared in the sky, even the land of the Firmament was swept in as well,” Zhang Xuan deduced.

It was due to the size of the fissure in the sky that spiritual energy escaped from it so quickly. It would not be surprising if some land had been swept in as well.

Landing on the ground, Zhang Xuan immediately cast his Spiritual Perception around him, and he could sense that there were innumerable treasures lying all around him. Ores that were rare in the Firmament filled the land, and even a nearby river was made entirely out of condensed spiritual energy.

“There’s someone over there,” Zhang Xuan noted.

There were others who had noticed the place and landed there.

Not too far away from them, there were twelve people, a Conferred God King and eleven God Kings, gathered closely together. They seemed to be discussing something intently with one another.

The other party had noticed them as well and asked, “Friends, would you like to join us?”

“Zhang shi...” Luo Qiqi glanced over.

“Let’s head over.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

They were all there for the same purpose, so there was no need for them to intentionally avoid them.

Walking over, Zhang Xuan realized that the only Conferred God King of the group carried the insignia of the Sky of Cloud Dragon.

“Friends, I am Conferred God King Ao Feng of the Sky of Cloud Dragon,” the Conferred God King introduced himself with a clasped fist.

Zhang Xuan clasped his fist as well to return the greeting.

“We are all here to seek our fortune, but there’s only so much that we can do alone. We are weak in the face of danger. However, if we can put our strength together and look out for one another, there is a lot more that we can do,” Ao Feng said.

The crowd nodded in agreement.

It would indeed be dangerous if they ventured alone as mere God Kings. There were many dimension rifts and traps that were hard to deal with. The slightest carelessness could very well spell their death.

Furthermore, they were not guarding against just the traps from nature. There were Conferred God Kings and God Kings scouring the area to pick on easy targets. It was one thing to find treasure, but it was another thing to take it out of there safely.

For this reason, half of the God Kings and Conferred God Kings who entered the Flooding Sea would end up losing their lives each time around.

“As you know, unless a God King earns the acknowledgement of a God Monarch and overcomes the Trial of Conferment, no matter how they cultivate, they won’t be able to advance their cultivation any further. Their lifespan will be capped at ten thousand years. Once their time is up, that will be the end of them,” Ao Feng said.

The eleven God Kings around him could relate deeply to those words.

The hurdle to becoming a Conferred God King was not one that could be overcome just by cultivating diligently. There were many God Kings in the Firmament that could only live in despair after realizing that there was simply no chance that they could advance any further.

“All of you should have received quite a few treasures from the Flooding Sea already, probably enough for you to push your cultivation up to God King realm pinnacle. But have you thought of what comes beyond that? Your lifespan won’t be increased just because you have reached God King realm pinnacle,” Ao Feng said as he slowly looked at the faces of

those gathered around. “The only thing that is in your way is the acknowledgement of a God Monarch!”

“We also know that if we can earn the acknowledgement of a God Monarch and receive their pointers, we should be able to clear the Trial of Conferment easily and possibly become a Conferred God King... But people like us don’t even get the opportunity to meet the God Monarchs, so how can we earn their acknowledgement?” one of the God Kings remarked with a resigned look on his face.

Who did not want to earn the acknowledgment of a God Monarch, the highest existence of the Firmament?

But God Monarchs were lofty beings who lived a world of their own. How could it be easy to catch their eye?

There was once a God King who attempted to amaze a God Monarch by putting on a grand performance, but in the end, what he received was not the acknowledgement of the God Monarch but a slap that condemned him to death.

Ever since then, all cultivators had realized that it was futile to attempt anything excessive before the God Monarchs.

Through years of experience, the God Kings had realized that there were two key factors one had to meet in order to earn the acknowledgement of a God Monarch.

First, one had to be sufficiently talented.

Second, one had to be recommended by someone in power.

Without these two in place, there was nothing they could do that would work.

“I wouldn’t be saying all of this if I didn’t have a way out for you!”

Seeing how he had managed to catch everyone’s attention, Ao Feng said with a chuckle, “The truth is that I have received an order from the Cloud Dragon Monarch. He needs a certain treasure within the Flooding Sea, and if you can help me acquire it, it’ll surely please him greatly. I’m certain that he would be more than willing to listen to any request that you

have for him! Whether you want to become his direct disciple or be conferred, it would all be within your grasp!”

“The Cloud Dragon Monarch needs something?”

“Really? Aren’t God Monarchs the strongest existences in the world, such that there is nothing that could move them? It’s hard to believe that there’s something in the world that they need...”

“Can I really take your word for it? As long as we are able to find the treasure that the Cloud Dragon Monarch needs, he’ll take us in as his direct disciple and even confer us?”

Everyone was moved by what Ao Feng was proposing.

The only thing they feared was that the God Monarchs needed nothing.

As long as there was something the God Monarchs wanted, they would be able to catch their attention and please them. Then, it might really be possible for them to receive a conferment!

“May I know what it is that the God Monarch wants?” someone amid the crowd asked.

If it was too difficult to accomplish, such that they might even have to pay their life for it, there would be no point in doing it.

The reason they wanted to be conferred was to lengthen their lifespan and obtain an even higher standing. It would all be meaningless if they lost their lives.

“What the God Monarch wants is a set of Condensed Earth Essence on this land. Due to the concentrated spiritual energy harnessed within it, even someone of my prowess is unable to use it. Only God Monarchs would be able to assimilate it,” Ao Feng said. “However, there are some phantasmagoric spirits protecting the area, so I’m unable to enter it alone. I need your help to acquire it.”

“Phantasmagoric spirits?”

“They’re a unique lifeform that thrive in areas rich in spiritual energy. They don’t have a physical body, and their strength is roughly at the level of a God King, making them hard to deal

with. I tried entering the area earlier, but I was stopped outside. However, if we put our strength together, we should be able to overcome their defense easily!” Ao Feng said.

If he could obtain the Condensed Earth Essence by himself, there was no way he would have shared it with anyone else.

However, despite being a Conferred God King, he had found that it was impossible for him to accomplish this task on his own.

“Condensed Earth Essence?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up.

He had read about it in the books in Kong shi’s house. Condensed Earth Essence boasted even purer spiritual energy than pinnacle God Essence Pills.

If he could obtain it, there was a good chance that he could push for a breakthrough in his zhenqi cultivation to Conferred God King realm pinnacle in one shot.

A God King amid the crowd asked, “How many phantasmagoric spirits are there? If it’s too dangerous, I’ll have to turn down your request. We would prefer to live our life peacefully in the days ahead...”

“Live your life peacefully in the days ahead?” Ao Feng sneered. “Look at how the Firmament has been faring in the past few decades! With the receding of spiritual energy, competition over cultivation resources is getting more and more intense. Putting aside rising to greater heights, I believe even sustaining your current level is posing to be a problem for most of you. Let me ask you one very direct question. How much longer do you think you have before your fortune runs out?”

“The moment you run out of resources and your cultivation starts declining, what do you think your enemies who feared you in the past will do? Do you think that the powers that have backed you so far will continue to back you? Even if I don’t say more, I think most of you should have already gotten my point.”

“This...”

The crowd found themselves at a loss for words.

Cultivation was like going against an upstream river; one could only either advance or regress.

Even staying at the same spot would require a huge amount of cultivation resources. This was similar to how warriors had to train their bodies constantly in order to maintain their level of fitness.

The Firmament was facing an unprecedented shortage of resources, such that even God Kings were having difficulties gathering sufficient resources to maintain their cultivation.

Nearly all God Kings had a massive clan backing them. Once they fell, their clans would fall apart as well. Everything that they had built up to date would fall apart.

“There’s no way to live your life in peace in the current Firmament. You either charge ahead and forge a path for yourself or else back down all the way till there’s nothing left at all. It’s that simple. Even I, as a Conferred God King, am not spared from such a fate!”

Seeing how the crowd had gone silent from his words, Ao Feng changed his tone and sighed deeply before continuing. “I’ll be honest with you. Just two days ago, there was a battle above the moon, and the Heaven Subjugation Monarch... fell!”

“What did you say?”

“The Heaven Subjugation Monarch has died?”

“How did he die? Could it be... the fight with God Monarch Lingxi?”

“Is it even possible for a God Monarch to die?”

Those words caused a huge commotion to erupt from the crowd.

Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin’s battle had taken place on the moon, so other than the God Monarchs and the Conferred God Kings close to them, there was hardly anyone who knew of the news.

The ascension of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch through the ranks had sparked the hopes of many ordinary cultivators.

They felt like as long as they worked hard, it was possible for them to become spectacular existences like him!

For this reason, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch was the idol of many cultivators in the Firmament, a figure whom many respected and looked up to.

Many of them had actually been rooting for the Heaven Subjugation Monarch's victory over God Monarch Lingxi, but who could have known that he would actually lose his life?

If even a God Monarch could lose their life, as mere God Kings, the situation seemed even more desperate for them.

Just like that, the eleven God Kings fell silent, and the atmosphere grew a little stifling.

"I'm not telling you all of this just to scare you," Ao Feng said. "I am telling you that you need to become stronger in order to survive and protect your clan. The Firmament before us is no longer the same peaceful Firmament we knew.

"I won't deceive you. There's indeed some degree of danger when it comes to dealing with the phantasmagoric spirits, but as long as we put our strength together and coordinate well, I am confident that our chances of success exceed ninety percent. There is no better chance than this to turn things around. I have already offered you the opportunity, and it's your choice if you want to grasp it or not."

"We still need to think things through a little..."

"Since that's the case, I'll offer another alternative to you all." Seeing that the crowd was still hesitating, Ao Feng added, "As long as you are willing to come along with me, regardless of whether we are able to acquire the Condensed Earth Essence or not, I'll give you a pinnacle God Essence Pill and owe you a favor as a token of my appreciation. Of course, I'm taking on quite some risk by making this offer, so after we receive the treasure, you need not think about receiving any reward from the God Monarch."

"This..."

The crowd was stunned for a moment before their eyes glowed in delight.

These eleven God Kings were all unaffiliated cultivators. Some of them belonged to a Sky, but they were not backed by any of the Conferred God Kings. As such, the cultivation resources they had on hand were relatively meager.

A pinnacle God Essence Pill was a staggering fortune to them, and they could receive the favor of a Conferred God King on top of that.

These two were unconditional as long as they agreed to join the team to help him.

On top of that, even though they wouldn't be able to ask a favor from the Cloud Dragon Monarch if they were to choose this alternative, it was still a good chance for them to catch the Cloud Dragon Monarch's attention and possibly win his goodwill.

No matter how they looked at it, it didn't seem to be a bad deal to them.

"Alright, I'll agree to it then!"

"I agree to it, too!"

...

The key difference between the two offers was that they would not have to fully commit themselves to obtaining the Condensed Earth Essence. Even if they ended up retreating and the mission was a failure, they would still be entitled to the reward.

This was a risk that they could afford to take.

As a result, within just a minute, all eleven God Kings had already made their decisions.

Seeing how he had managed to get their agreement, Ao Feng heaved a sigh of relief internally as he turned to Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi and asked, "What about the two of you?"

"I'll agree to it as well." Zhang Xuan nodded.

The Condensed Earth Essence was useful to him, so he decided to join the group first before deciding what to do afterward.



“Great! With this, we have formally formed our alliance. From this point on, I have to emphasize that all of you must follow my instructions. I’ll open the option for you to back out until we engage the enemy, but I don’t expect you to abandon us during a critical period. As such an act could put the others at risk, I’ll show no mercy against deserters, understood?” Ao Feng said.

“We understand.”

The crowd nodded in response.

“Alright, let’s go then!”

With the negotiations completed, Ao Feng led the way, and the group followed him closely.

Soon enough, they arrived in the vicinity of a stream.

The spiritual energy in the area was even more concentrated, and the lush greenery rose all the way into the air, blocking off the sky.

Ao Feng pointed forward and said, “The phantasmagoric spirits are right ahead of us.”

The crowd turned their gazes over and saw white mist-like silhouettes drifting around the area.

Those are plant spirits nurtured by the rich spiritual energy in the area! Zhang Xuan thought in realization.

He had been wondering what the heck phantasmagoric spirits were, but it turned out to be just ancient trees and grass gaining consciousness as a result of the rich spiritual energy in the surroundings.

It was rather similar to what had happened to the Pill King.

While these spirits appeared to possess the strength of a God King, due to their limited means, their fighting prowess was extremely weak. However, what made them difficult to deal with was the sheer numbers they came in, such that it was easy to get overwhelmed by them.

Furthermore, as beings that thrived on spiritual energy, they could be said to be indestructible in areas with such

concentrated spiritual energy. That made them even more of a hassle to deal with.

“Our goal is to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence and not pit our lives against those phantasmagoric spirits,” Ao Feng said.

“Later, I want you to attack from all directions in order to attract the attention of the phantasmagoric spirits. I’ll make use of the chaos to get in, and once I obtain the Condensed Earth Essence, we’ll leave right away!”

“I think it’s a good idea, but what if you run away after obtaining the Condensed Earth Essence without telling us?” a God King said.

They had only just met one another, so it was hard for them to trust each other with their lives.

“Indeed. If you leave us in the lurch after obtaining the Condensed Earth Essence, you’ll be able to avoid paying us and returning the favor. That makes it very risky for us. I don’t think that the plan is feasible,” another God King added.

“What do you suggest then?” Ao Feng frowned after hearing some opposition to what he had proposed.

“We’ll advance and retreat as one!” the God King from before exclaimed.

“Indeed! We’ll advance and retreat as one!”

The rest of the crowd nodded in agreement.

“Such a course of action will indeed make it hard for us to turn against one another, but have you considered the possibility that we might be encircled by the phantasmagoric spirits?” Ao Feng said. “If that happens, not only will we be unable to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence, we could very well lose our lives.”

## 2244 Absorbing the Spirits

“This...”

The crowd frowned upon hearing those words.

There was some sense to what Ao Feng had said. There were a lot of phantasmagoric spirits around, and each of them possessed strength comparable to that of a God King.

If they were trapped, not only would they be unable to obtain what they wanted, their team could very well be completely wiped out.

Under such circumstances, they would surely have to sacrifice someone in order to break out of the encirclement, but given that they were strangers who were united by shared interests, who would be willing to give up their life to save the others? That was clearly asking the impossible!

“Taunting the phantasmagoric spirits and dividing their attention—this is the most viable solution we have at the moment. If you don’t even trust me for that, what’s the point of us working together?” Ao Feng waved his hand in dissatisfaction.

The crowd fell silent yet again. They might have only forged this alliance a moment ago, but if they weren’t willing to trust the leader, it would be better for them to go their own ways.

“Why don’t we practice a collaborative formation and force our way through the phantasmagoric spirits?”

“A collaborative formation? First and foremost, the time we have in this area is severely limited. Second, it’s only a matter of time before the other Conferred God Kings learn of the existence of the Condensed Earth Essence. It will only complicate things if we spend too much time on building up a formation.”

“Indeed. It would take at least half a month for all of us to master a collaborative formation and be in sync with one another. We don’t have that much time to waste.”

“If we had the time to do that, we’d be better off searching for other treasures around the area. We would be able to earn much more than a pinnacle God Essence Pill that way!”

...

The group devolved into an argument.

They did not expect something that was supposed to be simple to have so many complications.

At this rate, their team might just fall apart before the mission had even started.

“Fine, let’s do this. I’ll charge at the forefront whereas the rest of you will take the flank to protect me from the attack of the phantasmagoric spirits. Is that fine?”

Having known that a group that was put together last minute would surely be unreliable, Ao Feng could only compromise.

These God Kings were hoping to obtain treasures without taking on any risks, but how could there be such a good thing in the world?

“That sounds fine with me!”

The crowd quickly agreed to Ao Feng’s new plan.

By this point, Ao Feng could not be bothered to plan out any additional strategies. Taking in a deep breath, he said, “Let’s get to it then!”

Right after saying those words, he dashed ahead.

Hula!

Exerting the strength of a Conferred God King, he flitted forth like a bolt of lightning. His hand morphed into a claw as he swiped it across the space ahead of him, jolting the phantasmagoric spirits ahead of him back into spiritual energy.

“Follow me!” Ao Feng bellowed.

The remaining God Kings quickly followed suit.

Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi stuck close to the crowd.

It had to be said that Ao Feng was indeed quite powerful. He could defeat the God King realm phantasmagoric spirits with a

single strike each, leaving nothing behind at all.

Oh? These phantasmagoric spirits seem to be quite useful to my soul cultivation, Zhang Xuan thought as he blocked off the attacks coming from the phantasmagoric spirits coming from the sides.

These phantasmagoric spirits were basically spirits, similar to the beings he had enchanted. He realized that if he absorbed them, it could augment his soul cultivation quite a bit.

While his soul had reached Conferred God King realm pinnacle after receiving the World's Conferment, he still needed to reinforce his soul cultivation quite a bit before attempting for a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm.

If he could assimilate these spirits, there was a good chance that he could reinforce his soul cultivation significantly.

Let me give it a try!

With such thoughts in mind, Zhang Xuan tried to absorb one of the spirits that Ao Feng had shattered into his glabella.

If the spirit still had consciousness, absorbing it would be equivalent to possession, making it extremely troublesome to assimilate. However, the shattered spirits had already lost their consciousness, making them pure souls, which was extremely easy for Zhang Xuan to absorb.

Right away, Zhang Xuan could sense his soul cultivation strengthening a fair bit, and his eyes lit up in excitement.

Not bad!

It was fortunate that he had chosen to join the group. Even if he failed to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence in the end, it would still have been a fruitful trip for him.

With Ao Feng charging at the forefront and thirteen God Kings blocking the phantasmagoric spirits by the side, there were a lot of dissipated spirits lingering in the area.

Within just ten minutes, Zhang Xuan could already sense his soul growing rapidly.

But unknowingly, the group also ended up falling into the encirclement of the phantasmagoric spirits, just as Ao Feng had predicted.

The mountain stream was filled with plants and herbs that had lived for countless years, and the surrounding conditions were ideal for nurturing phantasmagoric spirits. As a result, there were a large number around.

Despite having fought for a while, the number of phantasmagoric spirits only seemed to continue to increase.

Some time later, Zhang Xuan finally stopped absorbing the spirits.

Over time, the effectiveness of absorbing the spirits gradually reduced, and finally, he reached a satiated state. At this point, he would need even purer spirits in order to further advance his soul cultivation.

“The Condensed Earth Essence is right ahead!” Ao Feng shouted as he continued charging forward.

Turning his gaze ahead, Zhang Xuan saw a sphere of a milky white substance floating above a lake.

It was only the size of a fist, but concentrated spiritual energy was rippling from it. The spiritual energy harnessed within the milky white substance was probably several times greater than in pinnacle God Essence Pills.

Zhang Xuan could feel the zhenqi in his body pulsating in excitement, desiring to absorb it in.

It's indeed good stuff. It'll be useful for me... Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up.

Just as he had thought, if he consumed it, he should be able to push his zhenqi cultivation to Conferred God King realm intermediate stage or advanced stage easily.

It was just that...

He had been absorbing the spirits all this while and had not contributed much to the group. Given that Ao Feng and the other God Kings had put so much effort into this, he felt embarrassed snatching it right away from them.

After all, he was a master teacher, not a burglar.

In any case, there were likely more than one of those spheres of Condensed Earth Essence lying around the area, so he would just to look around the area later on.

While others would have to forge a path through the phantasmagoric spirits in order to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence, he did not have to go through so much effort.

When it came down to it, he could simply draw out his soul and disguise it as a phantasmagoric spirit. This way, he should be able to easily slip through them and obtain the Condensed Earth Essence with ease.

Hong long!

As if to protect the Condensed Earth Essence, the number of phantasmagoric spirits only continued to increase the closer they got to it. As a result, the pressure that the group was under increased exponentially.

Within just a few minutes, there were four God Kings who had sustained severe injuries, and even Ao Feng had blood seeping from the corners of his mouth.

To make matters worse, the phantasmagoric spirits had grown much stronger. All of them had reached God King realm pinnacle, and they charged at the group fearlessly. Furthermore, they were extremely skilled at soul offense, causing the fighting prowess and morale of the group to be significantly reduced.

“At this rate, we might just lose our lives here,” a God King cried out.

Almost everyone in the group had a grim look on their face.

They had thought that with so many of them putting their strength together, they should be able to overcome the phantasmagoric spirits with ease. Who could have known that they had underestimated the difficulty of the mission?

“We need to back out now, or else there’s no way we’ll be able to escape with our lives!” another God King shouted.

In that instant, all the members of the group began to hesitate—should they retreat and abandon the mission or push on?

Even though they were very close to the Condensed Earth Essence, the pressure they faced was also growing with each passing second. At this rate, it was only a matter of time before they were wiped out.

“We have already come this far! How can we give up when we are already so close to the goal?” Ao Feng bellowed ferociously. “Everyone, just wait here for a moment for me. I’ll fetch the Condensed Earth Essence and come right back!”

With a furious roar, he began running forward, and all of a sudden, he began morphing into a massive golden dragon.

With imposing momentum, he charged right toward the Condensed Earth Essence in the air.

He knew that he could not reach the goal in his human form, so he had transformed back to his original body without any hesitation!



## 2245 Get Moving!

With the appearance of the golden dragon, the surrounding air seemed to grow thin, and the spiritual energy in the surroundings became even more viscous.

Ao Feng was displaying his true might as a Conferred God King of the Sky of Cloud Dragon.

Weng!

As soon as the golden dragon appeared, innumerable spirits in the surroundings began charging frenziedly toward him, even imploding themselves in order to deal some damage to him. In an instant, layers of spatial ripples diffused into the surroundings, destabilizing the space in the vicinity.

Under the relentless attacks of the phantasmagoric spirits, his resilient scales tore apart, and several glaring gashes were inflicted all over his body. His golden dragon blood dripped to the floor and crushed the rocks beneath with a sizzling sound.

Hu!

Knowing that he was in a desperate situation, Ao Feng did not hesitate to use his dragon breath, dissipating the dozens of phantasmagoric spirits that stood in his way. That opened a temporary passageway for him to pass through.

Sou!

Ao Feng quickly made use of the opportunity to dash forward, and just as he was about to reach the Condensed Earth Essence, a light barrier suddenly appeared in front of him, blocking him out.

“It’s a formation created by the phantasmagoric spirits!” Ao Feng’s face darkened as he felt goosebumps rising all over his body.

Not only did these phantasmagoric spirits possess sentience, they were even able to collaborate with one another to set up a formation... This far exceeded his expectations.

Ao Feng quickly lifted his claws to smash a hole through the light barrier.

The light barrier wavered under Ao Feng's strike, but it did not shatter.

Even with someone as powerful as Ao Feng exerting his full might, he was still unable to tear down the formation before him easily.

“I don't believe it!”

Ao Feng could not accept letting the Condensed Earth Essence slip through his fingers when it was right before him. No matter what, he was determined to make the mission a success.

Otherwise, once word began to spread about the dangers that lurked there, it would be difficult for him to gather a new team. In other words, he only had this one shot at success, and failure was not acceptable!

However, he also knew that he did not have much time left. With every second that he was stalled there, his group members would be facing even greater pressure from the phantasmagoric spirits.

Boom boom boom!

Ao Feng swiped his claws and tail repeatedly on the light barrier, causing it to tremor nonstop. Yet, he was simply unable to break it apart.

But while it was still refusing to shatter, it grew considerably thinner under his furious offense. With each strike, a fair bit of the spiritual energy that made up the light barrier diffused into the surroundings.

Observing that scene, Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up in excitement.

It's not a formation but a cocoon formed out of the purest essence extracted from innumerable phantasmagoric spirits...

At first glance, it did appear to be a barrier, but based on how the energy was leaking outward with each strike, it was apparently not the case.

If he was not mistaken, the reason the plants in the area were able to birth spirits was due to the presence of the Condensed Earth Essence in the area. For this reason, the spirits viewed the Condensed Earth Essence as their mother.

In order to protect their mother, the phantasmagoric spirits extracted the essence from their spirits and accumulated it over time in order to form this protective layer of defense.

In other words...

The light barrier was actually an incredible tonic for him!

If I absorb that, I should be able to advance my soul cultivation considerably, right?

With such a thought in mind, he quickly smacked away the two phantasmagoric spirits charging at him before moving closer to the light barrier. Indeed, he could sense the spirit essence that had diffused from the light barrier lingering in the air.

His soul cultivation grew significantly just by absorbing a sliver of it.

This confirmed Zhang Xuan's thoughts. If he could absorb all of it, he would surely be able to bring his soul cultivation to new heights!

It would be foolish to miss out on such good stuff!

He turned his eyes toward the light barrier, only to see the barrier being torn off layer after layer by Ao Feng's relentless attacks. The concentrated soul energy was then absorbed by the phantasmagoric spirits in the area, strengthening them.

"What a pity..."

At this rate, the pressure on their side would only continue to increase as the phantasmagoric spirits grew stronger. Besides, it was such a huge waste to give such tonics to the phantasmagoric spirits when they were hardly alive.

If he could have it instead, the benefit he gained from it would be even greater than consuming the Condensed Earth Essence!

This won't do. I should just take it for myself, Zhang Xuan thought as he walked over to the light barrier.

Boom boom boom!

Meanwhile, the golden dragon in the air was still striking the light barrier relentlessly, and the rebound from striking too hard was causing its claws to bleed profusely. At the same time, the phantasmagoric spirits in the area were still attacking him from all directions, causing his injuries to pile up.

It felt like he would succumb very soon and fall from the sky.

Ao Feng clenched his teeth tightly as he thought, I am deeply indebted to the Cloud Dragon Monarch. The Condensed Earth Essence is something that can allow the Cloud Dragon Monarch to further his cultivation, so no matter what, I must complete this mission.

Most of the Conferred God Kings had received guidance from their God Monarchs, and in the Northern, Eastern, Western, and Southern Skies, the Conferred God Kings were all related by bloodline to the God Monarch.

This meant that their relationship ran even deeper.

If the God Monarch needed something, even if it was at the cost of their life, they would still find it for them!

Ao Feng continued to attack frenziedly, but the stronger his strikes were, the greater the rebound was. It did not take long for his body to be nearly completely tattered, and it looked as if he was on the verge of collapsing.

Ao Feng knew that he had reached the limit of his body, and if he pushed on like that, he would die before he could lay his hands on the Condensed Earth Essence. Feeling utterly helpless, he was just about to give the order to retreat when he saw a young man standing in front of the light barrier that he had been hitting a moment ago.

With a gleeful smile on his face, the young man started to absorb the diffused energy of the light barrier.

“ ... ”

Lowering his dragon head, Ao Feng soon recognized who the young man was.

It was one of the last two God Kings whom he had recruited.

“Pay no heed to me. You can continue if you want. I’ll just absorb a bit before leaving,” the young man said with a friendly wave of his hand.

“...” Ao Feng nearly blacked out.

Bro!

I nearly got killed by the phantasmagoric spirits while trying to get to this light barrier! Even now, my body is still bleeding profusely.

How did you get here without the slightest crease on your clothes?

You are even in the mood to smile and wave at me...

Damn it, I am already dying! If you had such capabilities, why didn’t you just use them earlier?

Ao Feng glared at the young man with an aggrieved look, only to see the young man completely focused on absorbing the energy scattered all around. He was so focused that a small tornado of energy started to form around his body.

Two of the largest phantasmagoric spirits in the area sensed that the source of their strength was being absorbed by the young man, and they began charging over while screeching in fury.

“Be careful!” Ao Feng shouted out.

But before the phantasmagoric spirits could get close, the young man waved his hand casually.

Peng! Peng!

With two dull thuds, the phantasmagoric spirits were reduced to dust before being absorbed by the young man as well.

The young man suddenly raised his head once more to look at Ao Feng once more, and he said in an earnest tone, “There’s no need to be bothered by me. You can continue scratching at

the light barrier. It's already very thin now. If you hurry, you should be able to break it within ten minutes!"

"Ten minutes?" Ao Feng spat a mouthful of blood.

He had been thinking that he could break it soon, but in the end... ten minutes?

Despite putting his life on the line and attacking desperately, he had not even ground away a tenth of the light barrier?

What the hell! Was this even possible to break apart?

While wallowing in his sorrow, Ao Feng lowered his head once more, only to see that the young man had finished devouring all the energy lingering in the area.

Seeing that there was nothing anymore, the young man raised his head to direct a dissatisfied look in his direction, asking, "Why are you standing there in a daze? Get moving!"

"Ah..."

Without any thought, Ao Feng's claws began striking the light barrier once more, causing its energy to scatter in the surroundings.

Zhang Xuan nodded in satisfaction before turning his attention back to absorbing the spirit essence around him.

## 2246 Exasperation

Absorbing the spirit essence contained within the light barrier, Zhang Xuan's soul became stronger and stronger. At the same time, his control over his soul energy grew more refined.

It did not take long for his soul cultivation to reach satiation once more.

However, there was nothing to worry about.

With a thought, he redirected the spirit essence toward his clone, strengthening its soul.

He soon absorbed everything that could be absorbed.

Raising his head once more, he saw Ao Feng floating in the air with a bloodied body like a slain dragon. It felt like the other party had really used up all his strength.

He did not look as imposing as he did before.

"I have a pill here that can heal your stamina. Eat it!"

With a flick of his finger, Zhang Xuan threw a pill over to Ao Feng.

If the other party really fainted, he would not be able to absorb the spirit essence around peacefully anymore.

Besides, given how much he had absorbed earlier, it was only right for him to repay the favor.

"My injuries are too severe. Ordinary pills won't work," Ao Feng said with a bitter smile.

Even pinnacle God Essence Pills were not of much use to him, let alone some low-tier pills. Given the extent of his injuries, he would require at least a purer Dragon Bloodline in order to recover.

"Just give it a try!" Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

He had infused his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi and a bit of Little Chick's blood into the high-tier God Essence Pill he had

flicked over. That should be more than enough to heal up ordinary injuries.

Seeing the young man insisting on the matter, Ao Feng suddenly recalled how the young man was able to pass through the phantasmagoric spirits in order to get to it.

Perhaps in the hope that a miracle would happen, he opened his mouth and swallowed it.

As soon as he swallowed the pill, a warm flow spread across his whole body and healed his injuries.

“This...” Ao Feng narrowed his eyes in shock.

The effects of the pill were already comparable to a God Monarch realm pill!

To be willing to give away such a valuable pill so casually... Just who in the world was this young man?

Lowering his head, he saw the young man waving his hand calmly, saying, “You can get back to work now...”

“...” Ao Feng’s eyebrows danced up and down.

Just like that, the gratitude he felt for the young man vanished like a puff of smoke.

Aren’t you treating me like your slave?

Ao Feng looked around him and saw that most of the God Kings he had brought in were already injured, and their formation was on the verge of collapsing. Knowing that this was not the time to be fussing over this, he gritted his teeth and continued striking the light barrier furiously.

Kacha! Kacha!

The light barrier shuddered, and spirit essence began diffusing into the surroundings once more.

Zhang Xuan absorbed for a while longer before he began frowning in dissatisfaction once more.

As his clone had neither comprehended the Pathos of Heaven nor received the World’s Conferment, he needed a greater amount of soul energy than Zhang Xuan.



Initially, he did not really think much of it. However, the more he absorbed the spirit essence, the more frustrated he felt with how slow the rate at which the spirit essence was being produced.

The rate of how fast one cultivated did make a huge difference. If one's rate of cultivation was too slow, it would be hard to gather enough momentum to push for a breakthrough.

Why do I have to wait for Ao Feng to strike the spirit essence from the light barrier before absorbing it? Why can't I just absorb it straight from the light barrier? Zhang Xuan thought.

Looking at how exhausted Ao Feng was, to the extent that his tongue was stuck out like a tired dog, Zhang Xuan knew that it would be impossible to get him to pick up his speed. So, he turned his gaze toward the cocoon-like light barrier in the sky instead.

It would indeed be easier to absorb the diffused spirit essence from the light barrier, but since the output could not keep up with the rate of consumption, it was time to make some modifications to the plan.

If only he had known that Ao Feng was such a lousy worker, he never would have given the latter the pill.

What a waste of resources.

It seemed like Conferred God Kings were not as formidable as he had thought.

Shaking his head, Zhang Xuan moved over to the light barrier and attempted to absorb the spirit essence in it. However, the exterior was so hard that he could not absorb it at all.

Ah, that explains why that fellow isn't able to break it. This light barrier is indeed scarily resilient...

He raised his fist and gave the light barrier a good, hard punch, but the rebound from striking a hard surface caused his arm to go numb instead.

The light barrier formed from the purest essence of the plant spirits was more frightening than he had thought.

Even though he did not use his soul cultivation in the attack, no matter what, his physical body had still gone through the tempering of the Deathless Lava Reservoir. In terms of sheer strength, the amount of force he could dish out was far greater than that of other Conferred God Kings.

Yet, even with such strength, he still suffered a rebound that caused his hand to ache.

It seemed like one would at least require the powers of a God Monarch in order to swiftly breach the light barrier.

Let me try with a weapon then...

Since his fist did not work, Zhang Xuan quickly drew the Crimson Heaven Sword that the God Monarch of the Sword Hut had given him back then.

Hu!

The wind batters unceasingly on the unwilling tree, a son seeks to be filial but time slips past his grasp!

Zhang Xuan executed the Pathos of Heaven 4-dan sword art.

Puhe!

The light barrier in front did not even manage to hold its ground for a split second before a huge hole was ripped in it. Caught off guard, Zhang Xuan ended up stumbling inside the light barrier.

This... Zhang Xuan blinked blankly.

As his fist did not work earlier, he had expected it to take a great deal of effort to break the light barrier even if he used his swordsmanship. To his astonishment, he managed to tear a hole in it so easily...

If only he had known that it was that easy, he would not have wasted his time.

At the same time, Zhang Xuan could not help but wonder just what tier of weapon the Crimson Heaven Sword was. Was it not way too sharp?

Placing his sword back into his storage ring, Zhang Xuan began absorbing the spirit essence once more, and this time

around, he could feel concentrated energy streaming ceaselessly into his body rapidly.

Hmm, just as I thought. It's much more convenient absorbing the spirit essence from inside...

He could hardly absorb anything while he was out there, but in here, the spirit essence flowed so easily into his body that he really wondered what he had been doing the past few minutes.

Channeling the spirit essence toward the clone in his storage ring, his clone's soul cultivation quickly rose through the ranks, causing his fighting prowess to rise swiftly.

Peng peng peng!

While Zhang Xuan was absorbing the spirit essence from the inside, Ao Feng was still striking the light barrier with all his might. Dragon blood was dripping from his claws, and his nails had blunted as a result of smashing against something absurdly hard.

Just as he was thinking of giving up once more, he suddenly noticed that the young man from before had already slipped in and was standing inside quietly, not moving at all.

Once again, Ao Feng felt a sweet sensation at the back of his throat, and he nearly spurted blood.

Bruh, when the hell did you get in there?

Why didn't you call for me?

Did you not see how I was striking the light barrier with all my might?

Are you making fun of me?

It's as if I was searching the entire house for my keys, but it turned out that they were with you all along...

Ao Feng quickly circled around the light barrier and found the tear that the young man entered through. Without any hesitation, he charged right through the tear, and... he got stuck!

After struggling for a long time, he finally transmogrified back to his human form before entering.

“Condensed Earth Essence, it’s finally within my grasp...”

Paying no heed to the young man who was still standing motionless, Ao Feng rushed straight for the Condensed Earth Essence and grabbed it.

Tzzz!

Feeling the incredible energy pulsating within the milky-white sphere, Ao Feng trembled in agitation. He was just about to find a container to store it when he suddenly noticed something and frowned.

This is weird...

Why does it seem like the Condensed Earth Essence has shrunk quite a bit?

When I saw it earlier, it was still the size of a grown man’s fist. So, why does it look like a mere ping pong ball now?

While Ao Feng was still trying to figure out the mystery of the missing essence, the Condensed Earth Essence in his hand continued to shrink, becoming the size of a grape before further miniaturizing to the size of a bean...

Ao Feng grasped at his hair as he felt like something within him was going to explode.

If I give this little bean to the Cloud Dragon Monarch, the latter will surely think that I’m mocking him!

The heck...

# 2247 Venturing Along the Mountain Stream

Scratching his head in utter confusion, Ao Feng took a closer look, only to realize that the energy within the Condensed Earth Essence in his hand, after the shattering of the light barrier, was flowing outward ceaselessly.

It appeared that the light barrier had been created to prevent the Condensed Earth Essence from diffusing, and its destruction resulted in the inability of the Condensed Earth Essence to maintain its form.

Wait, so where did the spiritual energy go? Ao Feng thought anxiously.

Tracing the flow of spiritual energy, the result of his investigation made his body stagger from shock.

To his disbelief, both the light barrier and the spiritual energy from the Condensed Earth Essence were being absorbed by the young man. That fellow was leaving no scraps at all!

But... how was the young man doing it?

The spiritual energy of the Condensed Earth Essence was so pure that even Ao Feng himself would have difficulty absorbing it!

Gritting his teeth, Ao Feng quickly took out a jade container to store the bean-sized Condensed Earth Essence before sealing it off. Then, he furiously turned his gaze to Zhang Xuan and confronted him. “Friend, I am thankful to you for your pill earlier, but what do you mean by absorbing the spiritual energy in the Condensed Earth Essence? What do you expect me to present to His Sovereignty after all you have done?”

While he was grateful to Zhang Xuan for helping him earlier, the main purpose of their mission was to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence. If the young man had sucked it dry, it would have meant that their mission was a failure!

Do you know how much I have sacrificed in order to complete this mission? Not only did I promise everyone a pinnacle God Essence Pill and a favor, I even nearly lost my life in the midst of the mission. Yet, you stole the spoils of war right before my eyes...

Isn't that a bit too much?

Perplexed by Ao Feng's suddenly outburst, Zhang Xuan turned to look at the jade container and realized that there was less than a tenth of the Condensed Earth Essence left.

Taken aback, he quickly looked at his own body before freezing on the spot. "Ah? My cultivation has reached... Conferred God King? When did it happen?"

This was shocking. Even though it was only a cultivation stage, he had still managed to raise his cultivation from God King realm pinnacle to Conferred God King realm primary stage!

Just... why did he not notice anything?

He must have been so focused on absorbing the spirit essence that his body subconsciously started cultivating on its own under the effects of the Mind of Void. As a result, he ended up absorbing the Condensed Earth Essence involuntarily!

If I were to tell you that I'm here only to absorb the spirit essence and not to take your spiritual energy, would you believe me?

Zhang Xuan at least knew enough to know that Ao Feng would beat him to death if he said those words, so he scratched his head awkwardly and replied, "This... I honestly didn't mean for this to happen, and I'll give you an explanation later. For the time being, let's head out. I'm afraid that they won't be able to hold on for much longer..."

Ao Feng turned around and saw that the God Kings were indeed at their limits. Just a moment later, and they would have succumbed to the phantasmagoric spirits.

Having their Condensed Earth Essence taken away had caused the phantasmagoric spirits to fall into a greater state of rage, resulting in their attacks being far more violent than before.

All eleven of the God Kings had already sustained severe injuries, so the wise thing to do right now was indeed to retreat.

“Humph!”

Knowing that this was indeed not a good time to question the young man, Ao Feng gritted his teeth and leaped out of the light barrier. His body morphed once more into a massive golden dragon, and he wrapped the crowd around his body before dashing off.

He knew that the young man inside the light barrier possessed strength beyond him, so he could not be bothered with escorting him out with them as well.

“I’ll be waiting for you outside,” Ao Feng said to Zhang Xuan via zhenqi telepathy.

Zhang Xuan shook his head before focusing his attention back on absorbing the concentrated spirit essence around him.

Five minutes later, he was finally done absorbing the entire spirit essence, and his clone had also managed to advance its strength to God King realm pinnacle. With that, his clone would be able to match any Conferred God King with ease.

But at the same time, with the erosion of the light barrier, Zhang Xuan was immediately swarmed by hordes of phantasmagoric spirits. He swung the Crimson Heaven Sword in his hand to open a pathway for himself to retreat, but all of a sudden, he halted his footsteps.

“Should I head deeper in to see if there’s more Condensed Earth Essence around?”

Since he was already there, if he could find more Condensed Earth Essence, he might just be able to push for a breakthrough to Conferred God King realm pinnacle while returning what he owed Ao Feng.

So, he quickly activated the disguise amulet to alter his aura to appear to be no different from that of the phantasmagoric spirits in the surroundings.

Initially, the phantasmagoric spirits were attacking him relentlessly, but slowly, their movements came to a halt as they scanned their surroundings in confusion.

Plant spirits possessed only an elementary level of sentience, so they were unable to process complex situations. Zhang Xuan's disguise was nearly flawless, so not even they were able to tell the difference between him and their own kind.

"The disguise amulet is truly formidable," Zhang Xuan muttered as he quickly rushed alongside the mountain stream.

There had to be something along this mountain stream that the rest of this land did not have for it to be able to produce the Condensed Earth Essence.

Trailing ahead, the number of phantasmagoric spirits in the area gradually began to decrease. A moment later, Zhang Xuan came to a halt as he scanned the area right in front of him warily with a frown.

For some reason, he could sense a very familiar aura coming from there.

It was a sensation similar to what he had felt from the gray energy in the abyss beneath the Sky of Spirit Origin, which wielded the ability to neutralize his Heaven's Path zhenqi.

"This is weird..."

The further Zhang Xuan proceeded, the stronger the aura became. Eventually, it reached a point where even Conferred God Kings would be unable to withstand it.

Zhang Xuan had to wrap the Pathos of Heaven's zhenqi around his body in order to remain unaffected.

He continued flying for around ten minutes before he finally arrived at the bottommost area of the mountain stream.

Glancing downward, he felt his heart skip a beat.

The bottommost area of the mountain stream was a massive plot of empty land spanning over an area of tens of thousands of mu. There were no plants or any life at all on this plot of land, only a huge depression in the ground.



Zhang Xuan was unable to see anything while standing on the ground, so he flew into the air to get a bird's eye view over the area.

He soon realized that the depression in the ground was actually a humongous palm print!

“Was this left behind by a God Monarch?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

Even with his current strength, he would not be able to execute such a powerful palm strike. That could only mean that the palm print was left behind by a God Monarch.

There was just one problem with that.

The God Monarchs were unable to enter this area.

If so, how did that person leave this palm print?

Looking at the humongous palm print beneath him, a thought surfaced in Zhang Xuan's mind. “Could it be that the rift in the sky of the Firmament was caused by a battle?”

The Flooding Sea carried a great resemblance to the missing piece from the sky of the Firmament, and if he thought about it, the abyss beneath Spirit Origin Royal City did resemble a palm print as well.

If so, could the rift and the abyss have been caused by a battle between two God Monarchs?

Perhaps the fight had gotten out of hand, such that it resulted in Little Chick's demise in the end.

But if that was the case, as the strongest God Monarch of the Firmament, Luo Ruoxin should have intervened and halted the battle, especially if it was causing such massive damage to the world. Why did she not do so?

Just what happened in the past four to five decades of the Firmament?

Why would the heavens be fragmented into multiple pieces, falling all the way to the Master Teacher Continent to enter his and Kong Shi's bodies?

The many questions in Zhang Xuan's mind made him become more and more confused.

Circling around the palm print, Zhang Xuan was not able to find any Condensed Earth Essence in the area, and there was nothing that looked particularly amiss to him. So, he could only heave a deep sigh and head back to where Ao Feng and the others were.

While he did not manage to advance his zhenqi cultivation all the way to Conferred God King realm pinnacle, at the very least, he did manage to overcome his bottleneck as a God King. At the same time, his soul had also grown significantly stronger.

He was no longer far away from becoming a God Monarch.

All in all, he had earned quite a lot from this journey.

The only issue was that... he had no idea how he should face Ao Feng.

The latter had rallied their group together for the sake of obtaining the Condensed Earth Essence, but he had ended up absorbing more than ninety percent of it. That made him feel deeply embarrassed.

“Forget it! If it doesn't work out, I should just take him in as my disciple. Though, I must say, he doesn't look like a brilliant kid...” Zhang Xuan murmured hesitantly.

This was the greatest compromise he could bring himself to make.

## 2248 Betrayal

Having made up his mind, Zhang Xuan quickly headed back to where Ao Feng and the rest were.

Due to his disguise, the raging phantasmagoric spirits did not recognize him as an intruder and attack him. Soon enough, he arrived back at the mountain forest.

He was still thinking of how delighted Ao Feng would be after relaying his intentions to the latter when he suddenly felt shockwaves diffusing from the area ahead of him.

Dashing forward, he saw that Ao Feng, as a golden dragon, was currently brawling with a ferocious tiger.

“Ao Feng, it has only been a few days since we last met, but why does it seem like you have weakened a lot? If the others saw you in your current state, they would probably laugh their teeth out!” the tiger roared in laughter.

Two forces clashed relentlessly against one another like fireworks in the sky, causing brilliant flashes of light to appear here and there.

“A Conferred God King of the Sky of Adamant Gold?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

The ferocious tiger was likely a Conferred God King of the Sky of Adamant Gold, but it was just a little weird how they suddenly came to blows with one another.

“You b\*stard!” Ao Feng roared as he activated a secret art that caused his entire body to glow scarlet.

Once again, he dashed furiously toward the tiger.

Boom boom boom!

Under the collision of the two blows, dimension rifts appeared all around the area.

“Zhang shi...” Luo Qiqi called out as she walked over to Zhang Xuan’s side.

She knew that he had something to do earlier, so she had chosen to leave the mountain stream together with Ao Feng earlier so as to not slow him down.

“What’s going on? Why would the two of them suddenly fight one another?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Shortly after we came out earlier, Conferred God King Hu Xiao of the Sky of Adamant Gold suddenly stopped us. I reckon that he probably knows that about the Condensed Earth Essence as well, so he intentionally camped outside to snatch it from the wounded Ao Feng,” Luo Qiqi told him.

“I see...” Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

What all cultivators had to be most wary of in the Flooding Sea were not the natural traps nor the spatial turbulence but... their peers!

There were plenty of people who would lie in ambush, waiting for someone else to brave danger to obtain the treasure they wanted before assaulting them and stealing the fruit of their labor.

It seemed like that was exactly what the Conferred God King known as Hu Xiao was doing.

“If not for Ao Feng’s injuries, he should have been more than a match for Hu Xiao, but in his current state, things don’t seem to look too optimistic...” Luo Qiqi shook her head.

If not for Ao Feng sustaining severe injuries from the relentless attacks from the phantasmagoric spirits earlier, no matter how formidable Hu Xiao was, he would only be equal to him at the very most. Unfortunately, Ao Feng was not in a good condition, so the result of the duel was determined right from the very start.

Boom!

A deafening sonic boom exploded in the air, and Ao Feng plummeted from the sky. His massive body was filled with wounds, and golden blood flowed profusely from his body, creating huge craters beneath him.

Zhang Xuan hesitated for a brief moment before he began collecting the dragon blood that was leaking all over the area.

The blood of a Conferred God King Pureblooded Dragon should be able to sell for a decent price.

Hu Xiao transmogrified into a middle-aged man as he demanded with a wintry voice, “Hand over the Condensed Earth Essence!”

Ao Feng gritted his teeth indignantly.

“You know how many Conferred God Kings died in the previous Flood of Spiritual Energy. Don’t push your luck!” Hu Xiao harrumphed as he took a step forward toward Ao Feng.

Knowing that the other party would not hesitate to make a move against him over the Condensed Earth Essence, Ao Feng could only reluctantly hand a jade container over.

Hu Xiao caught the jade container and pried open its lid to check the contents. A moment later, he asked with a deep frown, “Why is it so small?”

Given how many phantasmagoric spirits there were around the mountain stream, the Condensed Earth Essence should have been a decent size. It was unimaginable that it would only be the size of a mere bean!

“The energy probably leaked out earlier while I was breaking the barrier around it. It was already this big when I first laid my hands on it,” Ao Feng replied, not revealing what had happened with Zhang Xuan earlier.

“Leaked out?” Hu Xiao frowned. He kept the Condensed Earth Essence into his storage ring before directing his eyes back to Ao Feng. “Since that’s the case, I’ll just take something of yours in order to make up for it then!”

With a flick of his finger, the storage ring on Ao Feng’s finger immediately flew into Hu Xiao’s grasp.

He tapped on it lightly to clear away the Soul Imprint before taking a look at the items within. His lips crept up in delight as he remarked, “Not bad. You have done well this time. It looks

like you have been working hard since entering the Flooding Sea. I'll be taking all of this!"

Since he was already there to rob Ao Feng, there was no reason for him to leave anything behind for the latter.

While the items inside Ao Feng's storage ring could not begin to compare to the Condensed Earth Essence, it was still highly beneficial for Conferred God Kings.

"You..."

Seeing how all his possessions were taken away by the other party, Ao Feng gritted his teeth furiously, but he could not say a word.

This was simply how the Flood of Spiritual Energy was. If one lowered one's guard for a moment, a plunderer would appear to snatch one's items.

If he fought with Hu Xiao over this, there was a good chance that the latter might just kill him!

So, he had no choice but to tolerate it!

As long as he was alive, he could always earn those cultivation resources back.

After snatching Ao Feng's items, Hu Xiao turned his gaze toward the other God Kings in the group. "The same goes for the rest of you. Hand over your stuff! I might still hesitate a little before Ao Feng due to the backing of the Sky of Cloud Dragon, but I can't say that the same goes for the rest of you. If you don't wish to die, you'd better make a move fast."

His voice was laced with threat.

The Sky of Cloud Dragon was known to be excessively protective of their kind, and Ao Feng was a Conferred God King on top of that. As long as Ao Feng was willing to obediently hand his stuff over, there was no reason for Hu Xiao to risk killing Ao Feng only to have the Cloud Dragon Monarch exact vengeance on him!

However, the other God Kings did not have the same backing as Ao Feng.

Even if he killed a couple of God Kings, there would be no one to fault him for his actions!

Facing the pressure from Hu Xiao, the injured God Kings glared at him indignantly, but there was nothing he could do.

They might have tried to escape if they were not injured, but in their current state, there was no way they could outrun a Conferred God King.

If they did not hand over their possession, there was a good chance that the other party would do them all in!

God Kings might be highly respected figures in the Firmament, but in the Flooding Sea, they were nothing at all.

“Here...”

“I have only collected these...”

Soon, the God Kings had handed over all the storage rings with them.

Looking at their harvest, Hu Xiao nodded in contentment. Just as he was about to continue speaking, a God King suddenly gritted his teeth, stepped forward, and said, “Conferred God King Hu Xiao, I am willing to serve you if you could return my treasures. I can tell what happened in the mountain stream that caused the Condensed Earth Essence to disappear...”

“You wish to become my follower? That’s not completely out of the question, but that depends on whether the news you have to offer is worth your life and the treasures you have,” Hu Xiao said nonchalantly.

“You will be pleased with what I have to offer...” the God King said with a glint in his eyes before pointing toward Zhang Xuan. “It was that fellow. He was the one who reached the Condensed Earth Essence first, and it was the size of a palm when he entered. However, shortly after he entered, the Condensed Earth Essence grew smaller and smaller till it reached its current size. I believe that he’s the culprit behind the disappearance of the Condensed Earth Essence!”

That fellow possessed the strength to deal with the phantasmagoric spirits, but he had watched idly as they got

injured, and he had even run to the light barrier to steal the Condensed Earth Essence.

To be honest, he had been extremely annoyed and dissatisfied with the young man for some time.

Through this, not only would he be able to teach the young man a lesson, he would also be able to keep his treasures. It would be killing two birds with one stone!

“You are the one who stole the Condensed Earth Essence?”

Hearing that the Condensed Earth Essence had actually been the size of a fist previously, Hu Xiao assessed Zhang Xuan with narrowed eyes.

If he could obtain the Condensed Earth Essence from the other party and present it to God Monarch Fumeng, he would surely be able to win the God Monarch’s favor!



# 2249 I Always Repay My Deb

“I have come here with Conferred God King Ao Feng in order to obtain the Condensed Earth Essence, and I didn’t have any intention of taking it for myself. It was an accident that led to this.”

With Ao Feng, who was lying on the floor, looking his way as well, Zhang Xuan awkwardly explained himself.

He had thought about it for a while, but he still felt a little embarrassed talking about it.

After all, the fault was on him.

Seeing the young man admit to it, Hu Xiao burst into laughter. “It looks like I have really struck gold this time!”

With cold eyes carrying unquestionable authority, Hu Xiao demanded, “Hand the Condensed Earth Essence over right now, and I can spare you from death!”

“I can’t,” Zhang Xuan replied nonchalantly.

He had already absorbed it into his body, so how could he present it to the other party? If he could, he would have already returned it to Ao Feng!

“Look here, the reason I am still talking to you right now is because I am in a good mood. If you keep pushing your luck, I can just loot the Condensed Earth Essence from you after killing you.”

Despite Hu Xiao’s threat, Zhang Xuan maintained the same nonchalant look on his face.

This truly angered Hu Xiao, such that he raised his palm and struck down on Zhang Xuan, creating a massive palm print in the sky.

Kacha!

A burst of force swept all over the surroundings as the palm print swiftly descended upon Zhang Xuan.

Seeing how Hu Xiao had made his move, the God King who had just offered himself to serve as Hu Xiao's subordinate raised his head with a smug look on his face.

"You should learn your place. Do you think that we are still in the Firmament, where everyone has to follow rules?"

They were in the Flooding Sea, a place known to be the graveyard of God Kings and Conferred God Kings. Yet, the young man still dared to act so conceited... Such actions were no different from courting death!

Facing Hu Xiao's attack, Zhang Xuan shook his head helplessly and lamented, "Is there a need for us to do this?"

These God Kings were just strangers whom he had met, so he did not feel any obligation to protect them.

I can turn a blind eye to you robbing them, but don't you think it's too much for you to rob and make a move on me?

Zhang Xuan raised his hand and flicked his finger.

Huala!

The massive palm print in the sky shattered like glass, and before Hu Xiao could even react, he was already struck square on his glabella, and he flew dozens of meters before crashing heavily onto the ground.

Huge mouthfuls of blood coughed out from his mouth.

"Conferred God King Hu Xiao's attack was undone with a single flick, and he was even sent flying on top of that?"

"Am I seeing things?"

The God Kings in the area shuddered in fright at what they had just witnessed.

Even Ao Feng's bell-like eyes were widened in shock. His body was trembling so much that he looked more like a gutless python than a massive dragon from afar.

From how the young man was able to travel among the phantasmagoric spirits and break open the light barrier, he knew that the young man was not an ordinary individual... But who could have known that he was so powerful!

He would have difficulty subduing Hu Xiao even if he was at his peak, but such a formidable opponent turned out to be nothing more than an ant in the eyes of the young man.

Was he not just a God King?

Hu Xiao struggled to his feet as he glared sharply at Zhang Xuan with bloodshot eyes.

How could he, as a Conferred God King, be severely injured with a single strike from an ordinary God King? He could not have imagined such a thing in the past!

Even though he did not put his full strength behind the earlier attack, the fact that the young man was able to overpower his palm strike so easily meant that he was stronger than most Conferred God Kings that he knew of.

“Damn you!”

Cursing loudly, Hu Xiao morphed his palm into a claw and swiped down at Zhang Xuan, exerting a might comparable to the weight of the mountains.

Seeing that Hu Xiao was still persistently coming after him, Zhang Xuan shook his head before placing his hands behind his back.

Hu!

Before the swipe could even land, the force was suddenly dispersed in midair. Following that, a cold harrumph sounded. “This is the last time I’ll let you off for daring to raise your hands against me.”

A series of spatial ripples swiftly appeared in the air, and Hu Xiao, who had still been striking ferociously a moment ago, had already fled into the distance.

As soon as his strike was dispersed, he had realized that he was no match for the young man. So, without any hesitation, he had turned tail and fled.

In the Flood of Spiritual Energy, the ones who were able to obtain treasures and walk out with their lives intact were the true victors. As for his reputation and the like, that was of secondary importance.

After all, given Hu Xiao's standing in the Firmament, who would dare talk cr\*p about him?

Besides, who would believe such words?

"Zhang shi..." Luo Qiqi called out.

She knew that Zhang Xuan could have stopped Hu Xiao from fleeing, so she was perplexed as to why he did not stop him.

"It matters not. None of us were injured anyway," Zhang Xuan said with a wave of his hand.

His current priority should be to raise his cultivation and push for a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm. Conferred God Kings no longer meant anything to him anymore, and they were not worth his time.

"But... he stole Ao Feng's treasures. If you retrieved them for him, you would have been able to even out the debt from the Condensed Earth Essence," Luo Qiqi replied.

Having been together for quite some time, she had come to understand Zhang Xuan's character.

He was not a person who liked to owe a debt to others. If he felt that he owed someone a debt, he would try to repay that person in his own way.

That was also why he had felt so awkward earlier when he was asked if he was the one who had taken the Condensed Earth Essence.

Given what had just happened, this was indeed an ideal opportunity to repay the debt he owed to Ao Feng. If he could exact vengeance on Ao Feng's behalf while getting his stuff back, he would be able to even the scales.

This way, he would not have to feel awkward around Ao Feng. And those words made Zhang Xuan's eyes light up.

He had been so caught up in trying to figure out how to stop Ao Feng from fainting from happiness when he offered to take the latter in as his student that he completely failed to consider such a possibility. If he resolved the issue in such a manner, he would not have to take the other party in as his student anymore...

What a relief!

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan glanced in the direction that Hu Xiao had escaped in, only to see that he had completely disappeared from sight.

“It’s already too late. He’s gotten away,” Luo Qiqi said with a bitter smile.

While Conferred God Kings were incapable of teleportation, the speed of their movements was almost as good as that. Hu Xiao had already run away for seven to eight breaths, so it would be nigh impossible to track and catch up with him anymore.

“It’s not too late yet,” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

He raised his hand and reached forward.

At the same time, the space in front of him began distorting. As if layers of paper had been compressed together, a distance of several hundred li was suddenly pressed together, allowing Zhang Xuan’s arm to stretch over this long distance to grab his target.

“W-what? How is this possible?”

With a cry of agony, Hu Xiao was pulled over to where Zhang Xuan and the others were before being slammed heavily onto the ground.

Seeing such a sight, Ao Feng’s mouth fell open.

Compressing space in order to capture someone... this was supposed to be a feat that only God Monarchs were able to pull off!

Was the young man before him actually a God Monarch in disguise?

Hu Xiao was also on the verge of losing his mind.

He had thought that he should be safe after flying so far away, but who could have known that the other party would be able to grab him so easily?

Even grabbing a fly would have been harder than this!

“I just remembered that you haven’t returned what you stole from them. Take out everything you have,” Zhang Xuan said as he glanced down at Hu Xiao with an impassive look on his face.

Having received the World Conferment and absorbed a great deal of spirit essence earlier, his soul was already strong enough to manipulate the spatial laws of the Firmament.

Even though Hu Xiao had escaped beyond his line of sight, it was still within the range of his Spiritual Perception’s detection. All it took was a mere thought for him to identify where Hu Xiao was and grab him.

It was nothing at all.

“Yes...” Hu Xiao nodded vehemently as he retrieved everything that he had taken away from them.

Against an opponent who could grab him so easily, he knew that he did not stand a chance.

After placing everything on the ground, Hu Xiao turned to Zhang Xuan and lowered his head subserviently. “Elder, may I leave now?”

He no longer pulled his weight before the young man.

“I said take out everything that you have, didn’t I? Where are your own possessions?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Since he was already doing this, he might as well take away everything that Hu Xiao had.

He did not feel any pangs of guilt taking stuff away from a guy who went around robbing others anyway.

# 2250 Exact Vengeance for Me, Zhao Ya!

“Y-yes!”

Not daring to argue with the young man, Hu Xiao quickly handed his storage ring over.

Zhang Xuan wiped off the Soul Imprint on the storage ring to take a look at the contents within before nodding in satisfaction.

As expected of a Conferred God King, there were quite a number of good things in there. While they were not too useful to him, they should prove to be quite useful for his parents, Luo Qiqi, and Sun Qiang.

“You can scam now.” Zhang Xuan waved his hand dismissively.

“Elder, thank you for sparing my life...”

After kowtowing thrice, Hu Xiao immediately ran away as quickly as he could.

He understood that the Flooding Sea was a place that preached the survival of the fittest. He might have had all his possessions taken away, but he could still recoup his losses as long as he was still around!

The antagonists usually lost their lives for spouting too much nonsense, so he would not make such a mistake.

After Hu Xiao left, Zhang Xuan looked at Ao Feng and the other God Kings and waved his hand.

“Take back whatever belongs to you!”

The crowd looked at one another, and after a moment of hesitation, they finally stepped forward to take back whatever belonged to them with reddened faces.

Initially, they had been a little displeased at how the young man was able to watch nonchalantly as they were getting extorted, but such a thought had already been vanquished from their heads.

They were only strangers, so why should the young man help them?

They should be grateful that he was willing to return their possessions to them.

“Elder, thank you for your help!” Ao Feng quickly reverted to his human form before bowing deeply to express his gratitude.

“There’s no need to stand on ceremony,” Zhang Xuan said with a wave of his hand. “It wasn’t my intention to absorb the Condensed Earth Essence, but that doesn’t change the fact that I have still done so. I hope that we can call it quits after I retrieved your possessions for you.”

“Definitely!” Ao Feng nodded vehemently in response. He fell silent with a conflicted look on his face for a moment before he asked, “Elder, by any chance, is it possible that... you are the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies?”

Given the huge commotion that had happened during the World Conferment, there was no way he would be oblivious to it. It was just that... he did not think that he would meet the other party there!

Furthermore, the other party was also much younger than he had expected.

“Yes, I am,” Zhang Xuan admitted frankly.

“He’s are the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies? The next... Heaven Subjugation Monarch?”

“No wonder he’s so powerful...”

“So, the red clouds that appeared two days ago was caused by that young man over there?”

...

Hearing the conversation between Ao Feng and Zhang Xuan, a huge uproar broke out amid the crowd.



It was only at this moment that the God Kings realized why the young man was so powerful despite only being a God King.

“That explains why you were able to absorb the Condensed Earth Essence!” Ao Feng struck his fist against his palm in realization.

The spiritual energy contained within the Condensed Earth Essence was so pure that even he, as a Conferred God King, was unable to absorb it carelessly. Yet, the young man was able to use it for his cultivation.

All this while, Ao Feng had been thinking that it was weird that something like this could happen, and just as he had thought, the young man was indeed no ordinary person!

The Conferred King of the Nine Skies, a person who was destined to become a God Monarch... It was no wonder he could absorb the Condensed Earth Essence easily.

At this moment, Ao Feng suddenly thought of something and said, “Elder, I know of a treasure here that will likely be useful to you.”

“Oh?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Roughly five thousand li away from here, I saw some Monarch Spirit Grass in a dimension rift. I didn’t dare enter the area with my current cultivation, but if it’s you, elder, I think that you should be able to do it easily,” Ao Feng said.

“Monarch Spirit Grass?” Zhang Xuan’s eyes lit up. “Are you are referring to the legendary medicinal herb that is useful even for the cultivation of a God Monarch?”

He had read about the medicinal herb in one of the books that Kong shi had left behind.

Most medicinal herbs were useless to him, so he needed something of that tier in order to raise his cultivation quickly.

Ao Feng nodded.

“Lead the way!” Zhang Xuan said.

In terms of effectiveness, it went without saying that the Monarch Spirit Grass was far better than that of the Condensed Earth Essence.

He might just be able to push for a breakthrough to Conferred God King realm pinnacle or even God Monarch!

“What do we do with him?” Ao Feng pointed to the God King who had given away Zhang Xuan earlier to Hu Xiao.

“I don’t think that there’s any need to keep him alive anymore,” Zhang Xuan said as he flung his sleeves coldly.

“P-please, spare my life...”

The God King was in the midst of begging for mercy when he suddenly felt himself losing control over his body. Then, his body began swelling up as the zhenqi in his body became erratic, and the next moment, he abruptly exploded.

Just like that, his body and soul were utterly obliterated.

If Zhang Xuan had not been strong enough, that God King’s betrayal would have cost him his life. In a place like the Flooding Sea, it was foolish to show mercy to one’s enemies.

Others would simply take one’s compassion for granted.

Ao Feng and the other God Kings recoiled in shock from the sight.

When they saw how the young man let Hu Xiao get away, they had thought that the young man was still too young and good-natured for his own good, but after witnessing such a sight...

Indeed, it would be foolish to get on the wrong side of someone they could not afford to mess with.

Ao Feng felt extremely grateful that he had stuck to his principles and had not betrayed the young man, or else that could very well have been his fate.

“Let’s go!”

Paying no heed to the rest of the God Kings, Zhang Xuan urged Ao Feng to lead the way.

...

Hu hu!

With a livid face, Hu Xiao gnashed his teeth together as he muttered hatefully, “There’s no one else... He must be that Conferred God King of the Nine Skies!”

It was not too hard to deduce the truth. Other than the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, who else, other than the God Monarchs, could possess such frightening strength?

“He might be formidable, but so what? Our Conferred God King Zhao Ya, who was groomed by God Monarch Fumeng himself, is nowhere weaker than him!” Hu Xiao thought of the silhouette of that valiant lady as he clenched his fists tightly.

Over the past month, God Monarch Fumeng had paid a heavy price in order to groom Conferred God King Zhao Ya, and fortunately, the latter had not let him down. Conferred God King Zhao Ya had displayed exceptional talent that far surpassed any Conferred God King that he had seen before.

Hu Xiao did not mind losing his own items; he could always recoup his losses easily by snatching the possessions of others. However, he could not forgive the young man for the humiliation he had suffered.

And if he enlisted the help of Conferred God King Zhao Ya, he might just be able to return the favor to the young man.

With such a thought in mind, he quickly took out a unique Communication Jade Token that had been bestowed upon them by the God Monarch. It was an artifact that could be used even in the Flooding Sea.

After sending out his message, around ten minutes later, the space around him wavered, and a person appeared before him.

Dressed in silver armor was a valiant young lady, who, despite her great beauty, commanded a cold and domineering presence that no one dared look down upon.

Zhao Ya!

“What business do you have with me?” the young lady said with a cold voice that seemed to distance her from others.

It was due to God Monarch Fumeng's help that she had been able to attain the strength that she currently possessed. Before entering the Flooding Sea, God Monarch Fumeng had told her to take care of the God Kings and Conferred God Kings from the Sky of Adamant Gold.

It was for this reason that she unhesitatingly parted from her juniors to rush over upon receiving the message from Hu Xiao.

“Conferred God King Zhao Ya, I was robbed by another Conferred God King just a moment ago, and the Condensed Earth Essence that I went to great lengths to prepare for God Monarch Fumeng has been taken away. I beseech you to help me apprehend that insolent fellow!” Hu Xiao bowed respectfully as he spoke.

Even though the other party was much younger than him, he did not dare act too haughtily in her presence, especially due to the vast disparity in their strength.

“Who was it?” Zhao Ya asked coldly. She had never been one to beat about the bush, so she got straight to the point.

“I don't know what his name is, but he's very likely the person who received the World Conferment a few days ago, the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies,” Hu Xiao replied.

Even though everyone knew about the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, his identity remained a mystery to everyone except the God Monarchs. After all, this was a matter of grave import.

“The Conferred God King of the Nine Skies?” Zhao Ya repeated with a cold glint in her eyes.

Prior to entering the Flooding Sea, the God Monarchs had instructed her to be careful if she encountered the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies. Since then, she had been wanting to meet the other party, but who would have thought the fellow would actually make a move on one of the people on her side?

He sure was brazen!

It seemed like someone was asking for a lesson.

# 2251 Can I Take Back My Words?

“Where is he?” Zhao Ya asked with a wintry aura around her.

“He’s currently at the mountain stream north of here...” Hu Xiao pointed in the direction.

“Lead the way!”

Hu Xiao hesitated for a brief moment before saying, “That person is quite strong. I fear that we might be in danger if we head there by ourselves.”

“Don’t worry and lead the way. I won’t let him touch a single strand of your hair as long as I’m around,” Zhao Ya replied coolly.

Hearing those words of reassurance, Hu Xiao heaved a sigh of relief before excitedly leading the way.

Soon, they arrived in the vicinity of where the Condensed Earth Essence was located.

However, only the God Kings who had been injured by the phantasmagoric spirits earlier were left in the area. When they saw Hu Xiao returning yet again, their faces immediately warped in fear as they cowered backward.

Paying no heed to the looks on their faces, Zhao Ya asked, “Where did the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies go?”

“He has already left with Conferred God King Ao Feng. We aren’t too sure where they are...”

This was the response that the most senior God King of the group gave.

It was not that they were intentionally concealing the truth to protect Zhang Xuan, but the conversation about the Monarch Spirit Grass earlier had been held privately to avoid the information from leaking. As a result, the God Kings had no idea where they were heading.

Hu Xiao frowned.

He did not think that they would leave so quickly, and he said in frustration, “It hasn’t been long, so I reckon they shouldn’t have gotten far yet...”

But before he could finish his words, Zhao Ya’s body suddenly began trembling as she seemed to have noticed something. She immediately turned to the God Kings and anxiously asked, “Do you know what the name of the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies is?”

“I’m not too sure... However, I think he goes by the surname of Zhang. There’s a lady in the group that he’s close to that addresses him as ‘Zhang shi’,” a God King replied.

Facing two Conferred God Kings who could dictate their fate, there was no one who would dare lie to their face out of fear of offending them.

“Zhang...”

There was a look of cognizance on Zhao Ya’s face as she heaved a sigh of relief. She quickly calmed her agitated emotions before turning to face Hu Xiao once more. “Tell me everything that happened between you and the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies earlier!”

“Ah?”

Not expecting Zhao Ya to suddenly ask him about the details of the incident instead of pursuing the young man, Hu Xiao scrunched his face awkwardly

He knew that he was at fault for this matter for attempting to steal from the group, so he had no idea how he should explain the situation.

Seeing that Hu Xiao was reluctant to talk, Zhao Ya pointed to one of the God Kings and said, “You, recount what happened earlier to me.”

“Yes!”

Not daring to offend Zhao Ya, the God King immediately explained everything that had happened in detail.

“Is everything he has said the truth?” Zhao Ya turned to look at Hu Xiao without the slightest expression on her face.

“T-this... It’s all the truth! There are no rules here in the Flooding Sea, and it’s survival of the fittest. I’m also doing all of this for our Sky of Adamant Gold...” Hu Xiao quickly explained, but before he could finish his words, a palm had already landed on his cheek.

Peng!

His body tumbled across the land before crashing heavily into a boulder, causing his head to spin.

“Conferred God King Zhao Ya, what do you mean by this? If you have any problems with me, we can always talk it out...”

Hu Xiao was on the verge of going crazy.

Was this young lady sick in the head? Why would she hit him before he could finish his words?

No matter how you look at it, we are from the same team, right? Even if I have done wrong by snatching from those weaker than me, you don’t have to slap me like that, right?

Peng peng peng!

Paying no heed to Hu Xiao’s protests, Zhao Ya sent fist after fist toward Hu Xiao’s abdomen. Hu Xiao, of course, tried to retaliate, but he was completely powerless before Zhao Ya’s overwhelming strength.

In the blink of an eye, he had already sustained severe injuries, and blood was pouring out from all over.

While coughing out blood, tears streamed down Hu Xiao’s cheeks...

Didn’t you mention earlier that you wouldn’t allow anyone to touch a single strand of my hair?

Yet, the one who attacked me in the end is none other than you!

The God Kings around the area also looked at one another in confusion. They could not understand the sudden friendly fire from the young lady.

They had thought that Hu Xiao had brought his backup over for vengeance, and their treasures would be taken away from them yet again.

But before they knew it, his backup started pummeling him instead.

Furthermore, her blows were decisive and vicious, showing that she had no plans of showing mercy at all.

Can anyone tell me what's going on here?

Who am I? What am I? Where am I?

Everyone was flabbergasted by the turn of events.

Feeling utterly indignant by the sudden pummeling, Hu Xiao bellowed, "I am no match for you, so I have no choice but to accept what you do to me. However, the God Monarch has instructed you to take care of everyone from the Sky of Adamant Gold, so at the very least, shouldn't you give me a reason for your actions?"

This is too much!

I called you here to exact vengeance for me, not to beat me up!

"I should have long thought of it when I heard about the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies," Zhao Ya muttered to herself before she directed a cold gaze toward Hu Xiao. "That person whom you want to take vengeance on... is my teacher!"

Other than her teacher, who else could possibly cause such a huge commotion in the world?

She had been thinking that she could finally surpass her teacher and be of some use to him after spending so many years cultivating in the Spacetime Mirror, but it seemed like she was still underestimating the capabilities of her teacher.

In the end, her teacher was still as monstrously fast as before!

In just one short month, he had already risen to become the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies.

Even Zhao Ya could not help but find this unbelievable.



“Your teacher?” Hu Xiao’s body shuddered as he spurted a mouthful of blood. “Conferred God King Zhao Ya, what you mean is that... he has once guided you?”

“The reason I was able to grow so fast was due to the strong foundation that my teacher built for me. Without my teacher, I wouldn’t be who I am today,” Zhao Ya replied. And there wouldn’t be Wang Ying, Zheng Yang, Liu Yang, Yuan Tao, Lu Chong, Wei Ruyan, Zhang Jiuxiao, Kong Shiyao, Dan Xiaotian, or Bai Ruanqing.”

“Wait a moment. Aren’t they the Conferred God Kings of the other God Monarchs? What relationship do they have with the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies?” Hu Xiao was a little dazed.

It was not that he could not understand what Zhao Ya was saying, but it was simply so unbelievable that he was having trouble wrapping his mind around such an idea.

“We are all his disciples!” Zhao Ya replied.

“You are... all his disciples? B-but... you are all the strongest Conferred God Kings in the Nine Skies! If you are all his disciples, then...” Hu Xiao exclaimed in a fluster.

It was at this instant that he finally understood why the other party had given him a beating.

It was fortunate that he had only told Zhao Ya that he had attempted to steal their teacher’s possessions. If his other disciples learned of the matter as well, he would really be a goner...

What the heck was this?

Even though everyone had been saying that the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies could very well become the next Heaven Subjugation Monarch, Hu Xiao himself did not think that the possibility was too likely. After all, the Nine God Monarchs would not allow the rise of yet another Heaven Subjugation Monarch to threaten their position.

With the new batch of Conferred God Kings that the God Monarchs had groomed, he believed that they would be able to stop the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies with ease.

But this...

This effectively meant that the twelve strongest experts within the Flooding Sea at this very moment were the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies and his eleven disciples! They were practically an untouchable existence there!

“The rest of you should have heard what we said. Tell me where the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies has gone.”

Zhao Ya turned to the rest of the God Kings.

A God King hesitated for a moment before pointing in a direction. “They headed in that direction!”

“Thanks.”

Zhao Ya grabbed the tail of tiger-form Hu Xiao and swiftly flitted in the direction pointed out to her.

Finally, she was going to meet her teacher once more...

The more she thought about it, the more agitated she became.

On the other hand, Hu Xiao, who was hanging in midair by his tail, suddenly realized that a worse fate was awaiting him. The earlier beating was just a teaser, and the true show would begin once they arrived before the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies.

Otherwise, why would Zhao Ya drag him along with her?

If only I'd known this would happen... I would have obediently gone around searching for treasures. Not only did I fail to exact my vengeance, I'm even going to be beaten up real bad...

To think that I was even relieved for a moment when I heard God Monarch Fumeng instructing her to take care of us...

Is it too late to retract my words? I don't really want her to take care of me anymore...

# 2252 Monarch Spirit Grass

“Are you sure that the Monarch Spirit Grass is here?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

The dimension rift before his eyes was more frightening than anything he had seen before. Under the frightening spatial turbulence everything, everything that entered it was broken down into a seven-colored aurora.

Even Conferred God Kings would not be able to enter such an area easily. Given that the Monarch Spirit Grass was just another medicinal herb, was it really possible for it to survive in such conditions?

“I am certain of it!” Ao Feng nodded. “This is the fourth time that the Flood of Spiritual Energy has occurred, and this is the fourth time I have come here. I have been exploring the area all this while, so I am still quite familiar with the terrain here. That is also why I was able to bring people straight to the Condensed Earth Essence.”

Zhang Xuan nodded.

He had been wondering how Ao Feng was able to figure out the location of the Condensed Earth Essence so quickly even though there were so many phantasmagoric spirits guarding the area. It turned out that he had been there a few times, just that he had not been strong enough to claim it the last few times.

“The dimension rift wasn’t that terrifying the last few times I was here. Back then, I was still able to see through the shattered space to see what is within, but it seems like the space has further destabilized over time,” Ao Feng remarked with a frown.

“Destabilized over time?”

“Yes. The dimension rift wasn’t this big or violent back then, and I was able to enter it the last few times I was here, but I couldn’t obtain the Monarch Spirit Grass. I didn’t think that it

would become like this in the last decade,” Ao Feng explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded as he examined the dimension rift contemplatively.

He had not been there ten years ago, so he could not tell what the situation was. However, with the current state of the dimension rift, it would not be too easy for him to enter it even with his current cultivation.

He turned his gaze over to Luo Qiqi and asked, “Is it possible for you to stabilize the space in there?”

As a manifestation of the Dimension Silencer, Luo Qiqi’s ability to manipulate space far surpassed that of any Conferred God King. If anyone could do it, it would probably be her.

“I think so, but I won’t be able to sustain it for too long,” Luo Qiqi replied.

“How long?”

“Probably... around twenty breaths at the very most!”

“That’s enough,” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile. “I’ll try to get the Monarch Spirit Grass within twenty breaths.”

“Alright then,” Luo Qiqi replied.

She walked up to the dimension rift, and her body morphed into a round orb.

Weng!

A light buzzing echoed from the orb, and the spatial turbulence within the dimension rift immediately calmed down. Even the seven-colored aurora froze in space, not moving in the least.

“This...” Ao Feng blinked in bewilderment.

All this while, he had thought that the young lady was an ordinary God King serving the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, but who could have known that she was a powerhouse herself!

Despite being a Conferred God King himself, Ao Feng himself was unable to achieve such a feat!

In other words, if he battled the young lady, even with the disparity in their cultivation, he still would not be a match for her.

As expected of the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, even the people around him could not be underestimated!

Hu!

As soon as Luo Qiqi stabilized the space inside the dimension rift, Zhang Xuan leaped right into it.

Flitting through the still seven-colored aurora, Zhang Xuan quickly observed his surroundings.

Initially, he had thought that the dimension rift was just yet another hazard of nature that occurred on this piece of land, but after entering it, he realized that he was underestimating the nature of the dimension rift. If left alone, it would eventually swallow this land whole.

“It’s that same energy from before...” Zhang Xuan frowned as he ventured deeper in.

He could sense terrifyingly powerful energy flowing in the depths of the dimension rift, hastening its growth, and this energy was identical to the gray currents he had seen in the depths of the mountain stream and in the abyss beneath Spirit Origin Royal City.

Zhang Xuan quickly wrapped his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi around his body before proceeding further.

Soon, amid the cracks of darkness, he saw three stalks of Monarch Spirit Grass floating in midair, seemingly on the verge of being devoured by the darkness.

Fragments of broken space that flowed close to the Monarch Spirit Grass would be devoured by it, and the leaves would grow even lusher.

Legend has it that the Monarch Spirit Grass thrives through absorbing the fragments of space, resulting in it harnessing

powerful spatial powers. It seems like the rumors are true, Zhang Xuan thought grimly.

Unlike other medicinal herbs, the Monarch Spirit Grass did not grow on spiritual energy but fragments of space, making it quite a unique existence.

I feel like someone intentionally planted the Monarch Spirit Grass here in order to stabilize this dimension rift.

This dimension rift was caused by the gray energy that could neutralize even the Heaven's Path zhenqi, so it was inevitable that it would continue to expand exponentially as it devoured the energy in the surroundings.

Based on what he had heard from Ao Feng, this dimension rift had existed for forty years, but if that was really the case, it should have long swallowed the entire Flooding Sea. It should not have been as small as it appeared.

It was the Monarch Spirit Grass that had prevented that tragedy from happening.

Its roots were tying the dimension rift together, limiting its expansion. On top of that, through absorbing the fragmented space, it was preventing the fragmented space from destabilizing the surrounding space. This had caused the expansion of the dimension rift to slow considerably.

It seemed too much of a coincidence that the Monarch Spirit Grass would appear where it was needed.

But if he said that someone had intentionally planted it here, who could it be? God Monarchs could not enter the Flooding Sea, and Conferred God Kings were unable to pull it off.

Geji! Geji!

While Zhang Xuan was still in thought, he could feel the frozen space around him beginning to crack. It seemed like Luo Qiqi was reaching her limits.

I can't waste any more time here...

Luo Qiqi could only last twenty breaths in total, and half of the time had already passed. He needed to make his decision quick.

His main goal there was to take the three stalks of Monarch Spirit Grass away, but if he did that, he would risk destabilizing this dimension rift, which had barely been kept under control.

There could be adverse consequences if he did so. It might devour the whole Flooding Sea whole, and it might even result in the dimension fissure above the Flooding Sea expanding further, hastening the doom of the Firmament!

But if he left it there...

He could tell that the Monarch Spirit Grass could no longer hinder the dimension rift anymore. This was also why Ao Feng was surprised by how much it had grown over the past decade.

Most likely, it would only continue working for one or two months more before all hell broke loose.

This might very well be the last Flood of Spiritual Energy...

When he heard that the Flood of Spiritual Energy occurred once every decade, he had assumed that it would continue that way and provide the Firmament with resources every now and then.

But he was clearly underestimating the severity of the problem.

The Flood of Spiritual Energy was an aberrant event, and this was proven by the instability of the Flooding Sea. It was only a matter of time before this temporary stopgap measure fell apart.

By then, not only would the Flood of Spiritual Energy come to a halt, the collapse of the Flooding Sea might even hasten the destruction!

That would explain Ruoxin and Kong shi's anxiety in completing the War of the Heavens...

It was only after coming into contact with all of this himself that he realized just how urgent the situation was. His previous thoughts had really been too shallow.

The heavens were far more complex than he had thought. The crisis would not disappear just because he kept delaying the inevitable. Eventually, when the Firmament fell to ruin, he would be affected as well.

In other words, regardless of whether he decided to join the War of the Heavens or not, he was destined not to be able to live a peaceful life. If all the fragments of the heavens were put together, at the very least, there would still be a sliver of hope for everyone.



# 2253 Someone Is Faster Than Us!

“Well, it’ll be fine as long as you can last for another month or two,” Zhang Xuan muttered.

Without picking the Monarch Spirit Grass, he turned around, returned to where the Dimension Silencer was floating, and said, “Let’s go.”

“I can still hold on. Quick, go pick the Monarch Spirit Grass first,” Luo Qiqi said anxiously.

Their goal there was to claim the Monarch Spirit Grass for themselves, so why was Zhang Xuan not picking it?

“There’s no need for that,” Zhang Xuan replied as he grabbed the orb floating in the air and pulled her out of the dimension rift. Then, the space behind shattered, and a seven-colored aurora burst forth.

“Why?” Luo Qiqi did not understand the reason behind Zhang Xuan’s actions.

“There are plenty of things I can use to advance my cultivation, but there’s only one Firmament,” Zhang Xuan said.

It would have been good if he could obtain the Monarch Spirit Grass, but it was not a necessity for him.

There were other medicinal herbs he could rely on for a breakthrough to God Monarch. There was no need for him to sacrifice the Flooding Sea and the Firmament for that.

As someone who had only arrived in the Firmament a month ago, he did not have any deep feelings for the Firmament. He also was not as noble as Kong shi, who harbored great compassion for the entire world.

However, at least as a human being, he could not bear to watch as an entire world was torn apart, and countless people lost

their lives.

He was starting to understand how Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin felt.

Carrying heavy responsibilities on their shoulders, their hands were tied. They did not have the freedom to do as they pleased.

“But where else can we find a medicinal herb like the Monarch Spirit Grass?” Luo Qiqi asked worriedly. “You have to advance your cultivation as quickly as possible.”

She was not a person of many words, but she was extremely perceptive of her surroundings.

Despite not knowing about the War of the Heavens, she could tell that the young man was in a rush. He had always been keen to raise his cultivation, but he seemed to be more anxious than ever to do so.

This made her realize that he was facing some compelling circumstances.

But as the young man never spoke about it, she had chosen not to ask. She decided to simply do whatever she could to help him in his time of need.

“It’s fine. We’ll eventually find a way out,” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile as he took out a pinnacle God Essence Pill from Hu Xiao’s storage ring and infused it with his Pathos of Heaven zhenqi before passing it over to Luo Qiqi.

The young lady had exerted herself beyond her limits in order to stabilize the dimension rift earlier, causing her to sustain some internal damage.

“I still know of a few places where there are medicinal herbs that could help a God Monarch advance their cultivation. I can lead you there,” Ao Feng offered.

Zhang Xuan nodded in agreement.

As someone who had participated in the previous three Floods of Spiritual Energy, even though the treasures he had acquired thus far paled far in comparison to what Kong shi’s direct

disciples had collected, he would still have been able to uncover quite a bit of treasure.

It would indeed be much more convenient for them with Ao Feng leading the way.

It did not take long before they arrived before another area where an invaluable treasure was located.

“The Midnight Flower. It’s a flower that only blossoms on the midnight of a full moon. It has to absorb the essence of the moon for thousands of years before it finally reaches maturity... Even though the conditions in the Flooding Sea are a little peculiar, the Midnight Flower only blossoms once every decade in here. The last time I was here, I saw one in the depths of the valley over there,” Ao Feng said as he pointed in a certain direction.

Glancing over, Zhang Xuan saw a lush mountain valley filled with innumerable God King realm phantasmagoric spirits.

“I’ll head in to take a look!”

Zhang Xuan activated the disguise amulet before flitting into the valley. A moment later, however, he returned with a frown. “Someone has already taken it.”

He could tell that there was indeed a Midnight Flower growing in there, but someone had beaten him to it.

“Did someone manage to gather a group to procure the Midnight Flower?” Ao Feng was a little taken aback.

The Midnight Flower, just like the Condensed Earth Essence, was protected by the phantasmagoric spirits, making it nigh impossible for a person to collect the Midnight Flower by themselves. Even in a group, the chances of success were not too high.

So, it was a little hard to believe that someone would actually be able to claim it. Did a group of Conferred God Kings work together for it or something?

After all, not everyone possessed unfathomable strength like the young man before him.

“It doesn’t seem so. Based on the trail, it’s an individual who snuck into the area and discreetly took the Midnight Flower away with him. It looks like the phantasmagoric spirits haven’t even realized that it’s missing,” Zhang Xuan replied.

He would have noticed if there were any marks of battle in the vicinity, but there was no such thing. Clearly, the person had, like him, discreetly snuck to where the Midnight Flower was and harvested it before leaving without kicking up a fuss.

The reason Zhang Xuan was able to do it was because he had the disguise amulet with him. How did the other party manage it?

“Ah... Let’s proceed to the next location then. I know a place that has Desolate Iron. This material can be used to forge God Monarch-tier artifacts. It’s buried in the underground lava not too far from here...”

Since the Midnight Flower had been taken, there was no reason for them to remain there.

“Let’s head over!” Zhang Xuan nodded.

While he already had a weapon in hand, he could still take the Desolate Iron and trade it for cultivation resources with the other God Monarchs.

Swiftly flitting ahead, the trio took roughly ten breaths to get to the lava pool.

Zhang Xuan wrapped his body in a layer of zhenqi to protect himself before diving into the lava. Not too long later, he returned with a frustrated look on his face. “The Desolate Iron you spoke about has been taken away as well.”

“That’s impossible!” Ao Feng shook his head in disbelief.

The temperature in the lava before them was so great that even God King realm artifacts would melt in an instant in it. Even someone of Ao Feng’s strength would not dare enter it recklessly. Just who in the world could enter the lava and take the Desolate Iron discreetly?

“What other treasures do you know of?”

Knowing their time was limited, Zhang Xuan quickly pressed on.

“I know there’s a location that has Otherworldly Meteorite. Back then, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch and his three Conferred God Kings tried to claim it, but they weren’t able to take it away with them. The last time I was there, it was still around,” Ao Feng said.

He was starting to lose confidence in himself after those two failures.

“Take me there,” Zhang Xuan instructed.

The three of them continued rushing forward, and this time, their destination was an ice mountain. It emanated a chilling frost that would freeze even a God King’s zhenqi.

“I don’t think that anyone will have come here,” Luo Qiqi said.

The frost in the area was to the extent that it was hard for even her to enter the area, let alone the other Conferred God Kings.

“You should wait here for the time being. I’ll head in to look,” Zhang Xuan said.

Driving the Pathos of Heaven, he swiftly acclimatized himself to the coldness before heading in.

Around ten minutes later, he returned with a bitter smile on his face. “We came too late again...”

The ice mountain had only gotten colder the deeper one ventured, such that it was difficult for Zhang Xuan to endure the chill. Yet, he was unable to find the Otherworldly Meteorite that Ao Feng had mentioned. Based on the marks in the vicinity, it seemed like someone else had beaten them to it.

They had gone to three places thus far, but the items had already been taken by someone else. It had only been a few hours since the Flood of Spiritual Energy started, but it felt like the entire area had already been swept clean.

Just who in the world was so capable as to obtain everything so quickly?

Perplexed, Zhang Xuan turned to Ao Feng and asked, “Do you know if there has been a particularly formidable Conferred God King who has appeared in the Firmament in the past decade?”

## 2254 Epitome Monarch Pill

Be it the Midnight Flower, Desolate Iron, or Otherworldly Meteorite, the environment that they lived in was not one where most Conferred God Kings would have been able to enter easily. Otherwise, Ao Feng would have already claimed them for himself.

Despite that, there was still someone who had consistently beaten them to it.

Just how formidable was their rival?

Ao Feng pondered for a moment before replying. “Due to the rise of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, all of the God Monarchs have begun paying close attention to the Flood of Spiritual Energy. For it, they devoted a great deal of resources in order to nurture a group of talented cultivators.

“Based on what I have heard, our Sky of Cloud Dragon has groomed three of such cultivators. Through using the Spacetime Mirror to warp temporal laws, all three of them have managed to receive their conferment from the Cloud Dragon Monarch before the Flood of Spiritual Energy... I haven’t met them yet, but it seems like their strength far surpasses that of other Conferred God Kings.”

“Oh?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

Could it be that the Nine God Monarchs knew that this would likely be the last Flood of Spiritual Energy, so they were going all out to ensure their survival?

With a perplexed look on his face, he asked, “Do you know the names of the three Conferred God Kings?”

“Their names are Kong Shiyao, Liu Yang... and I think there is one more called... Zhang Jiuxiao,” Ao Feng replied.

“It’s them?” Zhang Xuan was slightly surprised.

He had been very worried about his disciples ever since they were taken away by the God Monarchs. He was a little

relieved after hearing that Wang Ying and Wei Ruyan were doing fine in the Sky of Linglong, but based on what he was hearing, it seemed like most of them had successfully become Conferred God Kings.

That was really a load off his chest.

But speaking of which, was their cultivation not advancing a little too fast?

It was fortunate that he had reached the same level, or else how embarrassing would it be if he was no match for them when they finally met each other again?

“Indeed. It isn’t just the Sky of Cloud Dragon that has done so. I heard that a powerful expert going by the name of Zhao Ya from the Sky of Adamant Gold was conferred not too long ago, and her unique constitution allows her to easily cripple any opponent.

“Over in the Sky of Blazing Sun, there is a spear expert known as Zheng Yang whose sharp and swift pierces can easily overcome any enemy.

“Demon Monarch Qiankun seems to have taken in a disciple named Lu Chong not too long ago, and he boasts supreme soul arts that are second only to the God Monarchs’.

“The Sky of Linglong has taken in two cultivators known as Wei Ruyan and Wang Ying, and one of them is a fearsome user of poison whereas the other is known to be able to breathe life into inanimate beings.

“As for the Sky of Acheron, the Acheron God Monarch has personally guided three cultivators named Yuan Tao, Dan Xiaotian, and Bai Ruanqing, and they have managed to become Conferred God Kings as well.

“Even though all of them have only risen to prominence recently, their strength is not to be underestimated. In terms of fighting prowess, they are more than a match for veteran Conferred God Kings like me!”

Ao Feng was completely oblivious to the peculiar expression on Zhang Xuan’s face as he swiftly went through the situation in the Firmament. Then, with a grim look on his face, he said,



“Do you think that they are the ones who have taken the treasure?”

“This...” Zhang Xuan sighed deeply.

From the looks of things, that was likely the case.

He did not have a good gauge of how powerful the other Conferred God Kings were, but if it was his direct disciples, given the simplified Heaven’s Path Divine Art that they cultivated and the strong foundation they had built up over the years, there was no doubt that their fighting prowess would be top-notch.

They might even be able to defeat Kong shi’s direct disciples!

It was not that Zhang Xuan’s ability as a teacher was above Kong shi’s, but the fragments of heavens that they possessed were simply different from one another.

Heavens’ Order was an ability that allowed one to manipulate the building blocks of the world and bring one more time to cultivate. On the other hand, Heavens’ Imperfections was an ability that allowed one to see through flaws and correct them.

Without a doubt, the latter was far more powerful when it came to building up a cultivator’s foundation.

“The eleven of them are incredibly powerful. If it’s just one or two of them, you might still be able to subdue them. However, if they team up with one another, I’m afraid that even you will face trouble taking those treasures away from them. Elder, even though you are the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, I advise you not to go head-on against them,” Ao Feng said worriedly.

He had witnessed the strength of the young man when he beat Hu Xiao easily earlier, but those eleven were no pushovers. With the artifacts that the God Monarchs had bestowed to them, if they put their strength together, they would form a terrifying force indeed.

That was also why the direct disciples of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch had been unrivaled in the Flooding Sea all this while. Not only were they strong individually, more importantly, their teamwork and coordination were also

superb. Unless a God Monarch intervened, there was no one in the world who could subdue them.

“Go head-on against them?” Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan chuckled softly beneath his breath before replying, “Rest assured, that won’t happen.”

With a wave of his hand, he looked at Ao Feng and asked, “Other than those three, are there any formidable treasures in the Flooding Sea that you know of?”

Whether those treasures had been taken by his disciples or someone else, he had no intention of snatching them. Given so, it was meaningless to think too deeply into this matter.

The Flooding Sea was extremely large, such that it would take quite a bit of time if they had to go around searching the area. It would be much more efficient to follow the wisdom of those who had been there before.

In his view, even though Ao Feng’s cultivation was so-so, the knowledge he had accrued in the Flooding Sea was invaluable.

Ao Feng contemplated for a moment before speaking carefully, “There’s one last treasure I can think of... It is the most incredible treasure I have seen in my entire life. If a God Monarch obtains it, they will be able to advance their cultivation to a higher level... However, no one has been able to obtain it yet, so it has remained there for decades.”

“A treasure that could allow a God Monarch to advance their cultivation to a higher level? What is it?” Zhang Xuan asked.

If such a treasure really existed, it was something that would make countless experts go frenzied over it.

A glint flashed across Ao Feng’s eyes as he replied, “It’s the Epitome Monarch Pill!”

“Epitome Monarch Pill?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had not seen this name in any book records he had read before, but it clearly was not a medicinal herb.

“It’s a God Monarch realm pill,” Ao Feng replied.

“Pill? Why would there be a pill here?” Zhang Xuan frowned in incomprehension.

The Flooding Sea was a chaotic place where no one lived. Why would there be a pill there, let alone a God Monarch realm pill?

“Rumor has it that before the Heaven Subjugation Monarch became a God Monarch, he entered the Flooding Sea, and with his transcendental pill forging skills, he forged the Epitome Monarch Pill. Back then, he managed to forge two of them. He ate one of them and successfully became a God Monarch. However, as a result of his breakthrough, a cultivation ordeal was summoned, and the already unstable Flooding Sea became even more so. In the midst of the chaos, the second pill got away...

“After that incident, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch instructed his direct disciples to find the second pill, but none of them have been able to do it to date. As a result, it has remained here over the years. While it doesn’t possess the strength of a real God Monarch, there is no doubt that it has already far surpassed the level of Conferred God Kings,” Ao Feng explained.

“It was forged by the Heaven Subjugation Monarch?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

If there was someone in the world who could forge a God Monarch realm pill despite not being a God Monarch, it could only be the talented Kong shi.

Since the Epitome Monarch Pill can help one become a God Monarch, if I can get my hands on it, won’t I be able to successfully make a breakthrough? Zhang Xuan thought as he clenched his fists tightly together.

## 2255 Taming the Comets

“Where is the Epitome Monarch Pill then?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“To be frank, I’m not too sure where it is. I have only seen it once throughout the past Floods of Spiritual Energy, and I nearly lost my life to it back then,” Ao Feng said.

“You don’t know?”

“The pill possesses sentience, and it is able to transmogrify into a human. It’s exceptionally skilled in concealing itself and assaulting those coming after it, making it a difficult opponent to deal with. In the previous Flood of Spiritual Energy, it killed Conferred God King Ao Ye of our Sky of Cloud Dragon.” Ao Feng shook his head.

Even in this land filled with all sorts of danger, what Ao Feng feared the most was still the Epitome Monarch Pill.

Morphed into a pill, it could hide in the narrowest of spaces, not emanating the slightest aura at all. It was like the perfect assassin that could silently snipe away the lives of the cultivators in the Flooding Sea one after another.

Just recalling what happened back then made shivers run down his spine.

If not for the disciples of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch passing by just at that moment, he would have already been a goner!

“Where did you meet it last time?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“I met it at the Lake of Comets!”

The Lake of Comets was yet another dangerous land in the Flooding Sea. There were all sorts of rocks flying randomly in all directions, intersecting one another, forming something reminiscent of a massive formation.

If not to seek treasures in there, even the strongest of Conferred God King would do well to stay away from it.

“Let’s head over there,” Zhang Xuan said.

After receiving the coordinates from Ao Feng, he quickly tore open a spatial passageway.

The first thing that came into their sight after walking out of the spatial passageway was a massive lake that rose all the way into the sky. There were countless comets flying in the area, emanating a brilliant glow.

From time to time, these comets would collide into one another with a resounding explosion, and with a series of shockwaves, the surrounding space would collapse into a black dimension rift.

“What’s truly frightening in the Lake of Comets is not the comets themselves nor their collision. It is the everchanging gravity within that space,” Ao Feng explained grimly. “Those comets are unbelievably heavy despite their relatively smaller size, and due to their random movements, the gravitational field within the area changes chaotically!”

Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had experienced an abrupt change in the gravitational field back at the Azure Bridge. Back then, it had just been a swift ninety-degree change in his center of gravity, but it had still left him disorientated for a brief moment.

In the Lake of Comets, however, there were all sorts of comets flying in all directions, like a series of ping pong balls flying all around an enclosed space.

If the gravitational field within the area was constantly changing along with the movements of the comets, it would take him a long time to adapt to this new environment. By then, the Flood of Spiritual Energy might have already ended.

“I’ll have a go.”

Taking in a deep breath, Zhang Xuan extended his Spiritual Perception to perceive the gravitational field within the area, but barely a moment later, his face started to turn ghastly pale.

He felt as if he had been thrown into a washing machine and tossed around the place like a rag.

Just as he had imagined, the gravity affected not only one's physical body but one's soul as well. One would have to swiftly adapt to the constant changes in order to be able to maneuver around the area properly.

Luo Qiqi took out a sword and tossed it in. The next moment, it began flying randomly in all directions, as if a fly buzzing randomly around the area.

Peng!

After moving randomly for a moment, under the relentless pull of gravity from all directions, the sword spirit finally dissipated, and the sword itself disintegrated.

The three of them looked at one another with widened eyes.

The sheer pressure from the gravitational force was actually enough to destroy a high-tier Celestial God artifact so easily. Just the thought of it sent shivers down their spine.

"How did you enter the area back then?" Luo Qiqi asked.

"Actually, I never entered the area. I was attacked while I was outside," Ao Feng replied with a reddened face.

That explained it.

Just looking at this area was enough to leave him with goosebumps all over. It was unimaginable that someone of Ao Feng's prowess would be able to enter and leave such a place safely.

"I'll head in to take a swift look. Wait outside and don't move recklessly," Zhang Xuan said.

He channeled his Sword Intent around his body before walking right into the lake.

Tzzz!

As soon as he entered the area, he felt a powerful pull tugging at his body, trying him to drag him somewhere.

To resist the pull of gravity, Zhang Xuan exerted the strength of his physical body, causing his muscles to bulge out.

The gravitational field around him continued changing, but by stiffening his body, he was able to remain rooted to the spot. He waited for a moment to allow himself to become accustomed to the change in gravity before taking a step forward.

Sou sou!

Two comets were drawn to each other by each other's gravitational pull, and they surged rapidly toward him.

Zhang Xuan quickly drew his sword and slashed at the two comets.

The two comets broke apart simultaneously, and a stream of smoke flowed out from them.

Zhang Xuan's eyes lit up. These comets are incredibly tough... are good stuff!

Given that a high-tier Celestial God sword had been destroyed so easily by the gravitational pull, he had been wondering how these comets were still able to remain intact in such an environment. As it turned out, the resilience of these comets had already reached a level comparable to God King realm artifacts.

What a pity that they can't be forged into weapons... However, if I could just collect these comets, it would be a sight to behold once I toss them toward my enemies...

Through his Eye of Insight, he could tell that these comets could not be forged into weapons. Nevertheless, they would still make pretty decent weapons even if he tossed them as they were at his enemies.

The only problem was that...

These comets were moving way too fast for him to collect!

If I store them into my storage ring while they are moving, it will surely puncture a hole in my storage ring and shatter the space within.

Due to the pull of gravity, the comets were both fast and forceful. As such, he could not simply collect them into his storage ring in their current state.

He would have to first find a way to slow them down, but it was beyond his means to do so at the moment!

Under the chaotic pull of gravity, even remaining on the spot was difficult enough for him. It would be nigh impossible for him to stop a comet in his current state.

Even though these comets can't be forged into weapons, if I think of them as my bricks, I guess they could kind of be considered as weapons already... If so, is it possible for me to enchant them?

His bricks were also good for pretty much nothing except for their exceptional resilience, which was similar to the comets. If his bricks could be enchanted, there was no reason these comets could not be enchanted.

Once he enchanted them, he should be able to make them slowly come to a halt before placing them in his storage ring.

I should give it a try!

So, Zhang Xuan gave himself in to the gravitational pull and began flying toward one of the comets. As soon as he arrived close to one, he reached out to touch the comet.

...

Outside the Lake of Comets...

"There are so many comets in there, and the gravitational field is a huge mess. Will Elder Zhang be fine?" Ao Feng asked worriedly.

"I'm not sure. The forces inside the Lake of Comets are so chaotic that even I would have trouble freezing the space in there. I'm a little worried about Zhang shi as well," Luo Qiqi replied fretfully.

Dodging those fast-moving comets was already difficult in itself, and the constantly changing gravitational field only made things worse. One would have to be incredibly lucky to survive there!

In terms of danger, it was several times worse than facing the phantasmagoric spirits.



The fact that even Luo Qiqi, a master of manipulating space, was unable to move freely in such a region showed just how dangerous the Lake of Comets was.

“It’s too dangerous. I wouldn’t even last ten seconds in there! Should we call Elder Zhang to pull back...” Ao Feng asked.

But before he could finish his words, his face suddenly froze.

He had just witnessed the impossible.

Deep in the Lake of Comets, a young man was standing calmly on the spot, and several comets were circling neatly around him in single file. From time to time, these comets would leap up a little, as if trying to act cute. They looked no different from a bunch of well-trained performance dogs.

# 2256 The Epitome Monarch Pill Appears!

Ao Feng suddenly felt his mind blanking out entirely, reaching a state of absolute emptiness. So, this was what that would happen when the string of rationality in one's head finally snapped.

Those comets flying around the area were supposed to harness boundless might, were they not?

Why would such a situation happen?

“It looks like... those comets have been enchanted and tamed...” Luo Qiqi also gulped in shock.

“Enchanted? But he only entered the Lake of Comets a short moment ago... I don't get it! How is this even possible?” Ao Feng's cheeks were twitching wildly, a reflection of the state of his brain.

God Kings possessed the ability to bestow spirit to objects, and he was able to do the same. However, he would need to spend a great deal of time and effort, possibly several months while draining him both mentally and physically, in order to do so...

Yet, the young man was able to enchant so many comets within like... two minutes? Three minutes?

Not to mention, he had even managed to tame all of them!

What was even more shocking was how lively the young man was despite all of that. It was as if what he had just done was no big deal and did not take a toll on him at all!

While the two of them were still in shock, the young man in the Lake of Comets leaped forward toward his next comet, and upon touching it, the trail of comets following him would increase by one. Just like that, the line of comets grew longer and longer...

In the blink of an eye, more than half of the comets in the lake were following Zhang Xuan.

“What is Elder Zhang doing by taming those comets?” Ao Feng muttered weakly.

Bruh, aren't you here to find the Epitome Monarch Pill?

What are you toying with those comets for then?

“I guess... he's trying to get the Epitome Monarch Pill to appear,” Luo Qiqi deduced.

“Ah!” Ao Feng exclaimed. “The Epitome Monarch Pill is able to morph into a pill and hide from the eyes of even the strongest experts. If it's hiding among the comets, biding its time to launch a sneak attack, it would be difficult for even someone as powerful as Elder Zhang to guard against it. So, by taming all the comets, he will be able to seal off the hiding spots of the Epitome Monarch Pill. It is a good plan! Why didn't I think of it beforehand?”

Once the surroundings had been cleaned up, there would be no place for the Epitome Monarch Pill to hide anymore. That would make it much easier for them to deal with it.

“He's the kind of person who is always able to find unique ways out of difficult predicaments,” Luo Qiqi said with a smile.

“Who dares ruin my home? You are asking to be killed!”

While those two were speaking, loud rumbling echoed in the air, and the entire Lake of Comets suddenly began shaking. Following that, a massive face suddenly appeared in midair.

“A God Monarch?” Luo Qiqi narrowed her eyes in shock.

She had seen Fairy Linglong using this ability before. It was an ability unique to the God Monarchs.

“That's the Epitome Monarch Pill! How could this be? Even though the Flooding Sea is rich in resources, it shouldn't have been that easy... It actually managed to make a breakthrough in its cultivation. Does that mean that it's a real God Monarch now?” Ao Feng mumbled in disbelief.

Luo Qiqi shook her head in incredulity as she asked, “But don’t God Monarchs have to govern a certain region or receive the Anima of Yearning from countless people in order to successfully ascend? How can a pill manage to do it?”

In order to become a full-fledged God Monarch, one had to be recognized by countless people to receive a boundless amount of Anima of Yearning to pull off the breakthrough.

For example, in order to become a real God Monarch, Kongshi had challenged the Nine God Monarchs one after another to receive the recognition from the people in the Firmament.

How could a mere pill that had not gone through anything at all possibly become a God Monarch?

Ao Feng pondered for a moment before replying. “It could be because we are in the Flooding Sea and not the Firmament.”

“Flooding Sea and not the Firmament?” Luo Qiqi pondered over those words for a moment before nodding in realization.

The Flooding Sea used to be from the Firmament, but it had torn away from it. As such, a different set of laws might apply there as opposed to the Firmament.

“Furthermore, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch made a breakthrough here before returning to the Firmament to challenge the Nine God Monarchs and receive the recognition of the Firmament,” Ao Feng said.

“It’s just that I find it a little weird. The gap between a Conferred God King and a God Monarch is humongous, such that in the entire history of the Firmament, the only one who’s managed to bridge the gap was the Heaven Subjugation Monarch. The Epitome Monarch Pill is ultimately just a pill, so how did it manage to do it?”

Such thoughts were shared by the young man standing in the middle of the Lake of Comets.

Even Zhang Xuan was unable to summon a massive face in the sky with his current prowess. One would have to possess a deep understanding of spatial laws to pull that off.

Could the Epitome Monarch Pill have succeeded in making a breakthrough?

A feat that countless cultivators had attempted and failed at was actually achieved by a mere pill.

“No, that’s not right. It’s the special environment of the Lake of Comets that allowed it to do so...”

Zhang Xuan spread his Spiritual Perception around the area, and soon, he realized the secret behind the massive face.

It was not that the Epitome Monarch Pill had managed to become a God Monarch. Rather, it had lived in the Lake of Comets for so long that it had gained full control over the area.

If the Lake of Comets was a dominion, the Epitome Monarch Pill would be its master. It could manipulate the spiritual energy within this space freely to form whatever it wanted to.

“You wish to kill me? The least you can do is reveal your main body. This mere will of yours doesn’t seem to have the strength to do so,” Zhang Xuan said before flicking his finger lightly.

Kacha!

The massive face in the sky shattered into pieces.

“You...”

It did not take long for yet another massive face to appear in the sky. It glared at Zhang Xuan furiously, but the young man simply shattered it easily with another flick of his finger before returning to taming the comets.

His main goal there was to find the Epitome Monarch Pill and make a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm with it. He did not intend to pull any punches in dealing with it.

Besides, based on what he had heard from Ao Feng, it appeared that the Epitome Monarch Pill had killed quite a few God Kings and Conferred God Kings over the past few decades.

Boom!

After the massive face had been shattered twice by Zhang Xuan, the space in the Lake of Comets began to distort, and a young man finally materialized. He shared the same appearance as the massive face, hairless and ferocious.

“You darned brat. I gave you a chance, didn’t I? You’re the one who pushed your luck!”

Huala!

Zhang Xuan immediately felt as if his body was bound by some force. The young man was manipulating the gravitational field in order to seal his movements.

At the same time, the young man dashed forward and launched palm thrust to crush Zhang Xuan.

“You aren’t a true God Monarch yet...” Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

While his fighting prowess far exceeded that of other Conferred God Kings, he could not yet deal with a real God Monarch.

Although the Epitome Monarch Pill had managed to become the master of the Lake of Comets, it was still some way off from becoming a God Monarch. As such, it was unable to fully tap into the energies of the Firmament or the Flooding Sea, thus limiting its strength.

In other words, the Epitome Monarch Pill was not a threat to Zhang Xuan.

“Go!” Zhang Xuan beckoned with a wave of his hand.

The comets that were following behind him immediately charged forth like a long, soaring dragon to crash right into the young man.

The sudden charge of so many enchanted comets created a massive compression in the space of the Lake of Comets, causing countless dimension rifts to appear in the area. The young man’s palm strike was nothing compared to the force coming from the charge of the comets, causing him to be overpowered right away.

“You...”

Just as Ao Feng thought, the Epitome Monarch Pill was initially hiding among the comets, and it was intending to secretly sneak up on Zhang Xuan to launch a surprise assault. But never in its wildest imagination could it have fathomed that someone would be able to tame all the comets so quickly and even use them against it.

It felt so infuriated that it could just blow up on the spot!

At the same time, it could not help but wonder in bewilderment...

Are all Conferred God Kings this frightening nowadays?

## 2257 A Legendary Treasure Surfaces

In a moment of fury, the young man raised his hands, and a spatial ripple swept into the surroundings. The comets that Zhang Xuan had not managed to tame yet suddenly changed direction and bolted right toward where Zhang Xuan was.

The abrupt increase in pressure from the incoming comets made Zhang Xuan feel as if his blood had frozen in place.

Even with his current physical body and soul cultivation, it would be impossible for him to withstand all those incoming comets. He could use the comets that he had tamed to defend against them, but it would undo all his hard work.

“Let’s see if the comets you control can withstand my sword...”

Taking a deep breath, Zhang Xuan drew the Crimson Heaven Sword.

He had not used this sword ever since his physical body, soul cultivation, and zhenqi cultivation had reached the Conferred God King realm. It was time for him to test out the limits of his fighting prowess once more.

He began channeling his zhenqi and Sword Intent into the Crimson Heaven Sword, and the sword released an excited cry reminiscent of the roar of a dragon upon receiving all this nourishment.

Hearing the sound from the Crimson Heaven Sword, Ao Feng felt his knees turning to jelly as cold sweat dripped from his head. “That’s the Eight Notes of Heavenly Dragon...”

Meanwhile, the roar made Zhang Xuan feel as if all the cells in his body had been revitalized, filling him with boundless energy.

“Go!”



With a deep bellow, Zhang Xuan executed the Pathos of Heaven 4-dan sword art, releasing a surge of sword qi reminiscent of a stream of white light.

It was a strike filled with indignation and yearning, but there was an unyielding spirit behind it all.

In an instant, the comets that were streaming toward Zhang Xuan were sliced in half, like cloth ripped apart. The halved comets ended up passing Zhang Xuan on each side.

However, the sword qi did not just stop there. It continued to surge ahead to strike the Epitome Monarch Pill.

The young man's face paled in the face of such a powerful sword art. He scrambled to the side to dodge the sword qi, but as if the sword qi had some sort of homing function, no matter how he tried to run around, he was unable to dodge it.

The wind batters unceasingly on the unwilling tree, a son seeks to be filial, but time slips through his fingers.

The conceptualization of the sword art carried a hint of helplessness. It was a feeling of standing against a force that could not be averted no matter how one tried to avoid it

It was a force of karma, and so, it could not be dodged.

“Damn it!”

The young man cursed as he raised his arms and faced the sword qi head on.

Boom!

The Lake of Comets wavered, and a massive dimension rift was torn open. The young man was knocked back several steps before he was able to regain his balance, and he gasped desperately for breath.

“He lost his arms?” Ao Feng bit his tongue in shock.

The Epitome Monarch Pill's arms had been severed by that one strike!

He was the strongest existence in the Flooding Sea! How could he have ended up being overpowered?

Was the Conferred God Kings of the Nine Skies not a little too frightening?

Luo Qiqi heaved a sigh of relief upon seeing that.

“Humph!” The Epitome Monarch Pill harrumphed.

His relaxed gaze turned grim as he realized that his opponent was stronger than expected. He directed the energy within his body toward his shoulders, and soon, a pair of new arms grew out.

In the first place, his human form was a transmogrification, and his arms and legs were nothing more than a manifestation of his medicinal energy. Even though he had lost quite a bit of energy from the severing of his arms, it was not an irrecoverable wound to him.

“As long as I have medicinal energy left within me, even if you sever all four of my limbs and my head, I still can recover without a hitch,” the young man sneered coldly. “Let me tell you, I have enough medicinal energy in me to do this more than a dozen times. I only hope that you have enough energy to execute that sword art of yours that many times, or else you will certainly be ripped to pieces...”

But before the Epitome Monarch Pill could finish his words, Zhang Xuan suddenly raised his hand, and the two severed limbs flew over to him. With a light tap, those two arms immediately morphed into a sesame-sized pill, and he swallowed it without any hesitation.

The Epitome Monarch Pill widened his eyes in disbelief.

You... We are in the midst of a life-and-death battle, yet you are actually eating my hands right before my eyes!

You are going overboard!

They might just have been arms, but that was still medicinal energy coming from a God Monarch realm pill. The medicinal energy was concentrated enough for God Monarchs to spend days trying to assimilate it, but the other party had swallowed it in the middle of a battle.

Was he not afraid of being stuffed to death?

With a livid face, the Epitome Monarch Pill raised his palm once more to strike Zhang Xuan.

Hu!

Yet another burst of sword qi shot forth, and the arms of the Epitome Monarch Pill fell off once again. Just like before, no matter how he tried to dodge it, the sword qi still struck its target.

“Hmm?”

The Epitome Monarch Pill channeled his energy to his shoulders once more to regrow his arms, but as soon as he raised his head after he was done, he saw the other party turning the severed arms into a pill and swallowing it again.

“You...” The Epitome Monarch Pill was really starting to lose his cool.

Are you a perverted psycho or something?

Are you going to continue severing my limbs and eating me till there is nothing left of me?

I am a God Monarch realm pill!

To make matters worse, the Epitome Monarch Pill realized that the zhenqi cultivation of his opponent, after devouring four limbs, had risen from Conferred God King realm primary stage to intermediate stage. If this went on, his opponent would only grow stronger and stronger...

This is supposed to be a proper battle, but all that's on your mind seems to be how you can slowly savor me in your mouth...

“Argh! You b\*stard! If I don't kill you today, my surname won't be Pill anymore!”

With a ferocious bellow, the Epitome Monarch Pill gathered all his strength in his palm to strike down on Zhang Xuan. But just as the blow was about to land, he narrowed his eyes and cursed, “The freak...”

This time, his arms and legs were severed by the other party's sword qi.

And just like before, the other party delightfully gathered his severed limbs and compressed them into a pill before swallowing it.

Boom!

His cultivation rose to Conferred God King realm advanced stage.

“You...”

The Epitome Monarch Pill felt goosebumps rising all over his body.

Years of being in the Flooding Sea had nourished him greatly, allowing him to store huge reserves of medicinal energy. However, losing his four limbs was still a huge blow.

With veins popping on his forehead, the Epitome Monarch Pill once again grew his limbs once more. This time, however, the aura that he emanated was far weaker than before.

“Run!”

Knowing that he was not a match for Zhang Xuan, the Epitome Monarch Pill immediately morphed back into his pill form before jolting a crack in the space. Then, he swiftly slipped into it.

“Hmm?”

Not expecting the Epitome Monarch Pill to run away so decisively as soon as it realized that it was unable to win, Zhang Xun swiftly swung his sword once more.

Huala!

A pair of arms and legs flew out of the dimension rift before it closed, but the Epitome Monarch Pill had already vanished without a trace.

“Tsk, he got away...” Zhang Xuan clicked his tongue in annoyance.

In the end, the Epitome Monarch Pill still had an advantage in the Lake of Comets as it was his home. There were some intricacies in the spatial structure there that Zhang Xuan was unfamiliar with, which the other party was able to make use

of. Furthermore, it was a fact that the Epitome Monarch Pill was stronger than him, so it would be difficult for Zhang Xuan to stop him from getting away.

Nevertheless, through assimilating the pair of arms and legs, Zhang Xuan's cultivation rose once more, and he successfully reached Conferred God King realm pinnacle.

He spent another hour taming all the comets before stowing all of them into his storage ring. Then, he returned to Ao Feng and Luo Qiqi's side.

“Elder Zhang, where should we head to next?”

Ao Feng had thought that it would be a brutal battle that would end in Zhang Xuan's defeat, but who could have known that he would be able to overpower the Epitome Monarch Pill so easily?

He was starting to feel like there was nothing in this world that could stop Zhang Xuan.

“Hmm, we'll head to...”

Just as Zhang Xuan was about to speak, the space around them suddenly jolted a little. Following that, a brilliant light harnessing energy that made even Conferred God Kings subconsciously tremble in fear burst out right ahead of them.

For an instant, the entire sky was blinded by its radiance.

“A legendary treasure has surfaced!”

This phenomenon immediately caught the attention of everyone in the Flooding Sea.

# 2258 The Retaliation of the Veteran Conferred God Kings

Such a powerful pulsation of energy that was not caused by a battle—that could only mean one thing. A legendary treasure had surfaced!

Judging from the energy that had been emanated, its value seemed to exceed even that of the Epitome Monarch Pill!

“Has anything like this happened in the previous Floods of Spiritual Energy?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Ao Feng, who was also dazed by the situation, shook his head in shock.

There were countless treasures lying in the Flooding Sea, but never had he seen any of them releasing such a frightening outburst of energy.

“Let’s head over to take a look!”

The three of them flitted ahead, and soon, they arrived at their destination.

The phenomenon had alarmed all the Conferred God Kings and God Kings that had entered the Flooding Sea, drawing them into the vicinity. Each and every one of them was staring at where the pulsation of the spiritual energy was the most violent with excited looks on their faces.

Their gazes were directed at a massive emerald lotus leaf that looked as if it had been sculpted by jade. It was floating in midair, emanating divine light.

“This is... Just how powerful is that lotus leaf? Its tier is far beyond what any of us can handle! However, if we can obtain it and present it to a God Monarch, we’ll surely be handsomely rewarded for that!”

“Indeed, the God Monarchs wouldn’t hesitate to take us in as their direct disciples and confer us if they could obtain the lotus leaf in exchange...”

“We’ll be able to rise through the ranks!”

Everyone was staring at the lotus leaf with heated gazes as they thought about the countless possibilities that could occur if they obtained the lotus leaf.

No one knew where the lotus leaf was from or what it was. However, the spiritual energy harnessed within it was so great that anyone who successfully assimilated it, even if the person was a God Monarch, would surely enjoy a tremendous surge in power.

Amid the discussion, a Conferred God King spotted Zhang Xuan and the others. “Conferred God King Ao Feng!”

“Ao Feng? You are referring to the Conferred God King of the Sky of Cloud Dragon?”

“Aren’t you asking the obvious? Who else could it be other than him?”

To Zhang Xuan’s surprise, the weak Ao Feng was actually highly respected among the God Kings and Conferred God Kings. Most of the female cultivators in the area were looking at him with eyes filled with reverence.

As it turned out, the Conferred God Kings of the Sky of Cloud Dragon, due to their noble and powerful bloodline, were viewed to be ideal spouses. There were many people who were more than willing to mate with them.

It was also for that reason that the descendants carrying the Dragon Bloodline were scattered all over the worlds.

“Conferred God King Luo Ying! Conferred God King Bai Zhi! Conferred God King Liu Yan...” Ao Feng also returned the greetings one by one like a true gentleman.

“Conferred God King Ao Feng must have been drawn here by the aura of the treasure as well! Oh, who are the two companions with you?” an elder asked as he looked at Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi curiously.

“They are God King Zhang Xuan and God King Luo Qiqi...”

Ao Feng had intended to introduce them formally, but the young man had shot him a look. Realizing that the young man was not willing to reveal his identity, he had gone ahead with a simple introduction instead.

The elder nodded before clapping his fist to greet them.

“Paying respects to God King Zhang Xuan and God King Luo Qiqi. It’s amazing how you have managed to achieve so much despite your age. It seems like the era is really changing...”

News about how Zhang Xuan had killed Conferred God King Baiye Qinghong of the Sky of Linglong had spread across the Nine Skies, and practically everyone in the Flooding Sea had heard of that incident. There were even some who had been able to acquire a recording of the happenings back then.

Their evaluation of the incident was that the young man did possess the means to kill Conferred God Kings, but his strength was mainly dependent on artifacts. Nevertheless, that was still enough for him to be classified as one of the powerhouses of the Firmament, and it would be wise not to make an enemy out of him.

For that reason, none of them dared disrespect him.

“You’re too courteous!” Zhang Xuan returned the greeting.

However, the elder frowned in displeasure at Zhang Xuan’s greeting. He felt like the young man’s attitude was a little perfunctory.

In truth, the elder had watched the recording of the battle between Zhang Xuan and Baiye Qinghong, and he felt like he could have done the same with the weapons bestowed upon him by his God Monarch, though it would have taken a bit more effort.

In other words, their strength was roughly on par with one another. In fact, if they put aside their artifacts, there was no doubt that he was the stronger one.

So, why was this young man acting as if he was some bigshot?



While the other Conferred God Kings who had gathered around did not say a thing, they also frowned slightly in disapproval toward Zhang Xuan's lackadaisical attitude.

It was already extremely rude for a junior not to take the initiative to greet a senior first, but the young man's attitude even appeared to be insincere on top of that.

"Conferred God King Liu Yan..."

Ao Feng was just about to explain things a little when the elder suddenly waved his hand and said, "Alright, let's put aside the formalities for now. Conferred God King Ao Feng, since you are here, I believe that you are eyeing the lotus leaf as well. Since we share the same thoughts, why don't we put our strength together?"

"Put our strength together?" Ao Feng frowned.

"Indeed. We are all veteran Conferred God Kings who have survived the previous Floods of Spiritual Energy, and every single one of us possesses our own means. While it would be stretching it to say that our fighting prowess is top-notch, I believe that we don't pale too much in comparison to the others. We have all received orders from the God Monarchs to bring the treasures of the Flooding Sea back to our respective Skies, and there is no doubt that the greatest treasure in the Flooding Sea is the lotus leaf right before us. If we can bring it back, we will surely be generously rewarded by our God Monarchs," the elder, Conferred God King Liu Yan, said.

Ao Feng nodded in agreement to those words.

While none of them could use the lotus leaf, there were great benefits to be earned if they could present it to their respective God Monarchs.

"May I know if you have heard of the newest Conferred God King of our Sky of Blazing Sun, Zheng Yang?" Conferred God King Liu Yan suddenly asked.

"Of course," Ao Feng replied. "There's no way I wouldn't have heard of him."

"Even though Zheng Yang is a Conferred God King of our Sky of Blazing Sun, he's arrogant and conceited. He doesn't

show the slightest shred of respect for veteran Conferred God Kings like us. In fact, he has formed an alliance together with the other young Conferred God Kings of the other Skies to steal the valuable resources in the Flooding Sea that we have discovered...”

The more Conferred God King Liu Yan spoke, the more furious he got.

“He stole your resources?” Ao Feng was stunned.

A Conferred God King of the group harrumphed angrily.

“That’s right! I found some Sealing Yang Grass that would have exceptional effects for God Monarch Zhuoyang, but he flew right into the ancient domain and claimed it for himself, not giving us the slightest chance at all!”

Two more Conferred God Kings chirped in with deep indignation in their voices.

“It was the same for me! I went through so much difficulty in order to find a Sea Originstone, but a person claiming to be his junior suddenly barged in and snatched it. It’s really as if they don’t have the slightest regard for us at all!”

“It’s the same for me. Just because they are a little stronger, they don’t show any respect for us at all. This is unacceptable!”

Having served the God Monarchs for so many years, they had contributed greatly to the growth of their respective Skies. Yet, instead of taking them as their students, the God Monarchs chose to groom a random bunch of youngsters instead. How could they possibly be happy about this?

But since it was the decision of the God Monarch, they could only swallow their indignation and grudgingly accept the situation.

But as if that was not bad enough, those youngsters were actually arrogant scoundrels who did as they pleased!

They took treasures as they deemed fit, not leaving anything for them. If they returned empty-handed, would their God Monarchs not think that they were utterly useless?

If so, they would be in a shaky position once they returned. Their God Monarchs might even find new people to replace them!

It was for this reason that they had gathered in such a hurry upon seeing the emergence of the lotus leaf.

“We, the veteran Conferred God Kings, have to unite together in order to protect our interests! If we can obtain this lotus leaf and deliver it to our own God Monarchs, it will prove that we are no weaker than those younger Conferred God Kings!” Conferred God King Liu Yan exclaimed.

“On the other hand, if those young scoundrels beat us to it, we will have tough days ahead of us. They will suppress us so badly that we’ll never be able to raise our heads again. We’ll lose even the final shreds of dignity that we have! So, Ao Feng, what do you say about that?”

“I...”

Ao Feng did not expect to suddenly receive such a proposal. So, he turned his gaze to Zhang Xuan to seek his opinion on the matter.

## 2259 A Finger Will Suffice

Ao Feng had already figured out from watching Zhang Xuan's response earlier that he had some kind of close relation to Zheng Yang and the others.

Thus, he felt like this fight was kind of hopeless. The veteran Conferred God Kings were going to suffer such a tragic defeat that they would not even know what had hit them.

Putting aside the fact that Zhang Xuan possessed the strength to overwhelm the Epitome Monarch Pill, even Zheng Yang and the others were already more than what the veteran Conferred God Kings could handle.

He had once fought one of them, and he knew that they were not even on the same level.

To plot against them right in front of the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies...

Were they brave, or were they just tired of living?

"What, you don't dare go against them?" Conferred God King Liu Yan scoffed after seeing Ao Feng's hesitation. "It's just a simple fight over the lotus. Even if those younger Conferred God Kings are angry at their loss, what can they do about it? As a Pureblooded Dragon from the Sky of Cloud Dragon, surely you won't be scared by just this much."

"I'm not scared, but..." Ao Feng said hesitantly.

"It's fine as long as you aren't scared. This matter is settled then!" Conferred God King Liu Yan had no intention of letting Ao Feng back out. He then turned his gaze to Zhang Xuan and Luo Qiqi and asked, "What about you two?"

"We'll pass," Zhang Xuan replied.

"Well, all he has is his artifact, so I reckon that he won't be much help in a real fight. As for Luo Qiqi, I've never even heard of her before, and she hasn't been conferred. Even if

they join us, I don't think that they'll be able to contribute much."

"What can two youngsters do in a fight among Conferred God Kings?"

...

The other Conferred God Kings did not pay much heed to Zhang Xuan's rejection.

While they were speaking, Conferred God King Liu Yan suddenly exclaimed, "Here they come!"

There was a slight disturbance in the space in the distance, but taking a closer look, one could see a figure rushing over at an incredibly fast speed.

It was a tall and slender young lady with a sword in her hand, commanding a valiant posture.

"Conferred God King Zhao Ya..."

Upon seeing the face of the person heading over, Conferred God King Luo Ying's eyes immediately reddened in rage.

It was this woman who had beaten him to the treasure that he had spotted earlier.

Huala!

So, Conferred God King Luo Ying raised his sword and pointed it at the young lady in the sky. "Zhao Ya, I know that you possess superior strength, but the veteran Conferred God Kings have already formed an alliance with one another. Back down now, or you'll suffer."

Zhao Ya shot a glance at Conferred God King Luo Ying before looking away, paying no heed to the latter's words at all. She continued flying toward the lotus with a nonchalant look on her face.

Huala!

Seeing that Zhao Ya was adamant about claiming the lotus, the other Conferred God Kings immediately drew their weapons before leaping forth to block her path.

Over the past few days, Zhao Ya had already made her name as one of the strongest Conferred God King in the Firmament. They were confident that they would be able to defeat her if they ganged up on her, but they also knew that they would not be able to get out unscathed if a battle did occur.

Furthermore, this so-called alliance was not exactly reliable. It was informal, and their interests were not fully aligned with one another. There was no saying when they would be betrayed by one another.

So, they hoped to just frighten her so that she would back down.

“You wish to block my way?” Zhao Ya lowered her gaze and looked at them with an air of majesty.

Her black hair contrasted with the silver armor she donned, making her appear to be a valiant Goddess of War.

Conferred God King Luo Ying harrumphed. “It’s all fair competition, Conferred God King Zhao Ya!”

“I don’t have time to waste on you lot!” Zhao Ya waved her hand dismissively as she insistently advanced forward.

“Audacious!”

“How dare you!”

“It seems like you really have no regard for us at all!”

They had made their intent clear, but the young lady still tried to bypass them. Liu Yan and the other Conferred God Kings immediately flew into a rage as they made their moves.

Channeling their energies together, they swiftly formed a massive barrier of zhenqi in the air to block Zhao Ya’s path.

The destructive energies that flowed through the barrier felt so overwhelming that there were no cultivators who would not feel powerless in its face. Anyone who forcefully barged through the barrier would suffer grave injuries or even death!

Zhao Ya frowned a little upon seeing their movements. She raised her sword and slashed it down on the barrier.

Boom!

The barrier was decisively severed before dissipating, and the Conferred God Kings were forced to retreat dozens of steps from the rebound. Their faces paled in fright as they stared at the young lady in the air in disbelief.

They had known that she would be a difficult opponent to deal with, but they did not expect her to be so powerful!

She had already grown to the level where she could sever a barrier they had set up with ease.

“Ao Feng, what are you waiting for? Make your move...”  
Conferred God King Liu Yan exclaimed anxiously.

But before he could finish his words, Zhao Ya had already descended to where Ao Feng and the others were standing, and with reddened eyes, her knees fell to the ground.

“Unfilial disciple Zhao Ya pays respects to teacher!”

“Disciple?”

“Teacher?”

Silence.

Everyone was flabbergasted.

This was because the person whom Zhao Ya was kneeling before was none other than God King Zhang Xuan, whom they had snubbed a moment ago. Not only so, she seemed to be so agitated that her body was trembling intensely, and her eyes had grown a little moist.

No one would have thought that there would be such a frail side to the valiant young lady.

What was going on?

Did this mean that the ferocious Conferred God King Zhao Ya who was inhumanely strong was a student of God King Zhang Xuan?

But was he not just an apothecary?

When in the world did he become Zhao Ya’s teacher?

Hula!

Just as everyone was shocked beyond words, deafening sonic booms echoed in the air as another ten youths flew over to where they were.

“Sh\*t, this is really bad. It’s Zheng Yang and the others!”

“Have they really joined hands with one another? This is madness...”

Seeing the figures that were heading over, many of the veteran Conferred God Kings could not help but retreat a little out of nervousness. Thinking that these ten youths were coming after them after hearing of their alliance, they immediately raised their weapons to protect themselves.

But what they imagined did not come to happen.

Instead, those ten youths descended to Zhao Ya’s side, and with the same reddened eyes, they kneeled to the ground. With an earnest and deeply respectful attitude, they lowered their heads and said...

“Unfilial disciple Zheng Yang pays respect to teacher...”

“Unfilial disciple Liu Yang pays respect to teacher...”

...

Their voices echoed loudly in the air, jolting the hearts of the veteran Conferred God Kings.

“All of them... are the disciples of God King Zhang Xuan?”

“But they are the strongest Conferred God Kings of the Firmament, the cultivators whom the six God Monarchs groomed personally! How could they all be God King Zhang Xuan’s disciples?”

“My goodness, can you pinch me hard so that I can check if... Yowch! What are you doing, you dumbass?”

Conferred God King Liu Yan and the others were going insane.

Never in their long lives had they seen anything so ridiculous.

Zhao Ya, Zheng Yang, and the others were already ridiculously powerful by themselves, but they were actually all



from the same lineage. To make matters worse, their teacher turned out to be the humble God King whom they had looked down on a moment ago!

Things were really starting to get out of hand...

“Did we... look down on him earlier?”

“Is it too late to start fawning over him now? Is there anything... that we can say to reverse the situation?”

Everyone could already feel tears welling up in their eyes.

Earlier, when God King Ao Feng introduced him, they did not think that he was anything much. In fact, most of them had even felt that he was a conceited young man.

But looking back, they were the ones who were being conceited.

Putting aside how strong he was, just the fact that he had so many overwhelmingly powerful disciples meant that it would not be excessive even if they welcomed him with the highest level of formalities!

If they had treated the young man better, there might still have been some room for reconciliation.

But it was a pity that they had allowed the opportunity to slip through their fingers. There was nothing they could do.

Meanwhile, seeing how much his direct disciples had grown over the past month, Zhang Xuan nodded in approval and said, “Rise!”

They had not let him down. The years he had spent teaching them had not been in vain.

“Teacher, I heard that there’s a particularly powerful expert known as the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies in the Flooding Sea. Have you met him yet?” Zheng Yang asked as he brandished his spear to the side.

“What’s wrong?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

“I have been hearing how powerful he is from the God Monarchs over the past few days, so I have been wanting to

challenge him to a battle to prove our teacher's name!" Zheng Yang declared haughtily.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan nearly choked on his own saliva. He looked at Zheng Yang for a moment before asking, "You are certain about it?"

"Yes, I am!" Zheng Yang replied determinedly.

The others were also nodding vehemently, expressing their agreement toward Zheng Yang's words. Only Zhao Ya was covering her face speechlessly, as if trying to act as if she did not know those fools standing beside her.

"Very well. All of you should come at me together," Zhang Xuan said as he placed a hand behind his back. "Just one finger will suffice."

## 2260 Nine Skies Lotus Leaf

Baffled by their teacher's words, Zhang Xuan's direct disciples were stunned for a moment before realization suddenly struck them, and their faces started twitching.

With a hushed voice, Zhao Ya muttered quietly to the dense Yuan Tao, who still did not seem to understand what was going on, "Our teacher is the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies..."

"..."

There was a moment of awkward silence before Zheng Yang started laughing stiffly. "Hahaha, teacher. I wonder what kind of treasure that lotus leaf over there is. I don't understand it at all. Hahaha..."

If they had known that their teacher was the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, they never would have dared to brag like that!

Ever since they had come under their teacher, every single time they thought that they had finally grown stronger, their teacher would pummel them heavily and put them back in their place.

While they had grown tremendously over the past month, somehow, their instincts were screaming at them that if they went through with the battle, they would be beaten up so badly that they would be wailing at the end of it.

A gentle smile formed on Zhang Xuan's lips as he said, "The lotus leaf over there might be eye-catching, but let's not lose sight of what we are going to do, alright?"

Seeing that his attempt to distract his teacher was futile, Zheng Yang's face collapsed in despair as he cried, "I wouldn't dare to challenge teacher to a battle..."

"There's no need to stand on ceremony. Let's begin right away," Zhang Xuan replied.

...

Boom!

Just as Zhang Xuan and his direct disciples were celebrating their long-awaited reunion with a good mix of physical intimacy and screams of joy, the lotus leaf in the air suddenly released a loud explosion sound.

Its leaves had fully matured, and they were radiating a blinding glow.

Great streams of concentrated spiritual energy were flowing out from it. Even just absorbing the bits that leaked out was enough to leave those gathered around feeling revitalized.

Everyone immediately turned toward the lotus leaf.

Unlike before, new inscriptions had appeared on the lotus leaf, giving it an enigmatic yet ancient appearance.

“That is... the geographical terrain and constellation map of the Nine Skies?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in astonishment.

He had seen the geographical terrain and constellation map of the Sky of Spirit Origin, Sky of Drifting Specter, and Sky of Linglong, and he could see them depicted clearly through the inscriptions on the massive lotus leaf.

He could tell that the lotus leaf was a natural artifact of the Firmament, yet it had been born with a complete map of the Nine Skies. This was extremely perplexing.

“Not only so, I can also sense the aura of the Nine Skies from it. Just what in the world is that lotus leaf?” Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

Without a doubt, the lotus leaf was a treasure beyond anything he had seen before. If he could assimilate it, it would do his cultivation much good.

Even pushing for a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm on the spot was not completely impossible!

“Now!”

All of a sudden, Conferred God King Liu Yan bellowed before rushing straight for the lotus leaf.

He knew that they would not stand a chance once Zhang Xuan and the others made their move, so he decided to make the first move.

As long as he could successfully grab the lotus leaf, he would immediately rush to the outer perimeter of the Flooding Sea and inform God Monarch Zhuoyang to teleport him out right away. Then, no matter how powerful Zhang Xuan was, there was no way he could snatch the lotus leaf from the hands of the God Monarchs.

The other Conferred God Kings also made their moves. With their powers, they weaved together a massive net that swiftly closed in on the lotus leaf. Through this, they could ensure that no one could get to the lotus leaf before them.

“Teacher!”

Seeing that someone was trying to beat them to it, Zhao Ya and Zheng Yang’s eyebrows shot up in displeasure.

It was one thing to be beaten up by their teacher, but they would not allow a treasure that would benefit their teacher to be taken before their eyes.

“It won’t be that easy for them to take the lotus leaf. Let’s just wait and see,” Zhang Xuan said as he stopped his direct disciple from getting involved.

He could not tell what kind of treasure the lotus leaf was, but just from the inscriptions and the aura of the Nine Skies it was emanating, it was clear that it was not an artifact that a couple of average Conferred God Kings could handle.

As he had guessed, while the massive net was about to wrap itself around the lotus leaf, the lotus leaf swayed a little, and the space in the surroundings immediately shattered.

Kacha!

A spatial shockwave rippled outward.

Peng peng peng!

The Conferred God Kings that had gathered around the lotus leaf were struck on the chest, and a deep laceration appeared on their bodies. They were knocked flying into the distance as blood spewed from their mouths.

“Frightening...” Zheng Yang and the others narrowed their eyes in shock.

Even though their fighting prowess far surpassed these veteran Conferred God Kings, they were not certain that they could have coped with that attack if they had been the ones facing it.

That was how powerful the lotus leaf was.

Realizing this, Zhao Ya looked at her juniors and said, “Let’s go together!”

“Un!”

With a determined nod, the eleven direct disciples of Zhang Xuan each took a deep breath before charging toward the lotus leaf together.

Unlike the veteran Conferred God Kings, their teamwork was nearly impeccable. In the blink of an eye, they had already gotten into position to form a collaborative formation.

Their combined might was probably enough to face even a God Monarch for a short period of time.

Unable to withstand their might, the surrounding space began to tear as a massive spatial storm broke out around the lotus leaf.

The lotus leaf seemed to be a little pressured facing such a furious onslaught of attacks. It suddenly began expanding larger and larger, reaching a size comparable to the sky itself. Then, with a twist, it swept itself across the cultivators standing against it.

“Sh\*t...”

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in shock.

He immediately drew the Crimson Heaven Sword and slashed it down on the lotus leaf.

The sword qi carried an unyielding will and bolted toward the lotus leaf. Just as it was about to strike its target, the massive lotus leaf suddenly swayed once again.

In an instant, Zhang Xuan suddenly experienced a bout of weightlessness. The space around him began warping at an insanely fast pace, and he suddenly found himself standing in the midst of a lush field.

It was a boundless grassland that extended to the horizons.

“I have... returned to the Firmament?” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

The land beneath his feet felt different from that of the Flooding Sea, and he could sense the aura of the Nine Skies around him.

He seemed to have returned to the Firmament.

“No, that isn’t right. I have entered the Firmament inscribed on the surface of the lotus leaf!”

Zhang Xuan swiftly noticed that something was amiss.

The Firmament was closed off, but it was not isolated. The real Firmament still carried a link to the rest of the myriad worlds, but he could not feel it there.

If he paid close attention to it, there were more differences between the area where he was and the real Firmament.

“Teacher...” A voice echoed not too far away.

Zhang Xuan quickly turned his head, and he saw Zhao Ya and the others flying in his direction.

Fortunately, it did not appear that they were injured. He heaved a sigh of relief inwardly.

Gazing into the sky, he said contemplatively, “There is something really weird about the lotus leaf. To think that it has an expanse of space comparable to the Nine Skies within it. Not to mention, it was able to pull us in here so easily...”

With their strength combined, they were strong enough to even deal with the God Monarchs. Yet, they were far too helpless in the face of the lotus leaf.

Just what kind of artifact was it to possess such unfathomable prowess?

“The flaw probably lies here...”

Zhang Xuan quickly looked around the area, but he was unable to find an exit. So, he lifted the Crimson Heaven Sword in his grasp and hacked it down on the ground beneath him.

If there was no way out in sight, the most plausible way out would be the ground.

While the lotus leaf wielded enigmatic abilities, Zhang Xuan did not think that it would be able to withstand an attack of his full might.

So, he channeled his spirit, soul, and psyche into his sword and struck down with all his strength.

Huala!

A burst of sword qi inflicted a massive crack in the ground, and spiritual energy immediately poured out from there. Without any hesitation, Zhang Xuan and his direct disciples leaped into the crack, and the next moment, Luo Qiqi's anxious face appeared before their eyes.

“Are you all okay?” Luo Qiqi asked worriedly.

Zhang Xuan nodded before speaking his thoughts aloud. “I don't understand. Just what kind of treasure is that?”

“I'm not sure! However, I think I heard those injured veteran Conferred God Kings calling it... the Nine Skies Lotus Leaf!” Luo Qiqi said.

As she had been outside the whole time, she had overheard the discussion among the other Conferred God Kings.

“Nine Skies Lotus Leaf?”

Zhang Xuan was a little taken aback.

A familiar-sounding name popped up in his head as he muttered, “The Nine Skies Lotus Embryo?”



# 2261 Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies

He had never heard of the Nine Skies Lotus Leaf before, but for reason, its name reminded him of the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo.

It was the material that he had used to forge his clone!

It was due to being made of such a material that his clone was practically indestructible and possessed superior fighting prowess. Even Zhang Xuan, when he cultivated the perfect Heaven's Path Divine Art, was no match for it.

It was only after he started comprehending the Pathos of Heaven that he managed to overpower his clone a little.

The Nine Skies Lotus Embryo and the Nine Skies Lotus Leaf...

Could they somehow be related to one another?

With such a thought in mind, Zhang Xuan brought out his clone.

As of this moment, his clone's cultivation had also reached Conferred God King realm pinnacle, making them roughly on par.

"Take a look at that lotus leaf over there." Zhang Xuan pointed.

The haughty clone tilted his chin upward to look at the lotus leaf, and his eyes lit up. "I don't know what that thing is, but I somehow feel my body being drawn to it..."

As the clone spoke, he began flying toward the massive lotus leaf.

At the same time, the massive lotus leaf seemed to have sensed something as well, and it began shrinking.

With a slight sway, the clone landed on top of the lotus leaf before morphing into a lotus core that seemed ready to blossom to any moment.

Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

It was how the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo had looked before he had forged it into his clone.

Tzzz!

The powers of the lotus leaf surged into the lotus core, nourishing it with energy. A pure white flower blossomed from it before slowly becoming transparent.

Boom!

An intense burst of energy rippled from the lotus as a nine-colored lotus flower blossomed in full, emanating a scent that intoxicated one.

“To think that it’s the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies,” Conferred God King Liu Yan muttered with eyes widened in disbelief.

“You know about it?” Zhang Xuan asked with a frown.

“Legend has it that before the Nine Skies were created, the primordial energy of the universe gave birth to the Primordial Golden Lotus to establish order in the Five Elements and the Four Extremities[1]. However, before it could mature, it suddenly vanished without a trace, resulting in the rise of chaos in the world. From the chaos came the Four Legendary Beasts, who eventually came to be known as the God Monarchs of the Northern Sky, Southern Sky, Eastern Sky, and Western Sky.”

As one of the older Conferred God Kings to have served the God Monarchs, he had heard of many things that were not recorded in the books.

“I thought that the Primordial Golden Lotus was just an artifact of the history, but to think that it would appear here... Furthermore...” Conferred God King Liu Yan clasped his mouth in shock.

The Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies was a treasure that even God Monarchs would find difficult to tame, but the young man had managed to forge it into his clone.

This was unbelievable!

If I'd known that you'd already tamed the lotus, I wouldn't have come here to snatch it from you...

Tzzz!

Zhang Xuan could feel his clone growing stronger by the moment as it continued to fuse together with the lotus leaf. Its power had already exceeded that of a Conferred God King by this point.

He could not help but heave a sigh of relief.

His clone seemed to have far more fortuitous encounters than he did.

At this rate, his clone was likely to become a God Monarch before him, and once that happened, he would probably become a truly indestructible and unrivaled existence in the world.

All this time, he had been wondering just what tier of artifact the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo was to be able to defeat him, a practitioner of the perfect Heaven's Path Divine Art. It was only at this moment that he discovered just how frightening a background his clone had.

"I should have long thought of it," Zhang Xuan said with a bitter smile. "In any case, given that the lotus has bloomed fully, my clone should be able to make a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm. However, it'll probably take some time before he completes the process..."

The Nine Skies Lotus Embryo carried the name of the Nine Skies, so he should have realized it when he finally came to the Firmament. It was just that he could not have imagined that his clone would actually be so formidable!

Taking a closer look at the lotus, he saw the lotus becoming more and more brilliant. Through their telepathic connection,

he could sense that his clone had already fully assimilated the lotus leaf.

Once the two energies finally fused together, his clone would become a God Monarch.

“I first found the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo back on the Master Teacher Continent. Initially, I thought that it was an unripe Nine Hearts Lotus due to its gray color, so I nourished it with my Heaven’s Path zhenqi. It was only then that its color started changing... Now that I think about it, the reason the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo was in such a state back then could be the result of that bizarre gray energy as well...” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

Back then, there was a soul oracle by the name of Mo Hunsheng possessing the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo, and through it, he was able to survive tens of thousands of years without dissipating.

All this time, Zhang Xuan had thought that it was his Heaven’s Path zhenqi that had led to its maturity, but now that he pondered upon it once more, he felt like it could have been the doing of the same gray congregation of energy that had suppressed Feng Jiuge’s cultivation.

It was due to him neutralizing the gray energy with his Heaven’s Path zhenqi that it reverted to its original color!

That was probably the reason he had eventually managed to forge a clone out of such a powerful artifact.

Most likely, the bizarre gray energy had already devoured all the energy within the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo by the time it got to his hands, allowing the Transcendent Mortal him to assimilate it easily.

“Be it the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo or the Deathless Monarch, it seems too much of a coincidence that I managed to get involved with them... It feels I am walking down a path that someone paved for me,” Zhang Xuan mumbled with a frown.

He felt that it was simply too lucky for him to stumble upon such fortuitous encounters, especially when he was on the

lower Master Teacher Continent. What were the odds of it happening?

If it was just a slightly more powerful artifact, he could still attribute it to his good luck. However, the Nine Skies Lotus Embryo was a precious treasure that even God Monarchs would die to get their hands on. Yet, he had ended up forging it into his clone unknowingly.

On top of that, he had somehow tamed the Deathless Monarch, one of the nine strongest experts of the myriad worlds, and even the strongest God Monarch Lingxi of the Sky of Freedom ended up as his girlfriend.

No matter how one looked at it, something was off!

How much luck did one need for all that to occur to one person? It was not as if he was the protagonist of some novel!

Zhang Xuan knew that Kong shi had played a hand in orchestrating some matters, but he felt like there was another enigmatic force that had been pushing him to grow all this while.

Unable to figure it out, Zhang Xuan decided to put it aside for the time being. Instead, he turned to look at his direct disciples.

Zhao Ya stepped forward and presented a storage ring to him. “Teacher, here are the treasures you have acquired at the Flooding Sea. We hope that they will be of some use to you...”

Zhang Xuan accepted the storage ring and took a look at the contents within. Then, he nodded and remarked, “Not bad!”

The items that his direct disciples had gathered were far more valuable than what he had found. There were at least ten items in there that were on the same tier as the Condensed Earth Essence and a few more that exceeded it.

For them to be willing to present the invaluable treasures they had procured to him, he could really feel their sentiments toward him.

“It looks like I don’t have to search any further. With these, I will be able to push for a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm without any trouble,” Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

However, when he was taking a second look through the items in the storage ring, he suddenly noticed something that made him frown. “Hmm? This is weird. Aren’t you the ones who took away the Midnight Flower and the Desolate Iron?”

He realized that the Midnight Flower and the Desolate Iron, which had vanished by the time he arrived in the vicinity, were not in the storage ring.

Was it possible that there was someone other than his direct disciples who possessed the ability to claim the treasures from those dangerous locations?

“Midnight Flower? Desolate Iron?” Zhao Ya and the others tilted their heads in confusion. “We’ve never heard of those items before.”

“What does this mean? Is there someone else who possesses great capabilities lurking in the Flooding Sea other than you all?” Zhang Xuan frowned in alarm.

[1] Four extremities refers to the four directions of the world.

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The Midnight Flower and the Desolate Iron were located in perilous locations that even someone of Ao Feng's prowess was unable to enter. There should have been no one else other than Zhang Xuan and his direct disciples that were capable of entering those areas to claim those treasures.

As such, he had assumed that it was their doing all along, but clearly, he was mistaken.

Was there another power in the Flooding Sea that was discreetly collecting all the treasures in the Flooding Sea?

"Someone else?" Zheng Yang frowned for a moment before nodding in agreement. "Now that you mention it, that does seem possible. There were several areas we visited where the treasures had already been claimed by someone else. We thought that it was the doing of the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, but that doesn't appear to be the case..."

"That person was able to collect all of those treasures without a hitch while leaving little to no trace at all. That means that they're no weaker than the rest of you..." Zhang Xuan was starting to feel a little bewildered by the situation.

Based on what he had heard from Ao Feng thus far, he and his eleven direct disciples should have been the strongest existences in the Flooding Sea. If so, where did this elusive expert come from?

"I heard that Demon Monarch Qiankun has accepted another successor other than me, and he's even forged a body for him," Lu Chong suddenly said.

"He forged a body for him?"

Once Lu Chong said that, Zhang Xuan also recalled hearing about such a thing before.

"Yes, that's right. That successor appears to have arrived in the Firmament ahead of us, and he appeared through the Netherworld Pool. Given his powerful soul cultivation, it

might have been possible for him to find those treasures ahead of us and take them away with ease,” Lu Chong said.

In a place like the Flooding Sea, other than having a veteran lead one around, another factor that played a crucial role was the strength of one’s soul. The stronger one’s soul cultivation was, the more sensitive one would be to the presence of treasures.

This played a crucial role in finding and securing the treasures hidden all over the area faster than others.

“If he arrived in the Firmament earlier than us, it means that he isn’t native to the Firmament. If so... who could it be?” Zhang Xuan fell into deep thought.

...

Outside the Flooding Sea...

“So what if those people are Zhang Xuan’s direct disciples? I still have a hidden piece! He’ll be able to secure a good deal of treasures in the Flooding Sea!” Demon Monarch Qiankun smirked smugly as he looked at the Communication Jade Token in his hand.

Even though they were unable to peer into the Flooding Sea with their consciousness, they were still able to receive news from those in the area through the use of special artifacts.

Just a moment ago, Demon Monarch Qiankun had received a message from the hidden piece that he had planted in the Flooding Sea. Based on the message he received, the hidden piece had secured a lot of treasures for their Sky of Drifting Specter.

Browsing through the list of items, Demon Monarch Qiankun felt tempted to look up to the sky and laugh heartily.

If his hidden piece could successfully bring all those items out, he would be able to advance his cultivation considerably.

While it was unlikely that he would be able to surpass God Monarch Lingxi, at the very least, he should still be able to rise to the top of the other eight God Monarchs.



Seeing how smug Demon Monarch Qiankun was acting, the Cloud Dragon Monarch asked with a cold harrumph, “How strong is the hidden piece you prepared?”

“He isn’t as strong as Lu Chong, so it’ll be hard for him to match Zhao Ya and the others. However, his soul is exceptionally strong, making him highly suited for covert operations and treasure hunting,” Demon Monarch Qiankun replied confidently.

“So what if your hidden piece has a strong soul? Once the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies lays his hands on that hidden piece of yours, you’ll still end up with nothing!” Fairy Linglong poured a bucket of cold water over Demon Monarch Qiankun’s smugness.

They were currently feeling frustrated at how their efforts had ended up benefiting only their enemy, yet this darned old man dared to celebrate gleefully before them. It went without saying that they had to rain on his parade to even things out!

“That’s only if the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies is able to find him. I instructed him clearly not to head to places with many people and to try his best to conceal his presence,” Demon Monarch Qiankun said proudly. “It seems like my plan worked out just fine!”

Seeing how prepared Demon Monarch Qiankun was, everyone could only shake their heads helplessly.

As expected of the wily old fox, he sure was cunning.

From the looks of it, Demon Monarch Qiankun was likely the greatest winner of them all.

Weng!

While they were sighing over this matter, they suddenly sensed an intense reverberation occurring within the Flooding Sea. They could vaguely feel spiritual energy that had flowed out reversing back into the Flooding Sea.

“What’s going on?” the Cloud Dragon Monarch asked with a frown.

“It seems like another legendary treasure has surfaced. The treasure is absorbing the spiritual energy within the Flooding Sea, causing the spiritual energy that has diffused into the Firmament to flow back in,” Fairy Linglong said as she stared at the black sea ahead of her intently, hoping to somehow peer through the darkness to see what was happening within.

“A legendary treasure? I wonder what it is,” God Monarch Zhuoyang remarked with eyes filled with excitement, but a moment later, he shook his head with a bitter smile.

Even if a legendary treasure appeared, it was unlikely to end up as theirs.

Without a doubt, the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies and his direct disciples would claim it for themselves.

“It is actually not that difficult to find out what it is. I’ll just have to get my hidden piece to check on it. Maybe I should get him to swipe it while he’s at it.” Demon Monarch Qiankun chuckled gleefully.

Fate always favored the prepared! This would be a lesson that the other God Monarchs should start learning!

It had not been easy for him to one up all the other God Monarchs, so he was extremely pleased with such an outcome. He quickly sent a message over to his hidden piece, and a moment later, he received a reply.

“He has been making sure to hide himself well in order to avoid meeting other cultivators in the Flooding Sea, but right now, he’s heading over to see the true form of that legendary treasure...” Demon Monarch Qiankun chuckled.

He waited quietly for a moment before swiping on his Communication Jade Token once more, and the next instant, his eyes lit up with far more excitement than he had experienced over the past tens of thousands of years.

“It’s the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies!”

“Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies?”

All the God Monarchs widened their eyes in astonishment.

While most Conferred God Kings might not have heard of such an artifact before, as God Monarchs, they knew just how powerful that legendary artifact was.

It was an existence created by nature to enforce laws upon the universe, making it an artifact no weaker than them God Monarchs.

“If any one of us obtains the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, we’ll be able to immediately raise his cultivation to a level comparable to God Monarch Lingxi...” The Acheron God Monarch, who had been quiet thus far, could not help but speak up in agitation.

The Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies was an artifact that was even more ancient than them!

Assimilating such an artifact would surely raise their cultivation by leaps and bounds, allowing them to easily overcome their current bottleneck.

“Indeed...”

The crowd nodded in agreement.

Even though their faces were turning green in envy, they knew that it was impossible for their Conferred God Kings to obtain it with Zhang Xuan inside.

“I’ll get my hidden piece to snatch it no matter what price he has to pay,” Demon Monarch Qiankun murmured beneath his breath as a glint flashed across his eyes.

He could not allow himself to miss the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies just like that!

So, with a swipe of his finger, he immediately relayed his orders through the Communication Jade Token.

No matter what, I still have a shot at this. While the cultivation of my hidden piece cannot compete with Zhang Xuan and the others, his concealment and treasure gathering abilities are top-notch. As soon as he lay his hands on the lotus, I’ll teleport him back to the Firmament, Demon Monarch Qiankun thought as his heart thumped in agitation.

The chances of success were slim, but they were not negligible. If his hidden piece somehow succeeded, it would be a huge victory for him.

His hidden piece was a secret card that he had prepared with great care, such that it was impossible for him to turn against him like Lu Chong.

Hu!

Just as Demon Monarch Qiankun was pacing around anxiously, waiting for the response of his hidden piece, his Communication Jade Token suddenly shook once again. He immediately lowered his head to look at the received message, and his eyes slowly widened in disbelief.

One could visibly see how the excitement on his face collapsed into despair, and it looked as if the old man would really pass away from the shock.

The other God Monarchs looked at him and asked, “What’s wrong?”

“My hidden piece said that...” With an expression on his face that looked as if he was going to burst into tears, Demon Monarch Qiankun cried out, “... Zhang Xuan is his Young Master, so he has already presented all of the items he has gathered to him!”

“...” The other God Monarchs.

Just a moment earlier, Demon Monarch Qiankun had been bragging to them with a gleeful look on his face, but in the blink of an eye, he ended up with a fate even worse than them.

There was no way Demon Monarch Qiankun could accept this, and the other God Monarchs were also staring at one another in frenzy.

It was already hard enough for them to swallow the fact that the cultivators they had taken in and nurtured were all Zhang Xuan’s disciples, but at the very least, Zhao Ya and the others did give them a heads up beforehand.

So, they had no choice but to accept this.

But even the hidden piece that Demon Monarch Qiankun had secretly prepared turned out to be Zhang Xuan's servant. This was just a little insane.

Did Zhang Xuan plant spies all around them?

"What in the name of the heavens is going here?" Demon Monarch Qiankun looked as if he was going to lose his mind.

The hidden piece had come from the Netherworld Pool, and he had spent a great deal of time and effort to groom him from a fragmented soul into a powerful Conferred God King. How did he become Zhang Xuan's servant?

He had thought that he was the smart one, but it felt like the young man was always one step ahead of them all!

For a moment, Demon Monarch Qiankun suddenly felt like he had lived so many years of his lives in vain.

"Serves you right..." Fairy Linglong chuckled softly beneath her breath.

Show off more, why don't you? Karma really does come around in the end...

...

Looking at the middle-aged man who was kneeling before him, addressing him as 'Young Master', Zhang Xuan was utterly stunned. "Wei Changfeng?"

A red-eyed Wei Ruyan also walked over with a trembling body as she cried out, "Father..."

The person who had appeared before them was none other than his servant on the Master Teacher Continent who had gone around stealing all kinds of treasures in order to treat his daughter's weak constitution, Wei Changfeng!

Back then, he had died at the hands of a saint beast while trying to procure a medicinal herb, and Wei Ruyan had grieved over him for a long time. Who could have known that he would come back to life and appear there?

"How did you..." Zhang Xuan stared at Wei Changfeng in disbelief.

“I have no idea how it happened either. Right after I died, I felt a powerful suction force pulling my soul in, and by the time I came to, I was already in the Netherworld Pool of the Firmament!”

Words could not begin to describe just how excited Wei Changfeng was seeing his daughter and Zhang Xuan before his eyes. When he learned that there was no way for him to return to the Master Teacher Continent, he had despaired for a very long time. He had thought that he would have to part with his daughter for good.

After embracing Wei Ruyan tightly in agitation, he finally began explaining how everything had come to be. “According to what Demon Monarch Qiankun said, I seem to have a unique constitution. That seems to be the reason Ruyan was born with the Innate Poison Body.”

“Unique constitution?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

He had checked on Wei Changfeng’s condition using his Library of Heaven’s Path when he met the latter on the Master Teacher Continent, and there was nothing special about him. He was an ordinary man through and through.

Was it possible for the Library of Heaven’s Path to have made a mistake?

“Did Demon Monarch Qiankun mention what kind of unique constitution it is?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“Yes, he said that I possess the Innate Embryonic Soul. I have an embryonic soul that allows me to retain the bare foundation of my soul even if it dissipates. It ensured that I did not lose myself even after I came back to life from the Netherworld Pool,” Wei Changfeng replied.

“Innate Embryonic Soul?” The frown on Zhang Xuan’s face deepened.

He had never heard of such a unique constitution before, but it was indeed a very formidable ability. Not even the Deathless Monarch had been able to remain himself after resurrecting from death.

That was probably why Wei Ruyan turned out to be so talented.

As for why the Library of Heaven's Path had been unable to see through Wei Changfeng's constitution, Zhang Xuan figured that it might be because it was too weak back then. It could also be because the ability was lying dormant within Wei Changfeng's soul, and it was only triggered after his death.

In any case, it was a huge relief that Wei Changfeng was alive.

Zhang Xuan could tell that Wei Ruyan had always been conflicted over how her father had died sacrificing himself for her survival, and it was a hurdle that she had never been able to overcome. When she thought of her father, she felt grateful and loved yet guilty and resentful.

Hopefully, such a turn of events could liberate her from the shackles of her father's death.

"Young Master, these are the treasures that I have gathered from the Flooding Sea," Wei Changfeng said as he presented a storage ring to Zhang Xuan.

Looking at the contents of the storage ring, he swiftly spotted the Midnight Flower and the Desolate Iron, and that made him heave a sigh of relief.

In the end, it turned out that it had been Wei Changfeng who was competing with them over the resources all along.

"I need you all to guard me. I'm intending to go into seclusion right now to push for a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm!"

With everything in place, Zhang Xuan was just about to start cultivating to push for a breakthrough when the ground beneath him suddenly started shaking. There was a frightening aura that was swiftly devouring the surroundings.

Alarmed, Zhang Xuan turned his head around, only to see that a massive dimension rift had divided the sky in half.

The spiritual energy that had flowed out to the Firmament was swiftly being swallowed by the dimension rift, and the sudden

influx of spiritual energy was causing great instability within the Flooding Sea.

The entire place was already on the verge of collapse.

Conferred God King Liu Yan and the others trembled fearfully as they asked with pale faces, “What’s happening?”

“Teacher...” Zhao Ya and the others also quickly turned their gazes over toward Zhang Xuan with nervous looks.

“It appears that someone has taken away the three stalks of Monarch Spirit Grass...” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes coldly.

Earlier, he had found three stalks of Monarch Spirit Grass that were used to stabilize a dangerously unstable dimension rift. However, it seemed like someone had taken them away, resulting in its abrupt growth.

The dimension rift was growing exponentially larger, and it did not take long for it to cover the entire sky. The area where they had fought over the possession of the Condensed Earth Essence earlier had been split in two, and there were many more areas that had been swallowed whole by the dimension rift.

The barrier of the Lake of Comets was also being swiftly torn apart by the spatial turbulence gushing forth from the dimension rift.

From the looks of it, the Flooding Sea was only moments away from total collapse.

“Teacher, what should we do?” Zhao Ya asked anxiously.

At this rate, it was only a matter of time before the dimension rift expanded to envelope the Firmament as well.

“We have to find a way to seal off the dimension rift or at least stabilize it,” Zhang Xuan replied grimly.

The Flooding Sea was, strictly speaking, not in the Firmament, but it was still linked to it. If the Flooding Sea was destroyed, the Firmament would suffer great devastation as well. Many lives would be lost.



It was because Zhang Xuan knew this would happen that he did not attempt to take away the Monarch Spirit Grass earlier.

But this...

Zhang Xuan looked at the glistening Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, and it appeared that it would still be some time before his clone could fully fuse the two powers together.

Seeing that there was no way out of this, he gritted his teeth and shouted, "Follow me!"

Then, he began flying toward where the dimension rift was.

Zhao Ya and the others followed him without any hesitation.

"Hahaha..." A resounding laughter echoed from the void.

"Weren't you trying to kill me earlier? Let's see who will kill who now!"

Zhang Xuan lifted his head and saw the Epitome Monarch Pill whom he had chased after earlier in the Lake of Comets floating in midair with a vicious smile on his face.

He had swallowed the three stalks of Monarch Spirit Grass, causing his cultivation to grow a step further to reach a level comparable to the God Monarchs.

After that fellow escaped, he had headed straight for where the Monarch Spirit Grass was located and eaten them without any hesitation!

As a result of that, the force that had been holding back the dimension rift all this while was torn apart, resulting in the current disaster.

Seeing how his failure to kill the Epitome Monarch Pill had resulted in a great catastrophe, Zhang Xuan clenched his teeth in fury.

"You're courting death!"

With a furious roar, he drew the Crimson Heaven Sword and charged straight for the Epitome Monarch Pill.

If the Flooding Sea really collapsed, countless lives would be lost in the Firmament... and all of this was caused by this darned fellow!

How could Zhang Xuan possibly not be angry?

HUala!

He slashed his sword furiously to execute the Pathos of Heaven 4-dan sword art in order to subdue the Epitome Monarch Pill.

“Did you think that the same trick would work on me again? Your naivety is hilarious!” the Epitome Monarch Pill sneered as he thrust his palm downward.

Weng!

Space seemed to have suddenly halted in that instant, and Zhang Xuan found himself unable to move at all.

With this single move, Zhang Xuan’s sword art was sealed. It was apparent that he was no longer a match for the Epitome Monarch Pill!

“Teacher...”

Seeing this, Zhao Ya and the others quickly rushed over to back him up, only to hear a voice shouting in their ears.

“Don’t bother with me. Hurry up and stabilize the dimension rift!”

“Yes, teacher!”

Zhao Ya and the others clenched their fists tightly. They were worried about their teacher, but they also knew that the dimension rift would only get more and more dangerous if it was left unchecked. So, they followed their teacher’s order and turned their attention toward the dimension rift instead.

Huala!

Meanwhile, Zhang Xuan released a surge of Sword Intent from his body and forcefully tore apart the frozen space around him. Then, he began to charge toward the Epitome Monarch Pill once more.

...

“We need to think of a way to seal off the dimension rift, or else it’ll result in a huge calamity for the Firmament...” Zhao

Ya and the others stared at the dimension rift with narrowed eyes.

In the first place, there was already the dimension fissure above the Flooding Sea that was sucking the spiritual energy out of the Firmament, and the Nine God Monarchs were utterly helpless against it. If another dimension rift appeared within the Flooding Sea, they could not even begin to imagine just what kind of disaster it would bring to the already precarious Firmament.

“Let me do it!”

Luo Qiqi charged to the forefront of the dimension rift and morphed into the Dimension Silencer. Then, she began to freeze the space around the dimension rift in order to prevent it from expanding any further.

With her effort, the expansion of the dimension rift actually came to a halt.

However, such a course of action seemed to be taking a huge toll on Luo Qiqi. The orb that she had morphed into trembled nonstop under the strain, and it felt like she would suffer an overwhelming rebound very soon once the space she was freezing broke free from her restraints.

“Quick, we need to help Qiqi!”

Zhao Ya and the others rushed over and channeled their zhenqi toward Luo Qiqi in order to supply her with the energy she needed to sustain this.

The dimension rift was indeed stopped for a while under their efforts, but before long, it began wavering once more. Then, everything continued to fall into the dimension rift yet again, be it rocks, spiritual energy, or treasures. All of them vanished without a trace after entering the dimension rift.

Pu!

Luo Qiqi spurted a mouthful of blood as she was forcefully jolted back into her human form. Blood flowed down her chin from the massive impact she suffered.

At the same time, the faces of Zhao Ya and the others also turned ghastly pale.

Tzla!

Without the Dimension Silencer to stop it, the dimension rift grew bigger with greater ferocity. In just a few moments, it had already devoured a huge chunk of the Flooding Sea, as if it was determined to reduce this area to nothing.

“I can’t stop it!” Luo Qiqi cried out in despair.

The Flooding Sea and the Flood of Spiritual Energy were temporary measures put in place by the world in order to slow the receding spiritual energy, and it had been unstable right from the start. The abrupt expansion of the dimension rift was like the first domino to fall, and once the process started, there was no way to stop it.

Even with Luo Qiqi, Zhao Ya, and the others’ superior strength, they were powerless in this situation.

“Teacher! Only our teacher can seal off the dimension rift!” Zhao Ya exclaimed as she quickly turned her gaze to Zhang Xuan.

At this very moment, the battle between Zhang Xuan and the Epitome Monarch Pill had reached its climax.

The Epitome Monarch Pill had successfully made a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm after consuming the Monarch Spirit Grass. While he had not gained the recognition of the Nine Skies yet, in terms of raw power, he was no weaker than the God Monarchs anymore.

On the other hand, while Zhang Xuan had managed to raise his zhenqi cultivation to Conferred God King realm pinnacle, his strength was a little lacking to deal with the Epitome Monarch Pill. As a result, he had been in a disadvantageous position the whole time.

“Hahaha, that’s what you get for challenging me! It’s time for you to die!”

Seeing how the young man who had arrogantly sliced his limbs off earlier was finally suppressed by his strength, the

Epitome Monarch Pill burst into excited laughter. He raised his palm and channeled his overwhelming strength to strike down Zhang Xuan yet again.

The Flooding Sea was already on the verge of falling apart, and the relentless attacks from the Epitome Monarch Pill were only hastening the destruction process. The entire space fell into chaos as spiritual energy surged around messily. There were quite a few God Kings who had already been sliced into pieces as a result of the chaos that was going on.

Usually, most God Kings would still be able to walk out of Flooding Sea alive, but within five minutes of the outburst of chaos, more than half of the God Kings had met their end.

In fact, even Conferred God Kings were starting to fall.

Within a short period of time, the death toll had exceeded that of a decade ago.

Seeing how the Epitome Monarch Pill was fighting more and more carelessly as time went by, Zhang Xuan's complexion turned awful.

"I need to quickly deal with this, or else we will all die here..."

At this rate, everything would be over by the time he was done with this fight.

"But I am already exerting my strength to my limit... If I want to subdue him quickly, I'll have to find a way to raise my cultivation somehow..."

He was already driving his zhenqi and soul cultivation to his limits and executing his strongest sword arts, but the Epitome Monarch Pill was overflowing with energy after devouring the Monarch Spirit Grass.

He did not stand a chance at all in his current state.

"I'll just have to make a breakthrough..."

Paying no heed to the palm strike descending upon him, Zhang Xuan took a deep breath before pulling out all the treasures that his disciples had given him.

With a burst of his zhenqi, he immediately tore apart all those treasures to extract their spiritual energy within.

Tzzzz!

Concentrated spiritual energy flowed endlessly into his acupoints and streamed through his meridians, nourishing his body.

Seeing how his opponent was still attempting to make a breakthrough while fighting him, the Epitome Monarch Pill harrumphed coldly as he hastened his attack. “It is too late for you to start thinking about making a breakthrough!”

“I have more than enough time here,” Zhang Xuan mumbled to himself as he immersed his consciousness into the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn.

If he cultivated in there, his time would be accelerated by a rate of ten thousand times of the outer world.

So, a second out in the Flooding Sea equated to ten thousand seconds in the Great Codex of Spring of Autumn, which was roughly 2.7 hours.

That should be more than enough for him to become a God Monarch.

Calming himself, he drove his zhenqi rapidly, and the bottleneck that he had chosen not to overcome the previous time appeared before him once more.

“Shatter!”

With a deep roar, he converted the energy within his body into sword qi to tear down the bottleneck blocking his path.

Boom boom boom!

He struck on the bottleneck with the greatest might he could muster, but he was still unable to tear it down.

“Damn it! Even after comprehending a God Monarch realm cultivation technique, it seems like it’s still no easy feat to make a breakthrough...”

When he felt the urge to make a breakthrough back when he was on the moon, he had thought that he could overcome the

bottleneck as and when he liked. However, it seemed like he had been underestimating the level of difficulty.

God Monarchs were the highest existences in the world. It was a level that all lives craved to reach, but since time immemorial, the only one who had succeeded was Kong shi. It was a feat difficult enough to be labeled with the word 'impossible'.

“It isn't just about the bottleneck within me. More than that, the heavens aren't allowing me to make a breakthrough...”

After attempting a few more times, Zhang Xuan finally understood the crux of the problem.

It was not just a problem about his own cultivation. More importantly, he could sense the presence of a force in the world suppressing him, preventing him from successfully making a breakthrough.

It was as if the heavens were guarding this final rite of passage. Anyone who tried to pass through it would be dragged out. It was a place that existed, but no one was allowed to enter it.

“Seal!”

Knowing that the culprit was likely the Library of Heaven's Path inside of him, Zhang Xuan unhesitatingly sealed it off with his soul cultivation.

Boom!

He attempted to make a breakthrough again, but his energy was still unable to reach the ultimate level of consummation to overcome the final hurdle to God Monarch.

“I'm still lacking in energy...” Zhang Xuan cursed beneath his breath.

Simply too many cultivation resources were required for him to become a God Monarch. Even after devouring all the treasures that his disciples and Wei Changfeng had collected and presented to him, he was unable to gather sufficient momentum to overcome the final barrier.

There was only one solution that he could think of.

The enemy that he was facing, the Epitome Monarch Pill, was also a cultivation resource, a God Monarch realm one at that.

If he could just devour it, along with his prior accumulation, the final hurdle to becoming a God Monarch should not pose a problem. He would be able to burst through it with a decisive kick!

But... how could he go about doing that when he was not a match for the other party?

With a click of his tongue, he quickly pulled his consciousness out of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn before launching yet another sword art to barely defend against the descending palm strike.

Seeing through the problem that Zhang Xuan was facing, the Epitome Monarch Pill scoffed mockingly. “Hahaha! If it was that easy to become a God Monarch, I would have left the Flooding Sea long ago. I wouldn’t have been trapped in this darned place for so long...”

Pah pah pah!

The cracks in space that were caused by the destruction had already crept to Zhang Xuan’s side. Taking a swift glance around him, the Flooding Sea was in a complete mess from the forces raging all around. It was not too far away from being completely obliterated.

“If I can’t make a breakthrough before the Flooding Sea collapses, it’ll be even harder for me to make a breakthrough once I return to the Firmament,” Zhang Xuan murmured anxiously.

He would come under the suppression of the Nine Skies once he returned to the Firmament, and that would make it nigh impossible for him to become a God Monarch in the short-term. He would have to earn the recognition of those in the Firmament and collect a great amount of Anima of Yearning in order to be officially acknowledged by the Nine Skies.

However, he needed the strength to deal with the crisis right now! He did not have that much time to spare!



Despite the tattered state of the Flooding Sea, it was still holding on due to the reflux of spiritual energy from the Firmament. Once all the spiritual energy was gone, the Flooding Sea would collapse.

“One minute. That’s all the time I have right now. I need to become a God Monarch within one minute...”

That was Zhang Xuan’s estimation before the collapse of the Flooding Sea.

However, it would be difficult for him to pull that off even with the aid of the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn. It was nigh impossible to achieve!

After all, the success of his breakthrough was built on the foundation of defeating the Epitome Monarch Pill, and that was, in turn, built on the condition that he needed to have the strength of a God Monarch...

It was like an infinite loop that he could not break out of.

An idea suddenly popped into Zhang Xuan’s head.

“Unless... unless I am able to comprehend a God Monarch realm sword art!”

It would be impossible for him to subdue the Epitome Monarch Pill and devour it within the next sixty seconds in his current state. He would have to find a way to raise his fighting prowess somehow in order to pull that off.

Since he could not raise his cultivation, he could only raise the prowess of his sword art!

The God Monarch realm cultivation technique that he had comprehended was based on love.

Even the heavens and earth are limited by time, but our feelings shall be eternal!

If he could figure out the sword art and exert it with his full force, he might just be able to slay the Epitome Monarch Pill.

However, the cultivation technique of the Pathos of Heaven was separate from its sword art, and deciphering the sword art before he had made a breakthrough was even more difficult.

After all, he was trying to figure out a sword art intended for God Monarchs before even becoming a God Monarch.

In terms of difficulty, that might be even tougher for him than making a breakthrough in his cultivation to become a God Monarch.

However, he had no other choice.

So, he began brandishing his sword in accordance to the God Monarch realm cultivation technique that he had comprehended, trying to shape it into a sword art. But each and every time, he would suddenly find his energy stopping at some point. He simply could not get it to flow smoothly outward.

“Wrong!”

“Wrong!”

“Wrong!”

“It’s still wrong!”

After trying ten different types of Sword Intents to drive his sword art in vain, his zhenqi fell into disarray from his haphazard attempts to circulate his zhenqi.

Time ticked by.

In the blink of an eye, thirty seconds had already passed.

The Flooding Sea was swiftly reaching its limit. The shaking had become more intense, and from the looks of it, it was hard to tell whether it would be able to last another next ten seconds or not.

“I sure am interested to see how many blows you can survive!” the Epitome Monarch Pill cried out excitedly as he sent yet another palm flying toward Zhang Xuan.

He could see through Zhang Xuan’s intention, so he wanted to crush his final sliver of hope.

The force he exerted this time was far greater than before, and it choked out the final breath of life within the Flooding Sea. The surrounding space began to collapse inward and crush down on both Zhang Xuan and the Epitome Monarch Pill.

This was a strike that would determine the life and death of two individuals.

If Zhang Xuan could not withstand the strike, it would be his death.

If he managed to do it, it would be the Epitome Monarch Pill's death.

"Teacher..." Zhao Ya and the others watched with reddened eyes.

They wanted to rush over to help him, but before they knew it, they had already been forcefully ejected from the collapsed space.

The only ones remaining on the battlefield were the two of them. Except for God Monarchs, no one was able to get close.

"It looks like I won't be able to comprehend it after all. I already knew it right from the start. Time is simply too tight, and it's impossible to figure out a God Monarch realm sword art in the spur of the moment. I was simply praying for a miracle to happen," Zhang Xuan muttered derisively beneath his breath.

So far, he had somehow been able to resolve any danger through his swift thinking and a stroke of luck. He had hoped that the same would happen this time, but he had simply been too optimistic.

There were some things that were simply impossible to pull off in the world. Just because he wished dearly for something to happen did not mean that it would.

Knowing that it was impossible for him to succeed, he gazed upward and watched as fragments of space exploded like fireworks in the sky before slowly crumbling to an endless void.

In that instant, time seemed to have slowed for him.

He returned to the time when he was still on the Master Teacher Continent, the moment that he activated his Zhang Clan bloodline.

Countless memories that he had made ever since his transcension two years ago played in his mind in slow motion.

In order not to be driven out of school, he had worked hard to be a better teacher. From there on, he had slowly advanced a step at a time. There had been so many things driving him forward along the way, be it his students, his family, his lover, or his friends...

Looking back, he seemed to have been fighting all this while without stop.

Perhaps this would be a good place for his journey to end.

He had thought that his fate was to meet his end under Luo Ruoxin's blade while competing over the fragments of the heavens, but it looked like he would be spared from such awkwardness.

A bittersweet smile crept onto Zhang Xuan's lips as he suddenly thought about Luo Ruoxin.

"If I die and can't be revived anymore, she'll be really upset, right?"

"Maybe she knew that this would be our fate when she agreed to get together with me..."

Thinking back, his ignorance all this while could be considered a blessing. There was probably nothing more painful in the world than having to wait for the arrival of an inevitable, tragic fate.

She must have suffered a lot ever since meeting him.

"Thinking about it, the God Monarch of the Sword Hut said that my sword art has too much yearning but lacks protection, and that's why it lacks the determination to push through at all costs. Is that the reason I failed?"

To protect meant to keep one's loved ones free from harm, but in the end, it felt like he could not protect anyone at all. It seemed like he really was not suited for this.

He was not like Kong shi, who carried great compassion for everyone and wholeheartedly wished for the prosperity of the

world. He had never wanted to become the savior of the world either.

That was not the path he wanted to walk. That was not the path that he had chosen.

“I am just me. I don’t hope to become enlightened and truly liberated from the world. All I hope is to be accountable to my own conscience.

“If we can’t be together alive, at the very least, we will be together after death!

“Let this be the final desperate struggle for my obstinacy!

“May we reunite if I survive this ordeal, and I pray that we’ll continue living on in each other’s minds should I fall in this fight!”

Hong long!

A brilliant glint surfaced in Zhang Xuan’s eyes as he compressed his surging Sword Intent together into the Crimson Heaven Sword.

Tzla!

With a slash of his sword, a burst of sword qi shot right into the heavens and tore the attack of the Epitome Monarch Pill in two.

“T-this... What kind of sword art is that? How are you able to execute such a powerful move?”

A shrill cry echoed in the air as the Epitome Monarch Pill muttered in disbelief. His body burst apart and morphed into a tornado of condensed spiritual energy before surging furiously into Zhang Xuan’s body.

With this, the restraints that had held Zhang Xuan back previously were swiftly overcome, and his cultivation surged furiously.

With a victorious smile, Zhang Xuan looked into the sky and bellowed with a regal voice that echoed in the depths of countless souls, “Today, I shall become a God Monarch.”

And just like that, he overcame the final bottleneck to the peak of the Firmament.

God Monarch realm, reached!

Boom!

The Flooding Sea finally burst apart like a brilliant firework.

## 2263 Finale 2

Half a minute earlier...

“Something happened to the Flooding Sea!”

Seeing how the black entrance before them was shaking ceaselessly, the faces of the Cloud Dragon Monarch and the others warped in shock.

All this while, they had assumed that the Flood of Spiritual Energy had become part of the natural cycle of the Firmament, a phenomenon that would come without fail every decade. Only upon seeing this did they realize that it was something that could collapse and vanish.

Once it disappeared, the Firmament would lose its final pillar of support. The spiritual energy of the Firmament would drain without stop till everything finally dried up, leaving behind nothing but a dead, desolate world.

“Stop it!”

The present God Monarchs raised their hands and channeled their powers into the black hole right before their eyes. They were hoping to use their powers to delay the collapse of the Flooding Sea.

Kacha! Kacha!

But barely after hanging on for a while, a massive tear suddenly appeared on the seal on the dimension fissure, causing spiritual energy that had just returned to the Firmament to be swallowed by the dimension fissure once more.

The tear continued to grow larger and larger, inching its way across the entire dimension fissure at a steady pace.

“First and foremost, we should stabilize the Firmament!” the Cloud Dragon Monarch bellowed.

They knew that this was not the time for them to be competing with one another. It was the time for them to protect the

Firmament and their home.

So, seven pulses of energy surged toward the dimension fissure, where the spiritual energy was escaping, to reseal it. Through sealing the dimension fissure, they were able to stabilize the state of the Firmament for the time being.

However, the condition of the Firmament had already been badly shaken, and the receding of the spiritual energy into the dimension fissure could not be undone.

The earth shuddered and the stars in the sky dimmed, looking as if they would fall at any moment. Countless buildings crumbled to the ground.

It looked as if the end had come.

“The Firmament is coming to an end...”

“I thought that this day would come, but I didn’t know it would come so quickly...”

“Don’t bother running anymore. If the Firmament collapses, there’ll be nowhere safe no matter where we escape to...”

...

In cities all over the Firmament, countless cultivators were staring at the sky with desolate looks on their faces.

Ever since spiritual energy began receding from the environment more than forty years ago, they had known deep inside that it was only a matter of time before the situation escalated into something beyond their control. They just did not expect it to come so soon.

“Let’s just wait and see. If the Nine God Monarchs can save the Firmament, we might stand a chance. Otherwise, the only fate that awaits all of us is death. There’s no need to feel so conflicted about this...” a high-tier God looking at the panicked crowd said.

Before he could finish his words, a voice suddenly echoed in the depths of their hearts, as if the will of the world had seeped into his body. “Today, I shall be a God Monarch!”



“God Monarch? Someone has managed to make a breakthrough... It’s God Monarch Zhang Xuan!”

“Isn’t Zhang Xuan that apothecary? How did he manage to become a God Monarch?”

“Indeed, that’s him! Back then, when the Heaven Subjugation Monarch became a God Monarch, I also heard a voice like that...”

...

Everyone was taken aback by such a turn of events.

In Twilight City, after hearing the voice that sounded in his mind, Mo Yun laoshi’s mouth fell open as he muttered in absolute shock, “God Monarch Zhang Xuan...”

A month ago, when he first met the other party, he had been extremely weak, only a God realm primary stage. Who would have thought that he would become a God Monarch within a single month, reaching the very zenith of the Firmament?

...

“He became a God Monarch?”

The teapot that Qi Ling-er was holding fell to the ground, but she did not even notice that.

She had known all along that the young man was no ordinary person, and she was convinced that he would grow stronger and stronger and eventually become a powerhouse of the Firmament. But she did not think that he would actually become a God Monarch, and at such a swift pace at that...

...

“As expected of the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies. Just like the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, he really managed to make a breakthrough in the Flooding Sea,” Fairy Linglong said with a conflicted look on her face.

The Flooding Sea had completely collapsed, but in the depths of the darkness, a young man stood imposingly in the sky. His face reflected the lofty look of an individual who towered over the world.

It was the same young man whom she had seen back on the moon.

When she first met the young man in the Sky of Linglong, she had intended to kill him over the issue regarding Baiye Qinghong. Back then, she could not have imagined that a few days later, he would actually transcend the level of a Conferred God King to become a God Monarch like her!

Furthermore, as a Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, it was likely that the strength he wielded as a God Monarch was superior to the rest of them.

“It’s no wonder the Deathless Monarch acknowledged him as his master, and God Monarch Lingxi fell heads over heels for him... He’s indeed an extraordinary individual!”

She had always prided herself for her sharp eye, but it seemed like she still was not as far-sighted as those two.

“The cultivators whom we have taken in are all his direct disciples. Though he was born a mortal, he carries the air of a true monarch. Just like the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, his ascension to the top might have been inevitable from the very start...”

The Cloud Dragon Monarch, God Monarch Zhuoyang, and the others sighed deeply.

They had been thinking that they could suppress the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies to prevent his ascension, but it seemed like their efforts had been futile from the start. There was no way they could have defied the will of the Nine Skies.

“He didn’t make use of the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies for his breakthrough!” Demon Monarch Qiankun suddenly exclaimed.

Those words startled everyone.

They had subconsciously assumed that the young man’s breakthrough had something to do with the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies as, in their opinion, only such an artifact could allow one to overcome that final bottleneck.

They had been so preoccupied with dealing with the destruction of the Flooding Sea that they did not notice the blossomed lotus amid the void.

The lotus had an ephemeral appearance that looked as if it had been carefully chiseled from a piece of jade, and its beauty held great temptation even for the God Monarchs.

“If he hasn’t used it, it means that we still stand a chance. If we can obtain it and use it for ourselves, we’ll surely be able to raise our cultivation!” God Monarch Fumeng exclaimed.

The Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies represented an opportunity for them to overcome their current self and possibly become an existence on par with God Monarch Lingxi. It would have been one thing if Zhang Xuan had consumed it, but upon realizing that it was still intact, there was no way they could continue holding themselves back.

“Zhang Xuan has only just made a breakthrough, and he’s still in the midst of reinforcing his cultivation. He won’t be able to assimilate that treasure anytime soon... It’s mine then!”

Without any hesitation, God Monarch Fumeng rushed right toward the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies to claim it for himself.

“Hold it right there. It’s mine!” Demon Monarch Qiankun shouted as he quickly dashed over.

The Acheron God Monarch, Cloud Dragon Monarch, Fairy Linglong, and God Monarch Zhuoyang immediately followed suit.

No one was willing to miss this precious opportunity!

All sorts of forces swiftly gathered in the air, forming bursts of energies that flew toward each of the six God Monarchs.

The God Monarchs were trying to slow down their rivals so that they could reach the lotus before anyone else and rise to a position of unparalleled power.

Boom!

But before any of the six God Monarchs could reach the lotus, a powerful barrier suddenly formed around the lotus, blocking

them. Following that, before everyone's astonished gaze, the lotus began to glow brilliantly as nine bursts of light irradiated the Firmament.

It was as if another sun had risen in the sky.

Peng peng peng peng peng peng!

The sudden outburst of light from the lotus knocked back the six God Monarchs, forcing them to retreat several steps simultaneously, and the impact left their faces pale.

It was clear from this clash that the lotus possessed strength at least comparable to them.

Weng!

With incredulous looks on their faces, the lotus before their eyes began to morph into the form of a young man. The young man cracked his neck leisurely before turning to look at Zhang Xuan with an exasperated look on his face.

“To think that you managed to make a breakthrough before me... How am I to show off like this?” he muttered in annoyance.

Then, he raised his head and declared, “I am a God Monarch like this damned ass here!”

“Two God Monarchs?”

“Is this really happening? Two God Monarchs actually appeared one after another...”

“No, that isn't it. It's only one... Haven't you realized that he is Zhang Xuan's clone?”

“His clone also became a God Monarch?”

The Cloud Dragon Monarch, Fairy Linglong, and the others grew ever more frenzied.

God Monarchs were the strongest existences in the world, and for the longest of time, there had only been the Nine God Monarchs in the Firmament. Everyone had believed that it would remain that way till the end of time, all the way till the Heaven Subjugation Monarch appeared.

It was then that everyone had realized that it was possible to cultivate to the level of a God Monarch.

Nevertheless, the nine of them had remained confident that their positions were unshakeable, till...

On this very day, two God Monarchs ascended one after another, and they were even in a master-clone relationship. What the heck was happening?

When did it become so easy to become a God Monarch?

More importantly, the first declaration that one made upon becoming a God Monarch was the best opportunity to build up one's reputation. But for some reason, this clone of Zhang Xuan seemed to appear exceptionally frustrated because it had lost to its main body and was not able to brag about its accomplishment...

The heck? You are a God Monarch!

We are lofty existences that have transcended mortality! Can you at least play your part as one of us instead of pulling down our reputation? You are making us look like ruffians on the street!

Not only were the God Monarchs stunned, everyone in the Firmament was taken aback.

They had never thought that the day would come when they heard a God Monarch hurling vulgarities!

Besides... why were so many God Monarchs popping up as if they were bamboo shoots after a rain? It really felt like the prestige that came with the title was slowly degrading over time.

“An individual of two God Monarchs, the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies. This is my master!” Little Chick cried out hearteningly.

As expected of his master, he was always cool no matter where he was!

Meanwhile, oblivious to his clone's narcissism and everyone else's shock, the real Zhang Xuan exhaled a mouthful of turbid air.

He had thought that he was doomed, but in the final moment, he had successfully comprehended a God Monarch realm sword art and slain the Epitome Monarch Pill, thus resulting in his ascension as a God Monarch.

He had come so close to death, but he had managed to overcome the crisis.

Zhang Xuan closed his eyes and perceived the raging energy flowing through his body as he clenched his fists tightly in agitation. He felt very different from how he had before.

In his current state, he felt like he held the entire world in his control. With a thought, he could make the world crumble.

“Somehow, I am two times stronger than I expected. It must be due to the influence of my clone...”

With the breakthrough of his clone as well, his two severed souls had successfully become God Monarchs. As a result of that, his physical body, soul, and zhenqi far exceeded those of the other God Monarchs, reaching an unfathomable level.

Boom! Boom!

While Zhang Xuan was in the midst of exploring the newfound strength in his body, the sky suddenly grew dark. Ominous clouds swarmed in, and it felt like the cloak of night had been cast over the Firmament.

The dimension fissure that the God Monarchs had sealed with difficulty began expanding once more, and it felt like the Firmament would fall apart under this ordeal.

“It’s the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation...” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes.

When one’s cultivation finally reached a level that the world could no longer withstand, a tribulation would fall upon one. This was similar to the Ancient Sage Ordeal of the Master Teacher Continent and the Semi-Divinity Ordeal of the Azure.

In the Firmament, this was known as the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation.

One who wanted to become a God Monarch had to overcome this tribulation.

“Isn’t this Monarch Heavenly Tribulation way too big?” Fairy Linglong asked with quivering lips.

“His tribulation looks as if it wields the force to tear apart the entire Firmament. How frightening... Not even the Heaven Subjugation Monarch’s tribulation back then was this powerful,” the Cloud Dragon Monarch muttered to himself.

“Back then, the Heaven Subjugation Monarch became a God Monarch by himself whereas Zhang Xuan made a breakthrough together with his clone, resulting in his prowess being doubled. Naturally, the tribulation he has to face is several times more powerful as well,” Demon Monarch Qiankun remarked with a bitter smile.

It was both a good thing and a bad thing that Zhang Xuan and his clone had made a breakthrough simultaneously to become God Monarchs.

The good thing was that his strength had doubled, granting him the fighting prowess to stand on par with the strongest God Monarch even though he had only just made a breakthrough.

But the bad thing was that the cultivation ordeal he had to overcome would be extraordinarily powerful as well.

He could lose his life shortly after his breakthrough.

Watching as more and more destructive energies gathered above him, ready to lay waste to him, Zhang Xuan smiled.

“The tribulation sure looks terrifying, but it means nothing to me.”

Under normal circumstances, it was impossible for a person who had just become a God Monarch to overcome such a powerful lightning tribulation.

However, it was a different case for Zhang Xuan.

He had already comprehended a God Monarch realm sword art, allowing him to summon a force far beyond one’s imagination. With the power at his disposal, this mere lightning tribulation did not pose a threat to him.

Hula!

Zhang Xuan took out the Crimson Heaven Sword and slashed it right toward the lightning tribulation above him.

This single attack created a brilliance that pierced through the darkness shrouding the Firmament, blinding everyone's sight for an instant.

The ominous clouds that loomed in the sky were vanquished.

With a single strike, he had overcome the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation!

Tzla!

With the end of the tribulation, Zhang Xuan heard fabric ripping echoing around him. Turning his head, he realized that the dimension fissure in the sky above the Flooding Sea had grown even larger.

Be it the collapse of the Flooding Sea or the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation, the Firmament had suffered heavy impacts one after another in swift succession, causing its very foundation to be rattled.

It had already gone beyond the tipping point of what the Firmament itself was able to repair, and right now, it was starting to progress toward a fate of destruction.

“Seal!”

With a flick of his finger, Zhang Xuan poured his zhenqi into the dimension fissure, hoping to forcefully close it up, but the effects were minuscule.

It was just like how, once a mirror was cracked, even the strongest glue would not be able to repair it to how it was.

Seeing how the dimension fissure was continuing to grow, Zhang Xuan turned to Little Chick and asked, “Are there any other ways out of this?”

No matter what, Little Chick was still a God Monarch who had lived since ancient times. He might just have a solution in mind.

“I don't know what we can do either...” Little Chick shook his head bitterly.



Earlier, when the six God Monarchs vied for the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, he had remained behind to keep the expansion of the dimension fissure under control, but he was unable to hold it back even after pushing himself to his limits.

“There’s no way out of this anymore...”

Just as Zhang Xuan was at an utter loss as to what to do, a composed voice echoed beside him. Glancing over, Zhang Xuan saw Luo Ruoxin standing right next to him with a deep frown.

Knowing that she was the one who knew the most about the current situation, he asked, “What is happening to the Firmament right now? My earlier slash might not have been weak, but it shouldn’t have resulted in it becoming tattered like that...”

He knew that the situation was not looking good for them, but it had not been so bad that it was irresolvable earlier. Yet, shortly after his breakthrough, it felt like the condition of the Firmament had suddenly deteriorated, reaching a state of hopelessness.

Hearing Zhang Xuan’s question, Luo Ruoxin shook her head and sighed. “The Firmament is like an ancient relic that has reached its limit. It was no longer able to support the birth of any strong powers, but the sudden ascension of you and your clone sapped away the final slivers of its foundation...”

“Sapped away its foundation?” Zhang Xuan frowned in incomprehension.

“As the heavens have been fragmented, the ability of the Firmament to regulate itself has been slowly eroding. In its current state, it is unable to withstand the breakthrough of new God Monarchs,” Luo Ruoxin further explained.

“So, if I didn’t make a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm, the Firmament might still have been able to survive for a long while?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Did he make a fatal mistake?

“Of course not. Even if you haven’t made a breakthrough, the Firmament still wouldn’t have been able to survive to the end of the next month. If the Firmament is to have any chance of surviving this ordeal at all, you needed to make a breakthrough eventually...” Luo Ruoxin sighed deeply.

“Wait a moment, the Firmament wouldn’t have survived to the end of the next month?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in shock.

The other God Monarchs were dumbstruck as well.

Clearly, they were unaware of this matter.

If the Firmament collapsed, everything would be over. Their pursuit of power and prestige would have all been for naught, and their effort thus far would have become nothing more than a joke.

“Do you know where the Flooding Sea came from?” Luo Ruoxin asked as she pointed to the shattered Flooding Sea.

The Cloud Dragon Monarch interjected into the conversation at this point. “It seems to have appeared fifty years ago, when the disaster of Spirit Origin Royal City occurred and the Deathless Monarch suddenly disappeared from the Firmament...”

Fifty years was not even the lifespan of an ordinary mortal, but to the immemorial Firmament, it had changed by so much within this short period of time.

“Indeed, the Flooding Sea first appeared during that period. Look at the entrance of the Flooding Sea, doesn’t it look like a huge hole that has been torn away from the Firmament?” Luo Ruoxin asked once more.

“It does.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

He had noticed this when he first arrived before the Flooding Sea. It looked as if someone had forcefully torn an irreparable hole in the sky of the Firmament, but he had swiftly put the thought aside as he did not think that someone would have the ability to do that.

After all, the Firmament had the ability to restore any instabilities in its space. It was for that reason that most dimension rifts that were created by cultivators closed soon enough, posing no threat to the Firmament at all.

It was hard to imagine what could have happened in order to create such a lasting mark on the Firmament.

“It was torn by a person.” Luo Ruoxin shook her head as she explained with a grim look.

Everyone froze in place.

Every single one of them present had the ability to create dimension rifts, but those would close soon enough due to the laws of the Firmament.

Yet, the dimension fissure had appeared above the Flooding Sea fifty years ago but still had not closed. Not only so, it even continued to expand over time...

They could not begin to imagine how powerful the person who had done this was.

Could he be even more formidable than them, the God Monarchs of the Firmament?

If that was really the case, where could that person have come from, and why would he make a move on the Firmament?

While everyone was shocked by the revelation, Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled the massive palm print that he had seen in the Flooding Sea. He had harbored similar doubts earlier, but he did not dare believe it back then.

Could it really have been the case?

“Fifty years ago, a palm suddenly descended from the sky and tore a massive hole in the Firmament.” Luo Ruoxin revealed what she knew about the incident fifty years ago without hiding anything. “Huge swathes of land were devoured by the dimension fissure that was formed as a result of the hole, creating what eventually came to be known as the Flooding Sea. The Deathless Monarch of the Sky of Spirit Origin was one of those who tried to fight against the palm, and he

eventually ended up getting killed by it, and Spirit Origin Royal City ended up being struck into chaotic space as well!

“In fact, the heavens of the Firmament also ended up being fragmented into three pieces that very day. Of those three pieces, Heavens’ Order and Heavens’ Imperfections fell through the cracks of space and flowed through the chaotic space for countless years. Eventually, those two pieces fell into the hands of the Heaven Subjugation Monarch and Zhang Xuan.”

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan’s body shuddered.

It seemed like his guess had been spot-on.

But who had launched the palm strike against the Firmament? How did the person gain such power?

“I don’t know where the palm came from or why it would attack the Firmament. However, what I do know is that the palm strike wields strength beyond what we, the God Monarchs, are capable of opposing,” Luo Ruoxin said with a hint of fear in her voice. “And to make things worse, that person’s attack carries malignant energy that harnesses the power to neutralize the heavens.”

“This...” Zhang Xuan suddenly recalled the gray currents of malignant energy that he had seen in the abyss beneath Spirit Origin Royal City. It had the ability to neutralize the Heaven’s Path zhenqi to form a brilliant green light before vanishing from sight.

And he had found the very same malignant energy in the Flooding Sea.

If such was the power that lingered in the dimension fissure, it would explain why the Firmament had not been able to seal the anomaly.

It was similar to how a wound would never heal if one applied a layer of chili paste over it instead of leaving it be.

Unable to be closed, the dimension fissure continued to sap spiritual energy from the Firmament relentlessly, causing it to grow weaker and weaker.

“With the fragmentation of the heavens and the gradual depletion of spiritual energy from the Firmament, it’s already a miracle that we have been able to last through the past fifty years. Based on my estimates, the Firmament would have collapsed within the next month after this Flood of Spiritual Energy. However, due to you and your clone’s simultaneous breakthrough, as well as that powerful sword art that you executed to overcome the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation, the deadline ended up being brought forward,” Luo Ruoxin said.

Even though it would hasten the doom of the Firmament, Zhang Xuan had to make this breakthrough by hook or by crook.

He needed to become a God Monarch for the fragment of the heavens that he possessed to fully mature. Only then would they stand a chance at reversing the fate of the Firmament.

Otherwise, what they would be doing was just delaying the inevitable.

“What do we do now?” Zhang Xuan asked Luo Ruoxin anxiously.

She had been preparing for this moment for the past fifty years, so if anyone had a plan to resolve the situation, it could only be her.

“There are two solutions. First, we can rid the malignant energy that has been neutralizing the power of the heavens. Second, we can repair the heavens to make it whole again,” Luo Ruoxin replied.

Zhang Xuan pondered over those two solutions for a moment before asking, “How can we get rid of the malignant energy that has been neutralizing the power of the heavens?”

He had encountered it back when he was in the abyss beneath Spirit Origin Royal City, and the malignant energy had formed a massive gray wall over there. If he wanted to clear away the malignant energy there, he would need an unimaginable amount of Heaven’s Path zhenqi.

Furthermore, given the point that they had reached, could they really avert the destruction of the Firmament just by

neutralizing the malignant energy?

“I have a strong feeling that over the past fifty years, the malignant energy has already developed its own consciousness and transmogrified into the form of a human. Otherwise, the dimension fissure above the Flooding Sea wouldn’t have grown so quickly. If we wish to resolve the problem, we’ll have to slay the consciousness of the malignant energy in order to halt the destruction. Then, all we have to do is put the fragments of the heavens together once more in order to save the Firmament,” Luo Ruoxin said after pondering for a moment.

“Transmogrified into a human?” Zhang Xuan was stunned.

Was it possible for that malignant energy to transmogrify into a human?

“That’s right.” Luo Ruoxin nodded. “I have never met it before, so I can’t really say for sure. It’s just conjecture on my part, but I believe that the possibility of that happening is very high.”

“I see. Assuming that your conjecture is correct, how powerful do you think it is? Also, do you have any idea where it might be?” Zhang Xuan asked.

These were the questions that he was the most concerned about.

If it was still not too strong, as long as they pooled their powers together, they might still stand a chance.

“I don’t know for sure, but I don’t think that we’ll be a match for it. Even with the strength of me, the eight God Monarchs, you, and your clone, our chances of winning against it will be slim at most,” Luo Ruoxin said. “You also know that it has the strength to tear apart the fabric of the Firmament and has left us utterly helpless for the past fifty years.”

Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly upon hearing those words.

Indeed. If it was that easy to deal with it, they would not have been at a loss as to what to do for so many years.

“You mentioned putting the fragments of the heavens together earlier... You are referring to the War of the Heavens, right?” Zhang Xuan asked with a hint of trepidation to his voice.

“Indeed. Both you and Kong shi carry a fragment of the heavens in your bodies. In order to make the heavens whole again, we have to...” Luo Ruoxin’s voice slowly trailed off near the end as she began trembling a little.

She could not bring herself to say those words out loud.

It was an inevitable fate, but she was reluctant to face it.

“I understand...” Zhang Xuan nodded with a wry smile. “It’s fine. You should just kill me. You have already obtained Kong shi’s Heavens’ Order, and now that I am a God Monarch, I can join the War of the Heavens...”

“Since it’s the War of the Heavens, how can it be that simple? If we could solve the situation by having one of us sacrifice ourselves, I would rather be the one who is killed!” Luo Ruoxin shook her head and sighed. “In the War of the Heavens, you don’t gain the eligibility just by becoming a God Monarch. Rather, you have to prove yourself first. The first condition to do so is to gain the acknowledgement of the Nine Skies.”

“Acknowledgement of the Nine Skies? But aren’t I already the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies... Ah! You mean... challenging the Nine God Monarchs?” Zhang Xuan asked.

Based on what Kong shi had done, it seemed like there were two ways to gain the acknowledgement of the Nine Skies. One was to become a Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, and the other was to defeat the Nine God Monarchs and receive their acknowledgement.

He had managed to become the Conferred God King of the Nine Skies, but becoming the God Monarch of the Nine Skies was much more troublesome than that. Otherwise, Kong shi would not have had to go around challenging the Nine God Monarchs one after another just to receive their acknowledgement.

Luo Ruoxin nodded to acknowledge Zhang Xuan’s words.

Meanwhile, Demon Monarch Qiankun and the others, who had been listening from the sidelines, suddenly felt a cold chill run down their spines as a piercing gaze slowly fell on them.

Are we going to be pummeled yet again?

Who the hell is the one who came up with such darned rules for the War of the Heavens?

We are bystanders! Innocent bystanders!

It's like a person venting their anger on their own cat after being beaten up by someone else... What did the cat ever do to you?

Make some sense, won't you?

While those God Monarchs were shuddering in fear, Zhang Xuan's lips curled up as he said, "Come at me together then!"

With a dual breakthrough to God Monarch with his clone and his God Monarch realm sword art, he no longer feared any of the God Monarchs.

He might have been slightly lacking compared to Kong shi when he was at his peak, but against this bunch of fellows, he was definitely more than capable of dealing with them.

"..."

"The heck..."

Some of the God Monarchs burst into tears.

Bruh! I know that you want to flaunt your new strength, but you don't need to do this, right?

It was already embarrassing enough for them to be defeated one by one, but that fellow wanted to pummel them as a group...

Do you think that we have no dignity at all?

We are God Monarchs! You shouldn't do this to us!

Their faces reddened as they were conflicted over what they should do. Accepting the challenge was not an option, but rejecting the challenge would be equally humiliating.

In this instant, they were at a loss as to what they should do.



“There’s no need for us to fight. I admit defeat!” Little Chick said.

Since the young man was his master, there was no shame in him admitting defeat.

“This...” Seeing that the Deathless Monarch had admitted defeat, the others also looked at one another in hesitation. A moment later, they sighed deeply and said, “We admit defeat as well...”

What else could they do?

It would only be more humiliating if they were forced to surrender under his fists.

Zhang Xuan and his clone were both God Monarchs, and he even had a God Monarch tamed beast that he could bring into battle as well. It was obviously a battle that they could not possibly win!

They would be facing three powerful God Monarchs simultaneously!

More importantly, they had seen how the young man sliced through the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation with a single slash of his sword. The might of that sword art was at the level where they could only barely block it with their powers put together, so there was no way they would be willing to face him individually.

With their pride, they could not stoop to the level of getting into a collaborative formation to deal with an enemy.

“This...” Luo Ruoxin’s eyebrows twitched at the sight before her.

Back when Kong Shi challenged them, he would present his name scroll to them and make an appointment beforehand. All the formalities were done properly; even when one side lost the battle, it did not feel as humiliating due to how ceremonial it was.

Yet, Zhang Xuan simply walked up to them and told them to come at him all at once.

You must not think much of God Monarchs at all, huh?

The moment that the Cloud Dragon Monarch, Acheron God Monarch, God Monarch Fumeng, Demon Monarch Qiankun, God Monarch Zhuoyang, Fairy Linglong, and the Deathless Monarch admitted their defeat, the Seals of Supreme Monarch that they carried released a burst of power that shrouded Zhang Xuan, bestowing him with the acknowledgement of those seven Skies.

With these acknowledgements, he had gained the ability to tap into the Anima of Yearning of the cultivators in those seven Skies.

“Hmm? That doesn’t seem right. It’s not seven but eight Skies... I have already received the acknowledgement of eight Skies?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback.

He could feel a sense of intimacy with eight Skies in the Firmament rather than seven.

Had the God Monarch of the Sword Hut also acknowledged him at some point?

“It’s the Crimson Heaven Sword, the Sacred Sword of the Sky of Heavenly Sword. By giving it to you, it means that the Sky of Heavenly Sword has acknowledged your strength and your potential,” Luo Ruoxin said.

Those words made Zhang Xuan nod in realization.

The God Monarch of the Sword Hut had mentioned that he had spent decades trying to forge this sword. Given so, even if the sword was not the Seal of Supreme Monarch, it also carried a similar significance to it.

Zhang Xuan turned to the young lady before him and asked, “Now that I have received the acknowledgements from the other eight Skies, am I eligible to participate in the War of the Heavens?”

Kong shi had challenged Luo Ruoxin only after defeating the other Eight God Monarchs and receiving their acknowledgement.

Luo Ruoxin lowered her head slightly as she quietly asked, “Are you certain about this?”

“Yes, I am certain about this,” Zhang Xuan said.

Glancing at the Firmament beneath him, he could see that chaos had spread everywhere. Out of desperation, cultivators had started killing one another to vie for the limited resources. Not even the God Kings were able to calm the chaos.

He could delay the fight a little more if he wanted to, but every moment wasted would mean more deaths.

He might not be selfless, but he was not willing to bear the burden of so many lives.

He already knew that this fight was inevitable, so it was meaningless to delay it any longer.

“Let’s begin then...” Luo Ruoxin took a deep breath before whipping out her sword.

She felt indignant and reluctant, but her feelings would not make a difference.

Ever since she accepted his confession, their fate had been sealed. They could not escape from it, and there was no changing it.

Their relationship was doomed to end in a tragedy.

“Yes, let’s begin,” Zhang Xuan replied with a smile.

They drove their cultivation to their limits as they prepared for the final showdown.

Just as they were about to make their move, an overwhelming energy suddenly burst forth from above.

Boom boom boom!

The dimension fissure above them grew even larger than before, and the black entrance of the Flooding Sea began to revolve slowly, forming a black hole to devour all beings in the world.

Be it spiritual energy, land, or life, everything was being sucked into it before dissipating amid a shimmer of green light.

“This is bad. The consciousness behind the malignant energy has made a move,” Luo Ruoxin exclaimed with a grim look.

“The consciousness behind the malignant energy?” Zhang Xuan repeated as he turned his gaze over as well.

Earlier, Luo Ruoxin had mentioned that it was highly likely that the malignant energy that could neutralize his Heaven’s Path zhenqi had already gained consciousness, allowing it to transmogrify into a human-shaped monster.

From the sound of it, it seemed like it was going to appear before him.

Hong long long!

As the black hole devoured more and more things, the space in the Firmament began to distort.

Those who were close to the black hole, Ao Feng and the other Conferred God Kings, could hardly stand their ground against the powerful suction force coming from it at all.

Zhang Xuan quickly channeled his energy into his Crimson Heaven Sword before slashing it toward the black hole.

However, it stopped right before the entrance of the black hole before dissipating.

“It’s too strong...” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in shock.

This was an attack that had allowed him to dispel the Monarch Heavenly Tribulation earlier, yet it could not do anything to the black hole. Just how powerful could that transmogrified being be?

“It’s coming out!” Luo Ruoxin exclaimed as she drove her zhenqi to her limits, preparing herself to make a move if needed.

Along with her words, a black silhouette began walking out of the revolving black hole. Everything that stood in its way, no matter how powerful it was, would be disintegrated into dust before disappearing amid a shimmer of green light.

“It’s the malignant energy...” Zhang Xuan felt his heart turning cold.

Having faced the malignant energy before, he knew how frightening it was. It possessed the power to neutralize even his powerful Heaven's Path zhenqi without any issues. Before it, the strongest artifacts in the Firmament swiftly corroded into nothing at all.

Upon walking out of the black hole, the black silhouette looked around him before his lips curved into a gentle smile. "Zhang shi, long time no see..."

Zhang Xuan's body stiffened upon seeing the true face of the black silhouette. "How can that be?"

The person who had appeared before him, the consciousness of the malignant energy that could neutralize his Heaven's Path zhenqi, turned out to be a familiar face to him... Vicious!

He quickly turned his attention toward his Book of Heaven's Path, only to realize that it was completely empty. Vicious, who should have been imprisoned there, had vanished without a trace.

And he did not notice a thing at all!

He clearly remembered that the other party had still been around when he entered the Flooding Sea, so when in the world did he disappear and grow so powerful?

Seeing through Zhang Xuan's doubts, Vicious smiled a little to himself. "You look confused. You must be wondering how I managed to leave the Book of Heaven's Path even though I should have been suppressed by its force."

That only made Zhang Xuan further narrow his eyes.

"The Book of Heaven's Path is indeed very scary, but you have neglected the fact that the golden page you have sealed me with only possesses the power of the Master Teacher Continent's heavens," Vicious said. "When my cultivation rose to Pseudo Immortal realm in the Azure, I was able to break free from the seal easily. I chose to remain in the Book of Heaven's Path of my own volition. Would you like to fathom a guess as to why?"

Zhang Xuan's heart skipped a beat upon hearing those words.

He had indeed neglected such a possibility.

As he ascended through the worlds, his Library of Heaven's Path had gotten proportionately stronger.

When he was still on the Master Teacher Continent, his golden page only wielded the ability to slay Ancient Sages. When he rose to the Azure, his golden page was able to deal with High Immortals with ease.

In the Firmament, the golden page was able to subdue any enemies beneath the God Monarch realm.

From that, it could be seen that the prowess of the golden page was dependent on the world he was in.

Vicious had been following him since his time at the Master Teacher Continent, and when they entered the Flooding Sea, the other party's cultivation had already reached the God King realm.

With such strength, how could the golden page formed on the Master Teacher Continent possibly continue restraining it?

It should have been obvious, but he had neglected such a simple fact!

"I told you that my body is suited to the Firmament, so I have been able to cultivate faster ever since arriving in the Firmament," Vicious said. "However, I didn't grow by absorbing the spiritual energy of the Firmament but the malignant energy that is destroying it! This is especially so when you brought me into the depths of the abyss. I realized that I could absorb it and grow swiftly... Of course, just the malignant energy in the abyss wasn't enough for me to make a complete transformation. The Flooding Sea was the key that allowed me to truly spread my wings!

"The Flooding Sea was an area that was free of the Firmament and its heavens' restraints, so the Book of Heaven's Path couldn't suppress me any longer. While you were searching for the Epitome Monarch Pill, I discreetly escaped to absorb the malignant energy, and eventually, I came to possess powers far exceeding any of you!

“I was also the one who led the Epitome Monarch Pill to where the Monarch Spirit Grass was. How else do you think it was able to reach a medicinal herb that it was unable to gather over the past few decades so suddenly?”

Those words made Zhang Xuan widen his eyes in realization.

He had been thinking that it was weird how the Epitome Monarch Pill did not devour the Monarch Spirit Grass even though it had been wanting to make a breakthrough to the God Monarch realm in order to escape the Flooding Sea. It was too much of a coincidence for it to have only found the Monarch Spirit Grass after encountering him.

It turned out that someone had helped it!

After all, the area where the Monarch Spirit Grass grew was extremely chaotic and fraught with danger. Zhang Xuan had only managed to enter the area by tapping into Luo Qiqi’s unique abilities as the Dimension Silencer. Otherwise, there was no way he could have even come close to it.

Given so, it should have been even more impossible for the Epitome Monarch Pill to approach the Monarch Spirit Grass!

“I am the great Vicious who once dominated the world,” Vicious roared furiously. “Back then, Kong shi schemed against me and nearly caused my death, and you forced me to bow down to you as your servant and ordered me around as if I was your dog. It’ll be hard for me to quell the rage burning in my heart if I don’t rip you into shreds...”

He was a being who had ruled over the Master Teacher Continent tens of thousands of years ago, and it had not been easy for him to come back to life. Yet, he had been subdued by a mere junior and forced to obey his command. It was inevitable that he felt resentful for it.

But due to his circumstances, he could only lower his head and tolerate it till he finally had enough power to turn the tables.

“You aren’t the consciousness born within the malignant energy... Instead, you took control of it, huh?” Zhang Xuan finally came to realize what was going on.

Most likely, Vicious had somehow managed to absorb the malignant energy and turn it into his own strength.

“You are still as sharp as ever. We of the Spirit Tribe originated from the Gods of Spirit Origin Royal City. But fifty years ago, a hand thrust us into chaotic space, forcing us out of the Firmament. I thought that I would be able to return to the Firmament with my own strength, but who could have known that the darned malignant energy would continue to plague us, slowly devouring our strength!” Vicious gritted his teeth in anger.

“Back then, I thought that if I could somehow turn this power into mine, I would be unstoppable... But even after I conquered the Master Teacher Continent, I was unable to figure out a way to do so.

“It was only during Kong shi’s ascension to power that I finally understood it. The malignant energy is an antithesis to the zhenqi we cultivate. It’s impossible for any cultivator to tap into that power... unless I give up on my own cultivation and start anew!

“So, I willingly died at the hands of Kong shi. Otherwise, given the strength of that brat back then, do you think that he could really have killed me?”

Zhang Xuan fell silent.

He had read through the records of the Master Teacher Continent, but there were no books that detailed how Kong shi managed to kill Vicious. Most books simply described the battle to be a gruesome one that lasted days.

And when he had asked Vicious about it, the latter had kept repeating that he did not remember a thing at all.

Could that really be true? Did Vicious really allow Kong shi to kill him of his own accord?

And his only motive for that was to give up on his cultivation and start anew so that he could absorb the malignant energy?

That could very well be true.



Even if Vicious had been continuously weakened by the malignant energy, it was unlikely for a God like him to have been killed by Kong shi.

Perhaps... even Kong shi had been duped by Vicious' act.

“Since you are also from the Firmament, shouldn't you help to prevent the collapse of the Firmament instead of controlling the black hole to hasten the destruction? What do you stand to gain from the Firmament's destruction?” Zhang Xuan asked.

He knew that Vicious was intentionally stalling for time in order to gain more power so as to gain a decisive advantage, but he could not help but ask about the other party's true goal.

If the Firmament was destroyed, everything would be gone. All that would be left was emptiness. What did Vicious stand to gain from such an outcome?

“So what if I am from the Firmament? Back then, when we were thrust into the chaotic space, what did those God Monarchs do? Nothing at all! They left us to despair in the lower worlds as our cultivation was slowly nibbled away by the malignant energy. This corrupted system of the Firmament should have been long torn apart and rebuilt!” Vicious sneered coldly.

How many times had he prayed to the Spirit God to save them and bring them back to the Firmament? Yet, all he received was silence and disappointment.

It was at that moment that he realized that it was futile to rely on others. If he wanted to survive, he had to grow strong enough to save himself.

So, he devised a way to absorb and cultivate the malignant energy so that he could rise to the very top of the world, and his efforts did not fail him!

He had finally succeeded!

“Enough, I have said all that should be said. Now that your curiosity has been satisfied, you can die!”

With a cold sneer, Vicious released his massive power, and innumerable dimension rifts opened all around the place,

threatening to tear Zhang Xuan apart.

“One last question. We should have sealed a Soul Contract with one another, and there should have been no way for you to liberate yourself from it. How did you do it?” Zhang Xuan asked.

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As long as he did not cancel the Soul Contract from his side, there should have been no way for Vicious to liberate himself from it.

This was similar to how the Deathless Monarch, despite being a God Monarch, was unable to free himself from a Soul Contract on his own.

In order to prevent Vicious from turning against him, he had made sure to seal a Soul Contract with him while they were on the Master Teacher Continent. This way, even if Vicious gained the ability to escape from the Book of Heaven's Path, he would still be bound by the laws of the Soul Contract.

“Ah, the Soul Contract? It was a headache to me for quite a while, but I realized that my worry was unfounded. What I have in me is the malignant energy that can even neutralize the heavens! As long as I can obtain sufficient strength, it isn't too difficult to tear apart that farce of a Soul Contract!” Vicious smirked.

The Soul Contract was a binding force that held one soul hostage to the other, but the malignant energy was a force that could neutralize even the heavens. As long as it was used properly, it should not come as a surprise that it could neutralize a Soul Contract as well.

“Is that so?” Zhang Xuan murmured as a glint flashed across his eyes.

“Have I satisfied your curiosity now? It is my repayment to you for bringing me to the Firmament! You can die in peace now!” Vicious scoffed.

An ancient, distant aura flowed from Vicious' presence as the abyss beneath him grew even larger. While they were talking, Vicious had managed to absorb a lot more energy, allowing him to further reinforce his cultivation.

Luo Ruoxin also noticed that something was amiss, and she hurriedly sent a telepathic message over to him. “Zhang Xuan, the more the black hole devours, the more powerful he will become...”

“Let’s make our move then!”

With all his doubts resolved, Zhang Xuan brandished his sword and said, “Since that’s the case, shall we fight it out then?”

Hong long!

A powerful burst of Sword Intent gushed forth from his body as he executed his God Monarch realm sword art.

This technique carried all his persistence, pushing his Pathos of Heaven cultivation technique to its very limits.

Hu!

With a single slash, he sought to split Vicious in half.

Luo Ruoxin also made a move at the same time. With a flick of her wrist, she charged forth with a sword in her grasp.

Her sword art was extremely similar to that used by the God Monarch of the Sword Hut. It carried a relentless momentum reminiscent of a cavalry unit charging toward an enemy, but at the same time, her movements felt free and unrestrained.

“Splendid! Your attacks are indeed remarkable. But it’s still lacking a little to go against me...” Vicious chuckled as he pushed his hand downward.

In an instant, his palm seemed to have covered the entire sky. The surrounding space shattered under the pressure, and it felt like even the sun, moon, and stars would be knocked down from the impact of his attack.

Pu! Pu!

Zhang Xuan and Luo Ruoxin were knocked flying simultaneously under the force of the palm strike, and fresh blood spurted from their mouths.

Even with the two of them collaborating with one another, they were still no match for Vicious!

Just what kind of realm had that fellow reached?

“Insolent!”

Zhang Xuan’s clone suddenly bellowed loudly as he began walking over. Every step that he took was accompanied by the blossoming of a lotus flower, and faintly, one could hear a running stream from within the void.

Looking at it from afar, he did have the air of a true expert.

Having assimilated the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, his cultivation was no weaker than the current Zhang Xuan.

He raised his fist, and summoning unbelievable might in his arms, he punched Vicious.

In retaliation, Vicious waved his hand, and his clone was sent flying as well.

He was unable to match Vicious in terms of strength as well.

Watching this sight, Zhang Xuan clasped his own face.

Even after becoming a God Monarch, his clone was still unable to kick off its showoff personality. Instead of wasting his effort on creating such decorative effects, it would have been better for him to channel all his energy into that punch!

That fool...

“We need to make a move as well! If they fall, we’ll be next!” Little Chick bellowed as he unfurled his black wings, setting the sky ablaze with his black flames.

The other six God Monarchs also swiftly brought out their own attacks.

The combined might of the seven God Monarchs was enough to utterly obliterate any of the Skies, but the enemy they were facing was Vicious, who had already absorbed all the malignant energy. As their attacks approached Vicious, the black hole suddenly grew massive before devouring the attacks of the God Monarchs.

A moment later, those attacks rebounded at the God Monarchs with greater ferocity than before.

Peng peng peng!

The seven God Monarchs, along with Zhang Xuan, his clone, and Luo Ruoxin, were knocked flying by that onslaught of attacks.

Even with the combined might of the God Monarchs, they were unable to withstand even a single attack from Vicious!

How in the world was that scoundrel so powerful?

“Playtime is over. You can die now!”

After knocking all ten God Monarchs back, Vicious took a step forward as he raised his fist once more to press down on the crowd.

“Insolent, you wretched demon!”

A loud bellow suddenly echoed in the air, and the elder of the Sky of Heavenly Sword suddenly appeared before them. With a slash of his sword, he formed a silver river of sword qi before them, protecting everyone.

“God Monarch? He is a God Monarch as well?” Zhang Xuan narrowed his eyes in shock.

All along, as the elder had taken his position behind the young man whom he thought was the God Monarch of the Sword Hut, he had assumed that the elder would be a Conferred God King at the very most. However, as soon as the elder exerted his strength, he realized that the other party was a God Monarch!

But if the elder was a God Monarch... who was the young man?

“He is the God Monarch of the Sky of Heavenly Sword,” Luo Ruoxin explained as she struggled to rise back to her feet.

“Wait... then who is the young man whom I met the other day?” Zhang Xuan was bewildered.

“He is...”

Luo Ruoxin was just about to answer the question when the space ahead of them suddenly began distorting, causing the silver river of sword qi to bend away. Following that, the God

Monarch of the Sky of Heavenly Sword was knocked flying before crashing into the ground, forming a huge depression.

Even Zhang Xuan, whose cultivation and mastery of swordsmanship far exceeded that of the elder, was no match for Vicious, so there was no way that he could last for long against Vicious.

“Hahaha! God Monarchs? Nothing more than a bunch of old fools who have stagnated with time! Today, I shall obliterate the Nine Skies and destroy the Firmament, returning everything to ground zero!”

After subduing the God Monarch of the Sky of Heavenly Sword as well, Vicious began laughing frenziedly. The space all around collapsed rapidly, signaling the impending downfall of the Firmament.

“What else can we do?” Zhang Xuan clenched his fists tightly.

He could continue pitting his life against Vicious, but it would be foolish to keep trying the same things when they had failed before while hoping for something different to happen.

Both he and his clone had already exerted their greatest power, and Luo Ruoxin had utilized her strongest trump cards. Yet, they were still unable to stop Vicious.

Was he already invincible in the Firmament?

Did they really have no choice but to watch the collapse of the Firmament helplessly?

“The only way is to have your Heavens’ Imperfection return to the heavens and have the heavens suppress him,” Luo Ruoxin said with tightly clenched fists.

“Return my Heavens’ Imperfection to the heavens...”

Zhang Xuan understood the meaning behind those words.

The Library of Heaven’s Path in his body was a fragment of the heavens, and if he relinquished it, the heavens would finally be completed. With the reinstatement of the heavens, the laws of the heavens would swiftly be enforced, and they might be able to fix the dimension fissure and expel Vicious from the world.

It was just that there was a problem with that plan...

“The current Vicious is simply too strong. If even our forces combined are unable to suppress him, will the heavens, even complete, really be able to do so?” Zhang Xuan shook his head skeptically.

The laws of the heavens were indeed powerful, but they were not absolute. The fact that God Monarchs were able to tear open dimension rifts and travel through space was evidence of that.

Given Vicious’ overwhelming strength, could the heavens really enforce their laws and crush him?

“This...” Luo Ruoxin contemplated for a moment before her face sank a little. “You’re right. The heavens won’t be able to suppress him. However, if the heavens are made whole once more, he might be able to wake up. With his strength, he should be able to slay Vicious easily!”

“He?” Zhang Xuan frowned.

“I’ll bring you over to meet him now. He’s in the Sky of Freedom...”

Taking a deep breath, Luo Ruoxin grabbed Zhang Xuan’s hand and quickly tore open a dimension rift.

“Trying to escape right before me?” Vicious harrumphed coldly as he pressed his palm down once more.

Peng!

Luo Ruoxin was knocked down from the sky.

“You b\*stard!”

Angered by Vicious’ attack, Zhang Xuan immediately executed his sword art once more to slash at Vicious.

Ding ding ding!

Yet again, it was easily deflected by Vicious’ powers.

“The two of you should quickly head over. We’ll hold him here for the time being!” Little Chick exclaimed.



Knowing that the two of them were leaving the area not to escape but to figure out a way to save the Firmament, the rest of the God Monarchs immediately charged forward to tie Vicious down. At the same time, Luo Qiqi also morphed into the Dimension Silencer to freeze the surrounding space.

“Let’s go!”

Seeing how everyone was charging forth without fear of death to cover them, Zhang Xuan’s eyes reddened a little. He knew that time was tight, so he quickly wrapped his hand around Luo Ruoxin’s waist before creating a dimension rift and leaping into it with her.

The next instant, they were in the Sky of Freedom.

The Sky of Freedom no longer looked like the paradise it did before. The collapse of the Firmament had caused great chaos everywhere, and this center of the Firmament was no exception to the rule.

Zhang Xuan looked at the young lady in his embrace and asked, “Where is the person you spoke of?”

If the person she spoke of could really save the Firmament, it would be a small price to pay for him to sacrifice his own life.

“He’s my father.” Luo Ruoxin quickly regulated her zhenqi to recover her wounds as she explained, “The blood inside the pendant I have you belongs to him, and the Deathless Monarch used to be his tamed beast...”

“Your father?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in realization.

That explained why the blood in the pendant resembled Luo Ruoxin’s so much but still somewhat differed.

That was also probably the reason the will left behind by the Deathless Monarch unhesitatingly acknowledged him as his master after seeing the pendant.

“Is your father a God Monarch as well, or does he possess powers surpassing that of a God Monarch?” Zhang Xuan asked.

The blood in the pendant had the ability to calm his Library of Heaven’s Path and restore rationality to his mind. That was an

ability that even the current him did not possess. Furthermore, based on what he had heard from Luo Ruoxin thus far, it seemed like he was much stronger than her.

If that was the case, why did he fall into a coma?

And how would making the heavens whole again allow him to regain his consciousness?

Luo Ruoxin clenched her fists tightly before answering his doubts hesitantly. “He isn’t a God Monarch... but the heavens!”

“Heavens? You are saying that your father is the heavens?” Zhang Xuan found it hard to believe what he was hearing.

“That’s right. Fifty years ago, my father was unable to withstand the prowess of that massive hand, and he ended up falling into a coma. At the same time, the heavens split into three fragments, and the Heavens’ Order and Heavens’ Imperfection fell into the chaotic space. I became the overseer of the Heavens’ Nature, and I have been working ever since to ensure the stability of the Firmament.

“The only way for my father to regain consciousness is to gather all of the scattered pieces. It’s for that reason that I was so determined not to fail. I descended to the Master Teacher Continent to study the Great Codex of Spring and Autumn, wanting to decipher a way to triumph over Kong shi. Before I fought with Kong shi, I also entrusted him with this matter, hoping that he could save my father in my place if I lost my life in the battle,” Luo Ruoxin explained.

Zhang Xuan nodded in realization.

Shortly after they met each other on the Master Teacher Continent, Luo Ruoxin had told him that she was working to save her close kin, but as she had never spoken about the matter after that, it had eventually slipped his mind.

From the looks of it, it seemed like the person she wanted to save was her father, the heavens of the Firmament.

But was it really possible for the heavens to morph into the form of a human and give birth to a child?

Zhang Xuan noticed an anomaly in her words and asked, “You mentioned that you are the overseer of the Heavens’ Nature... Does that mean that you don’t have any fragments of heavens in your body?”

Being the overseer of a fragment of heavens was different from possessing a fragment of heavens.

“I am only controlling it for the time being. It doesn’t belong to me,” Luo Ruoxin said.

Hearing those words, Zhang Xuan heaved a sigh of relief.

That meant that as long as he could extract the Heavens’ Imperfection from his body, everything would be resolved. There was no need for her to die for this.

Of course, he did not want to die either, but he did not wish for the young lady before him to come to any more harm than this.

“So, if I extract the Heavens’ Imperfection from my body, will your father come back to life and resolve this crisis?” Zhang Xuan asked.

“This... I’m not too certain,” Luo Ruoxin replied hesitantly as she looked at the collapsing Firmament around her.

As the heavens of the Firmament, she was not certain whether her father could really awaken when the Firmament was already in such a tattered state. Even if he regained consciousness, would he still have enough strength to defeat the powerful Vicious?

Even though she viewed this as their greatest hope, she was unsure about it.

“It looks like you aren’t certain about it. Since that’s the case, I think it’ll be better for us to keep that as our last resort. It’ll be safer for us to rely on ourselves instead of a stroke of luck. Let’s think of a plan together!” Zhang Xuan said. “With you, me, my clone, the Nine God Monarchs, and Kong shi, I don’t think that it’s utterly impossible for us to achieve victory!”

“Kong shi? But he...” Luo Ruoxin frowned.

“Kong shi is dead—is that what you were going to say? He isn’t really dead yet. According to what I heard, his death in

the duel between the two of you was just a way to free himself from the restraints of the heavens. Most likely, just like Wei Changfeng, he possesses the Innate Soul Embryo,” Zhang Xuan said.

After seeing Wei Changfeng, he finally understood what the key for Kong shi retaining his previous consciousness was. If he possessed the Innate Soul Embryo as well, he would not lose his sense of self even after death.

With all the cards that Kong shi had prepared for this event, it should not take too long for him to come back to life.

Hearing those words, Luo Ruoxin was taken aback. She did not expect Kong shi to have prepared such a hand.

“We’ll know once we head over to take a look. If I’m not mistaken, he should have already recovered. Otherwise, his disciples would have come to the Flooding Sea.”

Given the huge calamity that was going on, even though Ancient Sage Zi Yuan and the others were lacking in strength compared to the God Monarchs, they would have headed over in order to offer their help.

The fact that they remained absent meant that there was something more important that they had to attend to.

And this important matter likely had something to do with Kong shi’s revival!

“This...” Luo Ruoxin widened her eyes in realization as she found Zhang Xuan’s words perfectly logical.

“Let’s head over!”

With a flick of his finger, Zhang Xuan created a dimension rift that led directly to where Kong shi had left. Traveling to the other side, he swiftly saw an old man floating in midair.

Noticing their arrival, the old man greeted them with a smile. “You’re here.”

Who else could the old man be other than Kong shi?

The World’s Teacher was back!

Just as Zhang Xuan had guessed, he had discreetly come back to life while everyone's attention was preoccupied with the happenings over at the Flooding Sea.

"You..." Luo Ruoxin widened her eyes in astonishment.

She knew that Kong shi would have prepared a way to come to life, but she did not expect him to recover so quickly!

"Well, I have been concealing quite a few cards from the heavens," Kong shi said with a smile. "For one, I have left a Soul Imprint in the Netherworld Pool to accumulate Anima of Yearning quite a few decades ago, all in preparation for this moment. In our battle back then, I made use of the opportunity from my death to free myself from the restraints of the heavens, but in return for that, my body and soul ended up being devastated. It took me the last few days to make a recovery."

Skilled in the manipulation of temporal laws, even though only a few days had passed on the Firmament, in truth, decades might have passed for Kong shi.

After recovering from the shock of seeing that Kong shi had really returned, Luo Ruoxin shook her head and said, "We are indeed quite strong, but it still won't be easy for us to defeat Vicious..."

Earlier, they had all collaborated with one another, but they were still unable to stop Vicious. Even if they added another Kong shi into the mix, would it really make a huge difference?

The situation would likely remain the same!

"I agree with what you're saying. Even if we put our strength together, it isn't likely that we will be a match for the other party. However, what if we channel all of our strength into a single person?" Kong shi asked with a smile.

"Channel all of our strength into a single person?"

Both Luo Ruoxin and Zhang Xuan were a little confused as to what Kong shi was getting at.

"That palm from fifty years ago was able to tear through the Firmament and dissipate the heavens," Kong shi said. "There's

no doubt that it wields tremendous strength, far beyond what we can handle. Vicious has absorbed the entirety of this power, as well as fifty years of spiritual energy from the Firmament. If we fight him normally, there's no way that we'll be a match for him.

“However, if we channel all of our powers into a single person, we might just be able to change the result!”

“How do we do so?” Luo Ruoxin asked.

Such a thing was easier said than done.

God Monarchs were already the strongest existence in the world. If it was that easy to absorb the powers of another person, her cultivation would not have remained stagnant for so many years.

“My idea is very simple. We'll channel all our strength into Zhang Xuan and have him overcome the limits of a God Monarch. If he succeeds, he will be able to save the Firmament,” Kong shi said.

“Me?” Zhang Xuan was taken aback. “Why me?”

“God Monarch Lingxi cultivates the conceptualization of freedom, pursuing a state that transcends nature and desire. However, she is tied down by her father and the heavens, and she also has someone whom she yearns for. She will never be able to transcend in her current condition,” Kong shi said.

He turned to Luo Ruoxin and asked, “If I'm not mistaken, during our battle on the moon, you also once thought of giving it all up to die at my hands, right?”

Luo Ruoxin was unable to say a word.

Such a thought did flash across her mind during their battle. It was for that reason that they had ended up subconsciously holding back, making it appear like an ordinary spar instead of a life-and-death duel.

“One who is unable to transcend oneself will not be able to transcend nature. You won't be able to overcome the limitations of a God Monarch no matter how much spiritual energy you absorb. As for me...”

Kong shi sighed deeply. “I am an ambitious and greedy person. I wish to enlighten the whole world, but I don’t want anyone to sacrifice themselves for me in the process of doing so. I have too much compassion in me, and that’s a flaw. If I could harden my heart back then to exterminate the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe, we wouldn’t face such a crisis now.”

Back then, after he killed Vicious, the ranks of the Otherworldly Demonic Tribe had swiftly collapsed. Yet, he had chosen to let them off in the most decisive moment due to the benevolence in his heart.

If only he had hardened his heart and pushed on, they would not have been facing such a situation.

“So, I am not suited. On the other hand, Zhang Xuan, your cultivation technique is aligned with your will and intent, and there is no flaw I can see in you. You seek to live your life to the fullest. Even at the cost of your death, as long as you are able to live with your conscience, you will be able to charge forward bravely and overcome any obstacle. Such a person is more flexible and has more room for development. That’s why you will be able to reach a height beyond the two of us!” Kong shi said.

“This...” Zhang Xuan frowned.

He did not expect Kong shi to have such an evaluation of him and Luo Ruoxin, and he was just about to say something when Kong shi waved his hand. “You don’t need to feel bad about this. We don’t have the time to groom anyone else anymore, and even if we were able to make it in time, I don’t think that anyone would be able to do better than you already have.

“God Monarch Lingxi might not possess a fragment of the heavens, but years of controlling Heaven’s Nature has granted her a deep understanding of the heavens. I govern the Heavens’ Order. If we pass our powers over to you, you will gain the complete powers of the heavens. Together with your clone, the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, you will surely be able to stabilize the Firmament, reverse the tides, and vanquish the intruder!”

Seeing how Kong Shi's mind was already set up, Zhang Xuan turned to look at Luo Ruoxin, only to see her nodding in agreement.

Since that was the case, he nodded as well. "Alright then, let's go with that."

Hong long!

They swiftly sat down, and soon, two surges of energy began flowing into Zhang Xuan's body.

This caused his body to stiffen a little. In that moment, he felt as if he had morphed into a manifestation of the heavens, soaring above the nine skies.

Be it his soul, physical body, or zhenqi, all of them were being cleansed and reinforced, making them grow stronger and more powerful.

...

"The lot of you dare stop me as well? Very well then. I'll start with you before hunting down Zhang Xuan..." Vicious sneered coldly as he knocked Luo Qiqi, Zhang Xuan's clone, and the others flying.

The combined prowess of them all was indeed formidable, but they were still sorely lacking.

The Flooding Sea had devoured all the spiritual energy in the Firmament, except for the spiritual energy in the cities, and this massive bulk of energy was now under Vicious' control. This granted him the destructive power to obliterate anything that stood in his path.

Even though these God Monarchs and Conferred God Kings were already the strongest existences in the world, they were powerless before him.

The current Vicious was like the indomitable tyrant of the Firmament. No one could stop him.

"If the Firmament falls apart, there will be no point in us living. I, the Cloud Dragon Monarch, will fight you down to my final breath!"



The Cloud Dragon Monarch morphed into his original form, a humongous Five-clawed Golden Dragon[1], and charged right at Vicious.

“You? You aren’t worthy!”

With a wave of his hand, Vicious held the Five-clawed Golden Dragon tightly in his grasp. No matter how the latter struggled, he was unable to escape from Vicious’ clutches.

“Old friend, wait for me!” God Monarch Fumeng roared furiously as he morphed into a white tiger and charged as well.

The Deathless Monarch also turned into his original form, the Deathless Celestial Phoenix, and loomed over the sky.

The Acheron God Monarch turned into a massive tortoise that shook the lands with every step that it took.

The four beasts guarded the Four Extremities of the Firmament, so with them morphing back into their original forms, the collapse of the Firmament began slowing down.

It felt like four pillars had risen from the ground to support the falling Firmament.

Peng peng peng peng!

But with four consecutive palm strikes, Vicious subdued the four beasts with ease. Killing intent flared in his eyes as he said, “Since you are courting death, I’ll fulfill your wish!”

With a furious bellow, he was just about to kill all the God Monarchs present when he suddenly felt his hand freezing in midair.

“Have you asked me for permission to kill them yet?”

Before everyone’s shocked gazes, a silhouette slowly walked over from the horizon.

Zhang Xuan!

The young man was at least ten times stronger than when he became a God Monarch earlier, and power was overflowing from his body. He had turned to a completely different person ever since returning from the Sky of Freedom.

“You’ve grown quite a bit.” Vicious slowly retracted his hand as he assessed Zhang Xuan with narrowed eyes.

Clearly, he was shocked by how Zhang Xuan had grown so quickly within just a few minutes.

“So what if you’ve grown stronger? Even the Firmament is unable to hold me back. I don’t believe that you can stop me...”

With a cold harrumph, Vicious raised his palm to strike Zhang Xuan down, and Zhang Xuan raised his sword to meet Vicious.

The two of them began clashing with one another, and powerful shockwaves blasted everywhere, opening dimension rifts all around.

...

Over in Kong shi’s base in the Sky of Freedom, Luo Ruoxin worriedly asked, “Can Zhang Xuan win against him?”

After both she and Kong shi transferred their powers to Zhang Xuan, their cultivation had fallen to the God King realm, making it too dangerous for them to head to the battlefield.

However, their experience was still there. As long as they could acquire sufficient energy, they should be able to regain their cultivation soon enough.

Kong shi pondered for a moment before replying. “Even with his current strength, it’ll be difficult for him to achieve victory... unless... he comprehends a power stronger than the God Monarchs!”

Vicious was an opponent whom they could not defeat even with their powers combined. Even if they had transferred all their powers over to Zhang Xuan, it was unlikely that Zhang Xuan would be able to triumph over him.

The only reason they did it was to allow Zhang Xuan to touch the tip of the God Monarch realm. Only then would a window of opportunity open for him to overcome the limits of the God Monarch realm and transcend himself!

“Comprehend a power stronger than the God Monarchs?” Luo Ruoxin muttered to herself.

Back when her father was still conscious, he had said similar words to her. However, as hard as she had tried, she had never been able to break through that limit. Would the man she loved really be able to do it?

“Trust him. He’ll be able to do it. His sentiments for the world and his unyielding heart will allow him to do so,” Kong shi replied with a chuckle.

...

Peng peng peng!

After a few blows, Zhang Xuan’s finger was already bleeding profusely, and a deep gash had been inflicted on his chest.

Just as Kong shi had said, even if Zhang Xuan had formed the complete heavens within him after taking in their powers, he was still not a match for Vicious.

“Hahaha! I was wondering how formidable you would be, but it turns out that this is all you’ve got,” Vicious sneered coldly.

Taking a few steps back, Zhang Xuan gasped for air as he looked at Vicious and said, “Since I’m not a match for you anyway, why don’t you fulfill one final wish of mine? I would like to see the strongest attack that you have.”

“Are you finally ready to accept your fate? Very well, I shall fulfill that final wish of yours!”

With a cold sneer, Vicious slowly raised his palm, and green light began suffusing his hand.

Huala!

Then, he struck it down in a decisive motion.

The tremendous might of the attack caused the entire Firmament to scream under the overwhelming weight, and a massive depression was struck into the ground.

In the face of such an attack, Zhang Xuan closed his eyes, as if a person resigned to his fate.

Peng!

His head burst apart, and his soul dissipated into the void.

“Zhang Xuan!”

Seeing such a sight, everyone’s faces paled.

Luo Qiqi staggered backward as she stared ahead, horrified, as if she was going to go insane.

The Cloud Dragon Monarch and the others narrowed their eyes in disbelief.

Even Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin were stunned by that scene.

They had given their powers to Zhang Xuan to allow him to push for a breakthrough beyond the God Monarch realm, so why did he still give up without fighting back?

What was their sacrifice for?

“No, that’s not right. It’s the Deathless Monarch’s Quintessence of Deathlessness!” Kong shi suddenly cried out.

Luo Ruoxin quickly took a closer look at the screen, and she saw the crimson pendant that had been hanging around Zhang Xuan’s neck all this while breaking apart, causing a droplet of blood to float in the air.

The droplet of blood burst into flames, forming a sea of inferno. Amid the inferno, an unharmed figure walked out calmly.

Luo Ruoxin widened her eyes in astonishment. “He... made use of Vicious’ power and the blood in the pendant to sever the Heavens’ Imperfection from his soul.”

Unlike the Zhang Xuan before, the resurrected Zhang Xuan did not possess the Library of Heaven’s Path anymore. Free of the interference of the heavens, he finally managed to transcend the heavens!

“How did he manage to do it?” Kong shi was taken aback as well.

Their souls had been too deeply intertwined with the heavens, such that they could be considered as one. That was also the

reason Kong shi needed his soul to be disintegrated thrice before he could finally free himself from the restraints of the Heavens' Order.

Yet, the young man was able to free himself from the heavens so easily. Just what kind of method did he use?

“I see, I see...” Luo Ruoxin nodded in realization. “He used the method that Vicious used to liberate himself from the Soul Contract!”

The Soul Contract was a binding contract that was carved into one's soul. Unless the master released the servant, the servant's life would forever remain in the control of the master.

That was the same for the relationship between Zhang Xuan and the Library of Heaven's Path.

In essence, it could be considered an even stronger form of a Soul Contract. It was a contractual relationship that was binding even after death, which was why Kong shi had resorted to special means to liberate himself.

However, Vicious had explained to him how the malignant energy had the power to liberate a person from a Soul Contract, and it was probably at that moment that Zhang Xuan had begun formulating such a plan.

That was also why he had tried to convince Vicious to use his strongest attack against him. Through tapping into the malignant energy within his strongest attack, he would sever the bond with the Library of Heaven's Path from his disintegrated soul.

And everything worked out as planned.

...

“I see, so this is the method to exceed the God Monarchs...”

Walking out of the flames of resurrection, Zhang Xuan had a faint, enlightened smile on his face. He seemed to have understood something from his earlier death.

With a wave of his hand, he beckoned his clone over, who then morphed into a lotus.

In that instant, everyone felt as if Zhang Xuan had become the Nine Skies, and the Nine Skies had become his.

With a stomp of his feet, stability returned to the chaotic Nine Skies.

The Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies was born with the power to stabilize the world, and through the connection between him and his clone, Zhang Xuan was able to utilize such a power.

Not only so, after absorbing the cultivation of the Primordial Golden Lotus of the Nine Skies, he could feel the bottleneck that he had finally felt after taking in Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin's powers loosening a little.

There was a higher realm above him, and he was going to reach for it.

“The relationship between a master and his subordinates, the camaraderie of brothers, the ties between a teacher and a student, the sentiments between a parent and a child, the love that binds people together... It is an amalgamation of all these things that created the world. This is what it means to be alive,” Zhang Xuan muttered to himself with a smile on his lips.

The moment that his soul was liberated from the Library of Heaven's Path, he had finally understood it.

Did the world come into existence because a life became cognizant of its surroundings, or did the world nurture the first life?

Was it the wind moving, or was it the heart that had moved?[2]

These were questions that had confounded countless people over the years.

And of course, to the current Zhang Xuan... all of them were unimportant!

Without life and sentiments, what would the meaning of the existence of the world be?

So, beyond love were the sentiments of the world, the sentiments of all beings interweaved in the world.

All beings in the world possessed sentiments, and it was only with sentiments that the world came into existence. That was also what was sustaining all life in the world.

Love was a sentiment.

Hate was a sentiment.

Joy was a sentiment.

Pain was a sentiment.

The interactions in the world were all tied to sentiments, be it farewells or reunions.

“And I shall channel the sentiments of the world for my own use!”

With a deep roar, Zhang Xuan finally overcame the bottleneck trapping him, becoming an existence transcending the God Monarchs.

In that instant, it was as if a brand-new world had appeared before him, and his soul swiftly grew under nourishment.

Primordial energy swiftly surged into his body, bringing him to a new height.

He could only advance his cultivation through absorbing spiritual energy in the past, but with this advancement, this restraint had been released. Be it the spatial turbulence, the primordial energy lingering in the air, or even the green light formed from the neutralization, he could tap into everything.

“You...”

Not only did Vicious’ attack unexpectedly fail to kill Zhang Xuan, he even inadvertently helped the latter make a breakthrough. Trembling with fury, he bellowed in anger as he launched yet another attack.

“You resent the lofty God Monarchs for failing to save you from the chaotic space. That is a sentiment. You feel indignant and humiliated to have served as my servant. That is a sentiment. You wish to destroy the world to vent your fury. That is a sentiment. You wish to rise beyond the masses to gain ultimate power. That is a sentiment as well. You are a

being controlled by your sentiments, so how can you possibly not fall under my control?" Zhang Xuan spoke with a voice that crescendoed with every word.

With a raise of his hand, the sentiments that made up Vicious swiftly intertwined to bind him tightly together, sealing off his movements entirely.

Just like that, the indomitable Vicious had been stopped.

As long as a being had sentiments, it would fall under his jurisdiction.

"You..." Vicious' eyes widened in horror. "Zhang shi, I am your servant. Please don't kill me... I'm willing to offer my soul to you once more..."

"It's too late for you to be saying all of this now..." Zhang Xuan looked upon Vicious coldly as he shook his head.

Standing before him was a person who had hurt his girlfriend, Luo Qiqi, his direct disciples, and so many of his friends. He had tried to destroy the entire Firmament just to vent his own anger, killing many lives in the process.

How could he show mercy to Vicious?

"No..."

Sensing Zhang Xuan's decisiveness, Vicious narrowed his eyes as he tried to escape, but the next moment, he felt a stabbing pain piercing through his entire body.

Peng!

Vicious blew up, turning into countless surges of spiritual energy that surged over the entire Firmament.

The energy that had been devoured previously by the dimension fissure and the Flooding Sea had all returned to the Firmament, returning life to the barren wilderness.

"This..."

"Has everything ended just like that?"

The Cloud Dragon Monarch, Deathless Monarch, Fairy Linglong, and the others were flabbergasted. They could



hardly believe their eyes.

They had crossed blows with Vicious earlier, so they knew just how terrifying his strength was. Yet, such a powerful individual had been killed just like that. Just how powerful had Zhang Xuan become?

Was there really another realm above the God Monarch realm?

...

“He succeeded...”

Kong shi and Luo Ruoxin were finally able to release their tightly clenched fists.

...

“This is the final fragment of the heavens. I’ll return it to the Firmament now...”

The Heavens’ Imperfection that he had torn out from his body was floating above Zhang Xuan at this moment.

Weng!

With a wave of his hand, the Library of Heaven’s Path, which had accompanied him ever since his transcension, flew up and fused with the sky of the Firmament.

The loud chiming of a bell echoed in the air, and the devastated Firmament started to come back to life. Order began returning to the chaotic flow of spiritual energy in the air.

“It looks like the Firmament is going to enjoy an era of prosperity from the resurgence of spiritual energy...” Zhang Xuan chuckled.

The dimension fissure had closed after the completion of the heavens, and it would only be a matter of time before the Firmament returned to its peak.

“Zhang Xuan, come over here...”

After that was all done, a voice suddenly echoed in Zhang Xuan’s mind. He was slightly stunned at first, but he took a step toward where the voice was coming from.

This single step seemed to take him across countless boundaries, bringing him right before a young man.

It was the young man who had taught him swordsmanship back then.

“Elder, you...”

Seeing that it was him, Zhang Xuan was slightly taken aback.

He had thought that the young man was unfathomably powerful back then, and that was indeed the case.

Even in Zhang Xuan’s current state, he realized that he was only a sliver stronger than the young man. The young man had already reached the very peak of the God Monarchs, wielding powers that far exceeded those of Luo Ruoxin and Kong shi.

“I am Nie Tong. You can call me by my name,” the young man replied calmly.

“Nie Tong?” Zhang Xuan repeated the name contemplatively.

This was the first time that he had heard the name.

“Follow me. I’ll bring you to meet my elder brother,” Nie Tong said as he took a step forward.

Zhang Xuan followed behind him, and after traveling an unknown distance, they finally arrived before a mountain peak.

Standing before them was yet another young man who had eyes that seemed to be as deep as the abyss, making it nigh impossible to see through him.

“This strength...” Zhang Xuan shuddered a little.

He could tell that this young man before him was far stronger than him. He had transcended the limits of God Monarchs as well, and his cultivation was much deeper and more stable.

“I am Nie Yun.” The young man introduced himself to Zhang Xuan with a smile. “I am also Nie Lingxi’s, perhaps you might recognize her more as Luo Ruoxin, father!”

“Ruoxin’s father?” Zhang Xuan was astonished. “You are the heavens of the Firmament?”

Luo Ruoxin had told him earlier that her father was the heavens of the Firmament, but he did not expect him to be such a young man.

“Back then, I divided myself into three wills, and a will of mine became the heavens of the Firmament. Besides, this world was created by me. It isn’t wrong to say that I’m the heavens of the Firmament,” Nie Yun explained with a smile.

Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in astonishment.

The Firmament had actually been created by the person standing before him.

How powerful must he be?

“No, that isn’t right. If you were the one who created the Firmament and you are the heavens themselves, why would you watch by the sidelines as Vicious tore apart the Firmament?” Zhang Xuan asked.

If it was not for his breakthrough, the Firmament could have been torn apart. Was the other party going to watch as everything he had built fell to ruin?

Was he not concerned about his daughter at all?

Instead of answering Zhang Xuan’s question, Nie Yun gazed into Zhang Xuan’s eyes and asked, “Do you think that there are even stronger lifeforms above the Firmament?”

“Even stronger lifeforms?” Zhang Xuan pondered for a moment before nodding. “I guess so...”

He might not have met anyone else, but since he had been able to cultivate to this level, there should be others who had done the same.

The young man before him was one such example.

“I have always wondered about this question, so I tried to use my powers to peer above. However, as a result of my actions, it brought about retribution from a higher world. A palm descended from above to tear apart the Firmament,” Nie Yun said. “If I had dodged, the Firmament would have been utterly destroyed by that strike, and all life would have fallen to ruin. So, I gathered all my strength to withstand the palm strike, but

as a result of that, the heavens ended up splitting into three fragments.

“I could have recovered with a single thought, but I knew that if I wanted to overcome the limits of the Firmament, uncover the origin of the palm, and explore the world beyond the Firmament, it would be impossible for me to do it alone. So, I wanted to see if there is anyone else in the world who could transcend the boundaries of the God Monarch realm to stand on the same level as me.

“Thus, I sent the fragments of the heavens to the lowest world, and I bestowed one of them to a soul in this world and the other to a soul that belonged to another world. And you have not let me down,” Nie Yun explained with a smile.

“A soul that belonged to another world... So, my transcension to this world was your doing as well?” Zhang Xuan widened his eyes in astonishment.

He did not think that there would be such a truth to his transcension.

“Haha!” Nie Yun chuckled softly. “Those who are native to this world carry great deference toward the world and the heavens, making it harder for them to transcend nature. It was a decision I made on the spur of the moment, but you fared far better than I thought you would.”

“I...” Zhang Xuan’s face reddened. “If it wasn’t for Kong shi, I never would have reached my current level.”

His achievements were built upon the guidance of his predecessor. Had it not been for many others paving the path ahead for him, it would have been hard for him to reach his current level.

“I gave him a chance as well, but he didn’t grasp it well. His fight with Lingxi was the ideal opportunity for him to make a breakthrough, but he chose to back down. He prepared a hand that allowed him to overcome fate, but in exchange, he lost the determination to charge ahead in the face of adversity. Without such a spirit, there’s no way he’ll be able to face life forms that far surpass us!” Nie Yun said.

Zhang Xuan fell silent.

He had witnessed the battle back then, and Kong shi was indeed lacking decisiveness. It stemmed from his unwillingness to sacrifice Luo Ruoxin in order to climb to a higher height. With that, he lost the opportunity to make a breakthrough.

“But if Kong shi had won, Ruoxin would have lost her life!” Zhang Xuan exclaimed with a deep frown.

Did the other party not care about the life and death of his daughter at all?

“I am around. I wouldn’t allow anything to happen to her,” Nie Yun replied. “You have also reached the same realm as me. Do you think that I wouldn’t be able to save them in a battle of their level?”

If he had made a move, he could have saved Luo Ruoxin at the very last moment while ensuring that no harm came to her.

There was simply a huge difference between a God Monarch and an existence who had transcended the God Monarchs.

“Lingxi was born from my wife, Luo Qingcheng, and that’s why she chose to use the surname ‘Luo’ for her persona. In order to convince her of the situation to prevent her emotions from getting ahead of her, she still thinks that I’m in a coma at the moment.” Nie Yun shook his head with a derisive smile directed at himself. “I sure am a vicious father, aren’t I?”

“I think it would be best for you to explain everything to her. After all, she has already devoted all her feelings to you. I reckon that she barely has any thoughts left for me... Haha, I think I shan’t appear before her for a period of time, or else she might just flip everything upside down...”

Looking at Nie Yun with a conflicted expression, Zhang Xuan could not help but lament at how Luo Ruoxin had such an unreliable father. With a deep sigh, he nodded. “Alright, I’ll tell her about it...”

What else could he do? If he wanted to take Luo Ruoxin as his wife, he needed the approval of his future father-in-law. He

would just have to leave Luo Ruoxin to deal with Nie Yun in the future.

“The Library of Heaven’s Path is an artifact formed by my thoughts. It is both a foundation and a limiter. Through relying on your own abilities in the end to advance your cultivation, you have proven your own capabilities and potential. I believe that you will achieve great things in the future. As a father, I am relieved to entrust my daughter to you.” Nie Yun nodded with a satisfied smile.

Zhang Xuan nodded for a moment before he suddenly thought of something. He turned to Nie Tong and asked, “Elder, are you the one who comprehended the Gods’ Sword Intent in the Azure?”

Based on what he had heard, the founder of the Ascendant Cloud Sword Pavilion, just like Kong Shi, had risen to the Firmament, but Zhang Xuan had not heard of the other party’s name yet.

A person who was that talented could not possibly have remained unknown in the Firmament.

“It was a heritage that I left behind with a sliver of my will. I wanted to help you avoid some detours so that you could quickly advance through the ranks and catch up to my brother. He... has been alone for a very long time now,” Nie Tong replied calmly as he glanced at his elder brother with a deep look in his eyes.

It was as if there was no one in his eyes other than his elder brother.

To him, leaving behind a sliver of his will in a lower world like the Azure was nothing at all, but it had indeed helped Zhang Xuan a lot along the way.

It was that experience that had solidified his will to further his swordsmanship, allowing him to become the person he was now.

“I see. You have my gratitude.” Zhang Xuan nodded.

It seemed like they had been observing him all this while, and this left him a little conflicted within.

“You should return for now and focus on your cultivation. When your cultivation finally stabilizes, I’ll bring you to a greater world beyond so that you’ll know just how big the world is!” Nie Yun laughed heartily before waving his hand.

With a distortion in space, Zhang Xuan returned to the Sky of Freedom.

Standing before him was none other than Luo Ruoxin.

“Zhang Xuan...”

With a beautiful smile, the young lady leaped right into his embrace.

[1] Five-clawed Golden Dragons are usually weaved into the robes of Chinese Emperors as a symbol of ultimate authority.

[2] This is from a famous Buddhist story about two monks arguing over a moving flag. Monk A says that it’s the flag that is moving, and Monk B says that it’s the wind that is moving. An enlightened monk then comes in and say that it’s their heart (mind) that has moved.

# 2265 Author's Wrap Up

Library of Heaven's Path has finally come to an end.

I wanted to write my wrap up yesterday, but a friend came over yesterday, so I ended up delaying it till now.

This book has brought me a lot of honors. I became a God-tier and Platinum Author, and my book was first in the overseas market as well.

But it is also the hardest book I have written in all these years.

I have gone through joyous events. My son was born, but I have gone through sorrowful events as well: the death of my father.

There were happy times and sad times.

There were times I was excitement and times I was confused.

There was a period of time I thought that I had the world in my grasp and I could do anything at all.

There was also a period of time when I felt like there was nothing I could do and I was useless.

I think some of my emotions ended up seeping into the book, so it isn't as wholesome as I thought it would be.

Well, allow me to talk about a few major plot points that I have designed but didn't manage to pen them down.

In my storyboard, Luo Qiqi would die while trying to save Zhang Xuan in the Azure, and she would morph into the Dimension Silencer and enter the Firmament.

Out of rage, Zhang Xuan would finish cultivating the Divine Eyes of the Ninth Netherworld, but as a result of that, he would lose his sense of sight as well.

I already wrote the foreshadowing for that, but due to some events, I didn't dare write it anymore.



I could only abandon my original storyboard and go for a lighter story.

Well, who can I blame for seeking my own death?

There are some readers who say that the ending is a bit rushed, but it is actually not rushed at all.

I wanted to finish the book during the highest climax, when Zhang Xuan is the brightest of all. If I continue writing beyond this, it'll just be a little too draggy.

Our Xuanxuan likes to brag, and if you keep him alive and don't let him brag, he would rather that you just kill him...

So... Library of Heaven's Path ended!

(How is it? Are you satisfied with my reason? This is already the best one I can think of. If you aren't satisfied with me, you can come here to hit me. Though I can't defeat you, I will proudly show you my most magnificent kneeling position...)

However, there's no need for you to feel anxious. I'll write a few side stories when I have time, such as the one for Luo Xuanqing. I have already put some foreshadowing in place, but I didn't write him in at the end because I wanted to give him a special side story. To be honest, I also want to know how he'll react when he hears Zhang Xuan's declaration of becoming a God Monarch...

As for Luo Qiqi's ending, I am still thinking about it at the moment. I'll give her some closure, and I'll write it in the side stories.

The side stories will be posted on my public WeChat account, so you can head over and search for 'Heng Sao Tian Ya (横扫天涯)' and follow me. There will be notifications informing you of it once I post the side stories.

Last but not least, allow me to talk about my new book.

I have two drafts at the moment, so I'm a little conflicted as to which one I should write about.

As for the genre, it'll still be Xuanhuan (fantasy), similar to the Library of Heaven's Path. It'll be light and humorous, and

I guarantee that it'll be innovative. I have quickly scanned through the various genres, and it's different from the others book on Qidian. Definitely no one has written about it before!

You know, I am very serious about creativity.

As for when I'll launch it, allow me to rest for a period of time. I feel like I have been sapped dry by this book, so I need some time to rest and recharge.

However, I won't drag it out for too long. It should be out before the Mid-Autumn Festival.

As for what the book name will be, I'll post it on my WeChat public account in advance.

Alright, I shan't talk too much more.

There'll always come a point in time where we have to part. I know that there are many flaws with my story, but I have written it with my full heart. My feelings for Zhang Xuan definitely exceed those for anyone else.

When I wrote the ending, it was already four in the morning. I sat quietly in my chair, dazed, for nearly an hour.

My Library of Heaven's Path, my Zhang Xuan, has finally come to an end.

However, I'll deliver brand new stories depicting brand new worlds for everyone in the future.

A story different from that of Zhang Xuan and Nie Yun.

If you like me, please add my next book to your collection. You should receive some news about it within two months.

Last but not least, I wish everyone who has read my book prosperity.

# 2266 Side Story 1: Luo Xuanqing

“We’re finally out of there!”

Together with Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao, an unkempt Luo Xuanqing looked at the Grand Spirit Mountain behind him with a fatigued yet relieved look on his face.

Even though he had managed to become a God, and his zhenqi and soul had been nourished greatly by Zhang Xuan’s blood, he was still among the weakest in the Firmament.

Thinking about all the suffering he had gone through, he felt both helpless and stifled.

“So, this is the Firmament...” Luo Xuanqing sighed deeply as he shook his head.

Be it the Azure or the Master Teacher Continent, he was a top-notch genius respected by his peers. Even though he was not as radiant as that man, there was no doubt that his name would go down in history.

Despite only having cultivated for a few decades, he had risen from an ordinary human to become a God. This was a feat that had almost never been accomplished in the history of the Azure. Not even the talented Sect Leader Han Jianqiu of the Ascendant Cloud Sword Pavilion had managed to do it.

Despite that, after reaching the Firmament, he had still ended up being chased by a rabbit for three days straight for digging up its carrot. There were also incidents such as the ones where he was assaulted by a caterpillar, when a flying ant nearly slit his throat with its wings, when a green blade of grass pierced his skin and caused him to bleed profusely...

This was really a freaking land of frights!

Even the gentlest animal in the Azure could turn out to be a deadly beast there!

He could not even begin to explain how thankful he was to have been able to walk out of the Grand Spirit Mountain alive!

“Even though the three of us have become Gods, we still nearly lost our lives in the mountain. Back then, Zhang Xuan was the only one who managed to make a breakthrough to godhood, and he was carrying a huge bunch of Semi-Divinities with him. How in the world did he manage to survive on the Grand Spirit Mountain?” Hu Yaoyao exclaimed in disbelief.

Luo Xuanqing and Yu Fei-er looked at one another before falling silent.

In terms of the time of the Firmament, it was roughly a month ago that Zhang Xuan had headed over with his eleven direct disciples, his parents, and Sun Qiang. Back then, those fourteen people had not managed to reach godhood yet, meaning that not only would they be of no help in surviving on the Grand Spirit Mountain, Zhang Xuan even had to scour for food to feed them as well!

Without a doubt, the danger he faced must have been far greater.

Even an ant or a mosquito, insects that they had been able to kill with just a clap of their hands before, could easily kill a Semi-Divinity in the Firmament!

“He must have gone through a lot on the Grand Spirit Mountain... It took us five days to find a way out of that darned place. It would have definitely taken him even longer than that,” Luo Xuanqing remarked.

Then, his eyes suddenly lit up as he said, “He might have just left the mountain range and be residing in a nearby town right now. Let’s search around the area then. We might just be able to find him! This time, I’ll make sure to keep up with his pace... I don’t believe that he’ll still be able to defeat me now that we are in a brand-new environment!”

He had deeply conflicted feelings toward this old friend of his.

He hated him for making his younger sister suffer, but at the same time, he was impressed by the latter’s talents and

decisiveness.

If not for Zhang Xuan paving the way forward, it was likely that he would still have been on the Master Teacher Continent at this moment, unable to even become an Ancient Sage.

It was such conflicted feelings that fueled his desire to overcome Zhang Xuan. He wanted to teach that young man a lesson for having let his younger sister down!

But it was a pity that such emotions of his had never been fulfilled on the Master Teacher Continent nor in the Azure. It was likely that the Firmament was his last chance to do so.

Yu Fei-er suddenly pointed to the area ahead of them and exclaimed, “Look, there’s a group of people up ahead!”

Luo Xuanqing looked over and saw a couple of people dressed like students walking toward a nearby mountain forest. Their cultivation was only at the Semi-Divinity realm, and it looked like they were still a way off from becoming Gods.

“They aren’t even Gods yet, but they still dared to enter the mountain forest? Are they courting death?” Luo Xuanqing was baffled.

So, he began walking toward them to advise them against that.

Initially, the students were a little guarded against Luo Xuanqing, but after chatting for a while, they slowly lowered their guard.

Hearing that the three of them had grown up near the mountains and had never been to a city before, a good-hearted student advised them kindly.

“There’s a city nearby called Twilight City. City Lord Wu Fangqing is a Celestial God, possessing strength unrivaled in the vicinity. So, you must make sure to tread carefully once you are in the city, or else you’ll be tried and punished for flouting any rules!”

Ever since the receding of spiritual energy, rules had been of the utmost importance in the cities of the Firmament. The authority of a city lord was greater than ever, and only a fool would challenge that.

He was worried that the ‘passionate caveman’ Luo Xuanqing would step out of line and be punished for that.

“Celestial God?” Luo Xuanqing widened his eyes.

Thinking that Luo Xuanqing might not even know about the cultivation realms, the good-hearted student began explaining, “Yes, Celestial Gods are incredibly powerful experts. As you might know, Gods are classified into low-tier, middle-tier, and high-tier, and only a person who has made a breakthrough from high-tier God can become a Celestial God. Every single cultivator who is able to become a Celestial God is incredibly talented, and they are respected in the Firmament no matter where they are!”

The eyes of the kind student were shining in reverence as he spoke. “Putting aside Celestial Gods, even high-tier Gods are already qualified to start their own clan and become a powerhouse in Twilight City!”

“High-tier Gods? Celestial Gods?” Luo Xuanqing clenched his fists tightly as he swore to himself that he would one day reach the same level.

It had not been long since he arrived in the Firmament, but he realized that there was a huge gap between every single cultivation realm beyond godhood. Putting everything aside, even if he had ample cultivation resources, it would likely take several years of hard work for him to advance from low-tier God to middle-tier God.

“Indeed. I dare not even dream of becoming a Celestial God or high-tier God... My greatest wish in life is to become a real God, and once I graduate from school, I’ll find a good job in a prestigious clan or become the guard of the City Lord Manor. With the wages I earn, I shall get myself a pretty wife and climb to the top of the world!” The kind student smiled sweetly as he thought about the bright future he had planned for himself.

Not everyone could become a Celestial God, and he knew that his talent was only slightly above average among his peers. He dared not dream that ambitiously, and all he hoped for was to

successfully graduate from the academy and find a high-paying job.

His life would have no regrets if he could just do that.

Being a guard is not too bad. I'll become a guard after I enter the city too. I'll earn a decent wage and continue cultivating hard, Luo Xuanqing thought in determination.

The starting phase would always be the most difficult. They were completely broke in the Firmament, so there was an urgent need for them to improve their finances. As long as they were able to find a job and worked hard at it, they should be able to earn enough to raise their cultivation fast enough.

With luck, he might be able to become a middle-tier God or even a high-tier God within the next decade. By then, what would Zhang Xuan mean to him?

Besides, given that nasty temper that Zhang Xuan had and his compulsive desire to humblebrag, even if he applied for the position of a guard, no one would want to take him in... So, Luo Xuanqing still had quite an advantage, right?

"May I ask you something? We have a friend whom we parted ways with on the mountain roughly a month ago. If I'm not mistaken, he should have headed over to Twilight City. So, I was wondering if you might have heard of him," Yu Fei-er suddenly said.

The kind student shook his head and said, "I don't think it's likely that I would have heard of your friend. Twilight City is quite big, and there are millions of people entering and leaving the city everyday..."

"I know, but this friend of ours is quite talented and haughty. He likes to cause trouble no matter where he goes, so I was thinking that he might have done something that would make him quite known around the area..." Yu Fei-er pressed on.

Zhang Xuan had only arrived in the Firmament a month earlier than them, so the chances of others knowing about him were quite slim. Nevertheless, she was still holding onto a ray of hope.

She simply had not seen the young man for too long, and her yearning had only continued to grow deeper with time. She was anxious to obtain any news about him, even if it was just the word that he was doing fine.

“Cause trouble? I think you might be overestimating your friend a little too much... Even a lofty dragon has to make sure to stand in line in Twilight City, or else City Lord Wu will make him dearly regret his actions!” the student scoffed.

A bunch of cavemen who had never ventured out of their mountain that only managed to become Gods by some stroke of luck. They were thinking too highly of themselves if they thought that they could get away with causing trouble in the city!

Ignorance sure was scary!

“Enough, Yu Fei-er. I can understand your feelings. That fellow did cause quite the commotion on the Master Teacher Continent and in the Azure, but we are currently in the Firmament now. It’s a place filled with the most formidable experts in the myriad worlds! He might be talented, but it would be hard for him to stand out amid so many experts...” Luo Xuanqing harrumphed.

To be honest, he felt that this was really unfair.

How in the world could that dense braggart have people who fancied him?

On the other hand, he was so kind and handsome, yet there was no one interested in him at all...

What was this world coming to? Were terrible men the trend?

“I know...” Yu Fei-er’s body slumped a little as she shook her head bitterly.

Even with Zhang Shi’s talent, it was indeed impossible for him to achieve anything incredible in one short month.

“Alright, let’s stop thinking about, alright? That fellow, Zhang Xuan, has always been a restless fellow. Even if there are no signs of him now, it’s only a matter of time before we catch wind of him. What we have to do now is focus on our



cultivation so that we can wow him when we finally meet him once more...” Hu Yaoyao comforted Yu Fei-er.

Yu Fei-er nodded. “Yes, you’re right.”

Just as they were about to bid the students farewell, they suddenly noticed that the students were staring at them with widened eyes. The teeth of the kind student whom they had been talking to were even clattering together.

“Who did you just mention? Z-Zhang Xuan? A young man roughly twenty years of age who suddenly appeared in the Firmament a month ago, Elder Zhang Xuan?”

“Elder Zhang Xuan?”

The three of them glanced at one another in bewilderment. Luo Xuanqing asked with a frown, “Yes, indeed. But... how did you hear about that name?”

“Of course I have heard of that name...” the student exclaimed as his body trembled in agitation. “Elder Zhang Xuan is my idol, you know, my idol! He appeared from the mountain a month ago, and it was there that he met Mo Yun laoshi, Senior Wu Xiaoxiao, and the others. After entering Twilight City, within just a few days, he actually managed to overcome his bottleneck to become a Celestial God! You can’t imagine just how huge a commotion it caused in our city!

“And just recently, I heard that he has managed to reach the God King realm, and there are rumors that he has even killed a Conferred God King all on his own...”

Due to the vast popularity of the Beauty Pill and Breakthrough Pill, Zhang Xuan was renowned throughout the entire Firmament. As a result, bits and pieces of news regarding him began floating around, and as word spread from person to person, it eventually forged a legend.

“He managed to become a Celestial God in just a few days?” Luo Xuanqing was stunned. “He has already become a God King and even slain a Conferred God King at that?”

Thinking that a caveman like Luo Xuanqing might have no concept of what God Kings and Conferred God Kings were, the good-hearted student began to explain, “Well, God Kings

are cultivators even stronger than Celestial Gods, and they can be considered the top experts of the Firmament. As for Conferred God Kings, they are God Kings who have been personally conferred by a God Monarch, and they possess strength only second to the Nine God Monarchs!”

When news that Zhang Xuan had managed to kill Baiye Qinghong spread across the Firmament, he had immediately become the idol of all the youths in the Sky of Drifting Specter.

“I-Is that so? You mentioned the Nine God Monarchs earlier—who are they?” Luo Xuanqing asked with trembling cheeks.

“They are the true rulers of our Firmament. There have only been Nine God Monarchs ever since the founding of the Firmament, and it’ll remain that way until the end of time! It’s a realm that you can’t reach no matter how hard you cultivate. It’s simply that awesome and incredible...” the student explained.

But before he could finish those words, the ground suddenly trembled, and a voice echoed in their heads.

“Today, I shall become a God Monarch.”

As those words sounded, a silhouette standing proudly in the sky appeared in everyone’s minds. He gazed upon everyone with eyes filled with authority.

“Zhang Xuan...”

“Wait a moment, he has managed to become a God Monarch? Didn’t you mention that they are the greatest existence in the world and that it’s impossible for anyone to reach it no matter how hard they cultivate?” Luo Xuanqing nearly fainted on the spot.

What the heck is this?

I gritted my teeth to survive that darned rabbit and freaking ant nest all in the hope of catching up with you one day... And yet, you have already become a God Monarch?

You are toying with me!

My heart hurts...

Why does it feel like I suddenly can't breathe anymore?

Yu Fei-er and Hu Yaoyao also widened their eyes in disbelief.

They knew that Zhang Xuan was a restless fellow who would cause a commotion wherever he went. Yet, they did not think that it would be a commotion of this proportion.

In just a month after coming to the Firmament, he had already become a God Monarch.

The other students also did not expect such a situation to occur, and all of them fell dazed in shock.

But not too long later, yet another figure appeared in their heads. "To think that you managed to make a breakthrough before me... How am I to show off like that? I am a God Monarch like this damned ass!"

"..."

Everyone looked at one another in shock.

Hu Yaoyao and Yu Fei-er had their mouths opened so wide that an egg could slip right through.

This meant that...

Not only did he manage to become a God Monarch, even his clone had become a God Monarch as well!

Even more shockingly, when they turned their heads around, they saw Luo Xuanqing bawling with snot dripping down his nose...

The hell... Even if you don't want me to trouble you, you don't need to cultivate that fast to traumatize me, right?

You are already a God Monarch, but I still can't even hunt down a rabbit at all... How am I supposed to win against you like that?

Damn it!

## 2267 Side Story 2: Luo Qiqi

Pilipala! Pilipala!

On a mountain floating above the Sky of Freedom, festive firecrackers exploded loudly in the air, signaling a joyous festival.

Experts that people had only heard of in rumors but hardly saw around were swiftly gathering on this mountain. With bright smiles on their faces, they offered their congratulations and handed over their wedding gifts.

It was the wedding between Great Sovereign Zhang Xuan and God Monarch Lingxi!

The wedding between the two strongest experts of the Firmament was intended to be a discreet affair. They were planning to make it a simple ceremony with only close friends as guests, but somehow, news began spreading around. In less than half a day, the mountain was already flooding with people.

“From the Cloud Dragon Monarch of the Sky of Cloud Dragon, a Golden Dragon Scale Robe and three liters of Golden Dragon Blood!”

“From the Deathless Monarch of the Sky of Spirit Origin, three Deathless Phantasmagoric Feathers and five liters of Deathless Celestial Phoenix Blood!”

“From God Monarch Fumeng of the Sky of Adamant Gold, three Tiger Fang and two Tiger Tails...”

Looking at the list of congratulatory gifts that had been given by the God Monarchs, Fairy Linglong was utterly stunned.

These were things that countless experts would go into a frenzy in order to obtain, such that even God Monarchs would make a move on each other for them.

Yet, they were nothing more than ordinary wedding gifts here!

The other eight God Monarchs had really gone all out.

“From the Heaven Subjugation Monarch, three Monarch Origin Pills and two God Monarch realm swords...”

The more Fairy Linglong read on, the more strongly she felt that the God Monarchs had gone insane.

As valuable as the Golden Dragon Scale Robe and Deathless Phantasmagoric Feathers were, Kong shi’s gifts of Monarch Origin Pills and God Monarch realm swords were on a whole new level. Those were items that were useful even on God Monarchs!

If they used it well, they could definitely groom yet another God Monarch realm expert.

It would have been difficult for even the Heaven Subjugation Monarch to prepare another set of these items, yet he still gave them out as wedding gifts.

Fairy Linglong really wanted to shake that old man’s body and scream at him to check if he was still sane.

“This must really be the most extravagant wedding ever since the founding of the Firmament. I must say that God Monarch Lingxi’s eyes are truly sharp. To think that she would find a gem amid the hordes of mortals in the lower worlds...” Fairy Linglong shook her head and sighed.

She was one of the God Monarchs who had appeared along with the birth of the Firmament, so she had long seen past life and death. The reason she had remained single to date was because there was simply no one who could catch her eye.

She had thought that it was impossible for a man who had the ability to conquer her to appear in the world, but who could have known that two formidable figures would appear one after another within just fifty years?

This was especially so for Zhang Xuan.

The first time she met him, he was no more than an ordinary high-tier Celestial God, but in just ten days, he had become an expert that towered above the entire Firmament.

Just recalling that battle against Vicious made her pat her heart in relief.

If not for the rise of this young man, the Firmament might have ceased to exist.

As a woman, she could not help but envy how God Monarch Lingxi was able to notice his potential and support him all this time. If she had sharp eyes like that, she might have been freed from singledom by now...

“It’s just a huge pity for this young lass...”

Thinking about the young lady whom she had saved from the spatial turbulence back then, she could not help but sigh deeply in lamentation.

It was clear to anyone who had eyes how much the young lady loved Zhang Xuan. She gave her all for him, but in the end, she still was not able to receive anything in return.

Even someone who had lived for so many years like Fairy Linglong could not help feeling sorry for her.

Noticing Fairy Linglong’s gaze, Luo Qiqi turned her gaze over and directed a smile at her. “I’m fine.”

Despite her words, her eyes reflected endless bitterness and sorrow.

She knew that Zhang Xuan had never been moved romantically for her, but she simply could not help herself from falling deeper and deeper into the swamp.

“Forget him. I’ll help you find someone better, someone who truly loves you,” Fairy Linglong said.

“Someone better?” Luo Qiqi shook her head helplessly. She gazed ahead of her and sighed deeply. “Having met the best, I don’t think that there’s anyone who can compete with him.”

Having seen how outstanding Zhang Xuan was, no matter how good others might be, they could not possibly catch her eye.

Realizing that she could not convince Luo Qiqi at all, Fairy Linglong shook her head and berated, “You are really wasting your life on Zhang Xuan!”

It was as if she was poisoned by Zhang Xuan! No words would simply work on her at all.

Just as Fairy Linglong was in deep thought, the space before her suddenly warped a little, and two young men appeared before them.

The one standing in front had fair skin and a dashing appearance. Even Zhang Xuan would pale in comparison when it came to looks.

On the other hand, the young man standing behind him felt sharp and cold. Vaguely, one could feel a powerful Sword Intent harnessed within his body.

“The old ancestor behind the Sky of Heavenly Sword?” Fairy Linglong narrowed her eyes in shock.

As one of the Nine God Monarchs, she knew a thing or two about the truth behind the mysterious Sky of Heavenly Sword. The Heavenly Sword God Monarch was indeed powerful, but what was even more fearsome was the unfathomably powerful teacher behind him. Even God Monarch Lingxi could very well pale in comparison to him.

It was just that his teacher was an elusive figure in the Firmament, such that nearly none of the God Monarchs had ever seen him.

They had only heard rumors that he was a young man who appeared to be in his early twenties.

Nevertheless, judging from how the young man’s Sword Intent was even stronger than that of the Heavenly Sword God Monarch, it was as clear as day who he was.

However, what left Fairy Linglong even more astounded was how he, despite being comparable to God Monarch Lingxi, was actually standing behind yet another dashing young man. Who could the dashing young man be?

Paying no heed to Fairy Linglong’s doubts, the dashing young man walked up to the confused Luo Qiqi and smiled. “I didn’t expect the primordial energy created during my creation of the Firmament to morph into an artifact and gain sentience...”

“Creation of the Firmament? Primordial energy?” Fairy Linglong’s teeth clattered together as a conjecture surfaced in his mind.

“You carry the aura of the earth, which was what I used to seal the space of the Firmament in place back then. In the crisis fifty years ago, you ended up falling into the mortal world as the Dimension Silencer... It’s a pleasure to have you back here,” the dashing young man said.

Noticing the anxious look on Luo Qiqi’s face, he smiled a little before gently placing his hand on Luo Qiqi’s.

Hong long!

The next instant, Luo Qiqi’s cultivation began to surge. A peculiar connection was forged between her and the Nine Skies of the Firmament, granting her power over the spatial laws.

“This...” Luo Qiqi widened her eyes in shock.

The dashing young man had only touched her for a brief instant, but she could feel her strength growing several thousand times stronger than before!

Even if Fairy Linglong made a move on her, she would be able to subdue her easily!

“Am I... God Monarch?” Luo Qiqi muttered in disbelief.

It was nigh impossible for new God Monarchs to emerge in the Firmament. The only reason the Heaven Subjugation Monarch and Zhang shi had succeeded was because they each possessed a fragment of the heavens. Furthermore, the two of them were highly talented and diligent individuals, so their unyielding perseverance eventually allowed them to obtain the strength they currently had.

On the other hand, she had not done anything, but with just a touch from the dashing young man, she had gained such tremendous power as well...

Was she dreaming?

“Strictly speaking, you are the Overseer of the Firmament’s Space. Even though you aren’t a God Monarch, you can be certain that most God Monarchs won’t be a match for you,” the dashing young man replied with a smile.



“Then... why isn't there a cultivation ordeal?” Luo Qiqi was still unable to believe her current situation.

A breakthrough to God Monarch would surely bring about the envy of the heavens, resulting in a heavenly tribulation. The same should have happened to her, so why was nothing happening.

The dashing young man chuckled softly in response. “I am the heavens themselves. I am the one who allowed you to make a breakthrough, so why would there be a cultivation ordeal?”

“Heavens?” Luo Qiqi widened her eyes in shock.

“Do you wish to marry Zhang Xuan?” the dashing young man suddenly asked.

“I...” Luo Qiqi froze in place upon hearing those words, unsure how she should respond.

“Just say yes if you wish to, no if you don't want to. What's there to hesitate over? There's no need to be embarrassed over your own wishes,” the young man said with a wave of his hand.

“I... want to!” Luo Qiqi said. With greater determination this time around, she added, “I think of it even in my dreams!”

As if having confessed something that had been weighing on her mind all this while, the tense look on Luo Qiqi's face finally relaxed a little.

“Hahaha, what an energetic young lady you are!” The dashing young man burst into laughter. “Since that's the case, let's have him marry you as well!”

“This...” Luo Qiqi's eyes lit up for a moment, but soon, her face sank yet again as she shook her head. “But... Zhang shi doesn't like me, and I don't wish to spoil the relations between him and Luo shi. It wasn't easy for the two of them to get together with one another...”

She had witnessed just how much Zhang Xuan had gone through in order to come together with Luo Ruoxin. Their relationship really did not come by easily, so she could not bring herself to tear them apart.

“You are worried about that?” The dashing young man burst into laughter. He pointed over and said, “Well, just look over there...”

Luo Qiqi raised her head and saw a pair of lovebirds descending from the sky. The groom was dressed in a bright red wedding robe, looking more suave than ever. The bride had a light blush coloring her fair complexion, looking like shy little girl.

At that instant, the attention of the entire world was centered on those two.

They were none other than Zhang Xuan and Nie Lingxi!

While she was still awed by how compatible the two of them looked together, Nie Lingxi suddenly looked in her direction and beckoned her over. “Qiqi, come here!”

Hu!

The dashing young man snapped his fingers, and Luo Qiqi’s body flew over to where Zhang Xuan and Nie Lingxi were.

Nie Lingxi looked at her for a moment before waving her hand elegantly, and a magnificent red gown and tiara appeared on Luo Qiqi’s body, turning her into a beautiful bride.

“God Monarch Lingxi, I... I...” Luo Qiqi’s eyes reddened in agitation as her body began trembling lightly.

Everything had happened so quickly, and she could not believe that this was really happening to her.

“You have done far too much for Zhang Xuan. Previously, the Library of Heaven’s Path suppressed his feelings, leaving him with little emotions for those around him. Now that he has ascended on his sentiments, how could he possibly watch as you suffer?” Nie Lingxi chuckled softly.

“But...” Luo Qiqi was still a little overwhelmed by the situation.

Bliss had come so quickly that she did not know what she should do with it.

She turned her gaze toward the young man, only to see him looking at her dotingly. “Qiqi, are you willing?”

“I am...” Blushing in embarrassment, Luo Qiqi lowered her head and replied with a voice as soft as the buzz of a mosquito. “... willing.”

How could she not be willing? This was what she had been dreaming of ever since their time together on the Master Teacher Continent!

Back then, when he walked out of her wedding, she had thought that their fates would diverge once and for all, and it was impossible for them to be together. She had never dared imagine that this unrequited love of hers could one day be fulfilled.

“That’s all that matters,” Zhang Xuan said with a smile.

Then, he turned to the crowd and declared with a peal of hearty laughter, “Today, we shall be married!”

His voice echoed throughout the entire Firmament, and countless individuals clasped their fists to offer him their blessings.

Then, Zhang Xuan extended his hands to Nie Lingxi and Luo Qiqi and asked, “Shall we go?”

The three of them flew into the distant sky, till they finally disappear over the horizon of the world.

Beneath the crowd, the livid-faced Luo Xuanqing finally released the massive axe in his hand before heaving a sigh of relief.

“That’s more like it...”

—

Author’s Note: This story was designed to be a 1-to-1 pairing, but there have been readers hashtagging me, hoping for Luo Qiqi to have a better ending. So, I wrote this side story for her to give some closure.

## 2268 Side Story 3: Sun Qiang

“They must be the sweetest lovebirds in the Firmament...”

Every time that Fairy Linglong recalled how Zhang Xuan, together with Nie Lingxi and Luo Qiqi, flitted through the air to depart with the blessings of masses of experts, she could not help but feel deeply envious of them.

Born as one of the God Monarchs, she was destined to live a life very different from the others. Yet, she craved for the love of the mortals.

All this while, she had been hoping to meet a man far stronger than her that she could rely on.

However, the God Monarchs were mostly around her level of strength, and there were some who were even slightly weaker than her. Even though some had professed their feelings for her at one point in time, she was simply uninterested in them.

It was not that she was too ambitious, but what she craved for was the romantic and passionate kind of love that one would see in the mortal world.

This was not something that the Cloud Dragon Monarch and the others could bring her.

She simply knew them too well, and for that reason, she could not bring herself to be interested in them.

The Cloud Dragon Monarch was a philander, and he had countless descendants all over the world.

The Deathless Monarch spent his days thinking about how he could kill himself, reminiscent of a useless, pessimistic shut-in. On top of that, he was not interested in girls at all.

God Monarch Fumeng was a very hot-tempered person who hardly had any patience.

Demon Monarch Qiankun was simply too feminine for her liking.

God Monarch Zhuoyang was a reckless and insensitive person who tended to overlook the details. There were even rumors going around that he often did not put his undergarments on. Ew.

The Heavenly Sword God Monarch was married to his sword. Was there any need to say more?

The Heaven Subjugation Monarch was without any desires in the world, just like an ascetic monk.

And God Monarch Lingxi was a female...

See! There was simply no suitable person for her among the God Monarchs, and that was also why she had remained single over the years.

But... as she watched how lovey-dovey some couples were, she could not help but wonder when her spring would come?

As a woman, she dearly hoped to have someone reliable and dependable to stand by her side, supporting her through whatever she was facing.

She might be a God Monarch, but she was not completely free of desires. Perhaps due to her overwhelming desire for a companion, she found herself suffering from insomnia. No matter how she tried, she simply could not fall asleep.

This was truly frustrating for her.

That was why she felt deeply envious when she saw Luo Ruoxin and Luo Qiqi getting married.

How she wished that she had been in their place!

Sighing deeply, Fairy Linglong threw those thoughts to the back of her head as she walked through the streets of Linglong Royal City.

A month had already passed since Zhang Xuan and God Monarch Lingxi's grand wedding, but the commotion still had not died down. There were many people talking about that matter excitedly.

Fairy Linglong listened to their gossips for a moment before walking into a relatively high-class tavern.

She had already disguised herself before descending to the streets, so it was impossible for anyone to recognize her.

Even God Monarchs would not stay in their massive and cold palaces all day long. That would be dead boring! So, from time to time, they would disguise themselves as mortals to experience an ordinary life.

She took the window seat and ordered a few dishes before slowly savoring their flavors.

Just as the frustrations bubbling within her were finally starting to heal from the delicious food, a large group of people dressed in similar uniforms suddenly walked into the tavern.

“It’s him!”

There was a suppressed exclamation, and the dozens of people who had just entered the tavern immediately turned their gazes to a middle-aged man sitting not too far away from her.

The middle-aged man had a slightly plump figure. As his back was facing her, Fairy Linglong was unable to catch a clear glimpse of his face.

The middle-aged man seemed to be oblivious to the fact that there were many people looking at him. He was still holding his wine glass with a relaxed posture, sipping on it calmly.

There was a set of red braised pork belly and meat and pig trotters on the table, and the middle-aged man ate them heartily till oil was dripping from his lips.

“Surround him!”

After confirming the target, the leader of the group, a middle-aged man, raised his hand and gestured to his men.

Huala!

Dozens of men immediately surrounded the middle-aged man. Before they even made their move, one could already feel a terrifying killing intent emanating from them.

The leader of the group clasped his fist as he addressed the crowd all around. “Friends, there are some things that I have to

handle in here, so I'll have to ask you to excuse yourselves for a moment. You can count the tab for whatever you have bought on me today!"

"Yes yes, we'll leave right away..."

"They are from the Shangguan Clan!"

"Shangguan Clan?"

"Yes! After Conferred God King Baiye Qinghong died, Conferred God King Shangguan's clan ended up becoming the dominant power in Linglong Royal City. As such, we mustn't offend them at any cost!"

"Who is the fatty then? Why are they here to capture him?"

"I don't know about that, and it doesn't seem wise to poke our nose into this matter. Hurry up—let's go!"

...

Amid hushed discussions, the crowd hurriedly left the tavern.

This matter did not concern them, and it would be wise not to butt into the affairs of the number one clan of Linglong Royal City as well.

Soon, the only ones left in the tavern were the dozens of people, the fatty, and Fairy Linglong.

She was not in a good mood, and it had not been easy for her to find a place to rest and take a breather. Naturally, she was not willing to leave the area.

Seeing that there was someone who still had not left, the leader frowned. "Friend, our Shangguan Clan has something to handle. I hope that you can leave the area, or else we might just end up hurting you by accident. That would truly be a huge regret, wouldn't it?"

"You can continue doing whatever you are doing. I'm just a bystander..." Fairy Linglong said as she poured herself a glass of wine.

But before she could finish her words, she saw a huge shadow looming above her. Looking upward, the fatty had already sat down opposite her, and he passed a plate of pig trotters over to

her. With a smile on his lips, he said, “Young lady, it would be best for you to leave the tavern. They are here to deal with me, and it would be terrible if they hurt you by accident...”

It was only when the fatty took his seat opposite to her that she finally managed to see his face closeup. He had a friendly-looking face. Even though she would not call him handsome, he did have a unique charm around him.

Instead of accepting the plate of pig trotter, Fairy Linglong looked at him and asked curiously, “They are from the Shangguan Clan—do you not fear them?”

With her eye of discernment, she could tell that the fatty was only a high-tier Celestial God. Yet, he showed no fear before the experts of the Shangguan Clan, and he was even able to worry about her. It seemed like this fatty was more strong-willed than she had initially thought.

“Fear? What is there to fear about them?” the fatty replied with a laugh. “They are just a bunch of weaklings coming together!”

Sensing that the fatty really did not fear the opponents before him, Fairy Linglong grew curious.

Shangguan Yunwan was someone whom she had conferred. Even though she was unmarried, she had seven younger brothers. Due to that, the Shangguan Clan was huge, even compared to the other major clans in the Firmament.

The fatty was just a high-tier Celestial God, yet he was completely fearless. Just where did he get his confidence from?

Hearing those words, the leader’s eyebrows shot up as he glared with Sun Qiang with eyes that could kill. “You’re seeking death!”

Sun Qiang knew that a fight could not be avoided, so he placed his plate of pig trotters down before standing up. He swung his sleeves to the back as he spoke to the crowd around him with a nonchalant expression on his face. “I don’t know this young lady here, and she has nothing to do with me. Feel free to come at me, but don’t make things difficult for her.”



Seeing how the other party was still protecting her despite the danger he was in, Fairy Linglong could not help but see the fatty in a new light.

Putting aside whether he was in the right or wrong, just his attitude and disposition were already something that the group from the Shangguan Clan could not hope to match.

Gentlemanly and thoughtful, the fatty must have been quite a lady killer in his earlier days.

This was the first time that Fairy Linglong had encountered such a situation in her long life.

“Humph! We are here to deal with you in the first place anyway!” The leader harrumphed coldly before signaling his subordinates to attack.

In that instant, innumerable surges of sword qi burst forth to strike the fatty.

Without any hint of anxiety on his face, the fatty chuckled softly as he began to thread through the attacks of the crowd with the same ease as how butterflies weaved across a cluster of flowers. Surprisingly, not even a single attack landed on him.

Peng peng peng peng!

With a few dull thuds, the dozens of middle-tier Celestial Gods were soon lying on the ground, groaning in pain.

“What incredible combat sense he has!” Fairy Linglong nodded in approval.

With her eye of discernment, she could easily see through the fight.

The fatty appeared to be an ordinary high-tier Celestial God at first glance, but through his deep comprehension of combat, he was able to overcome his numerical disadvantage and subdue so many middle-tier Celestial Gods easily.

It was as if he could see through everyone’s flaws. That allowed him to predict their actions and retaliate against their attacks beforehand.

Due to that, those from the Shangguan Clan were unable to hurt the fatty at all despite having swarmed at him all at once. Instead, they were all swiftly defeated.

“Those idiots... Don't you dare get gleeful just because you defeated my subordinates!”

Seeing how his subordinates had been defeated so easily, the leader's face darkened. He took a step forward and exerted his cultivation, revealing his cultivation as a Half-God King.

Be it in terms of cultivation or strength, the leader was far stronger than the fatty. Judging from his exquisite moves, he had likely received the heritage of the Shangguan Clan's core lineage. That meant that he was one of the higher-ranking members in the Shangguan Clan.

Hu hu!

Without any hesitation, the leader launched a barrage of sword qi toward the fatty.

Despite the fatty's superior combat skills, it was still hard for him to cope with so much sword qi simultaneously with his current cultivation, so he ended up being forced back continuously.

“Be careful,” Fairy Linglong said with a frown.

The fatty had left a very good impression on her, so she did not wish for him to get injured.

“I appreciate your worry, but I'm fine. Like I said before, they are just a bunch of weaklings!” The fatty chuckled as he took a step back and grabbed a pig trotter from the table. He heartily took a bite of it before looking haughtily at the leader with the aura of a valiant warrior. “Allow me to see how strong you are!”

Right after saying those words, he dashed forward with his mountain-like body.

“That must be what they call... the air of a hero,” Fairy Linglong murmured with sparkling eyes as she felt something ripple in her mind, which had remained calm and placid for many years now.

She had thought that it would be impossible for her to meet a man whom she could fall in love with in the world, but who could have known that this average-looking fatty would catch her eye?

He might be weak, but he had an air of confidence and assurance that allowed him to stand unfazed even before experts far stronger than him.

This was definitely not something an ordinary man could do.

Overwhelmed by the fatty's imposing disposition, the leader cowered for a moment, but eventually, he gritted his teeth and charged forward as well.

Peng peng peng!

After trading a few blows, the confident fatty was still knocked back by the leader.

His confidence was still insufficient to make up for the deficiency in his strength.

“Audacious! How dare you lay your hands on me! Do you know who I am?” the fatty bellowed with a voice carrying the ferocity of a mighty lion.

“Who are you?” the leader asked with a slightly taken aback expression.

The fatty had spoken with such gusto that, despite having the backing of the Shangguan Clan, the leader was starting to doubt his actions.

It was true that the Shangguan Clan was powerful, but there were still quite a few people that they could not afford to offend. For example, before Baiye Qinghong's downfall, if they had dealt with her carelessly, that vindictive woman would have surely made their Shangguan Clan suffer terribly for it.

“I am the butler of the heavens!” the fatty declared as he gazed down loftily on the leader, as if there was no one who was qualified to stand on equal grounds with him. “By daring to raise your hand against me, you are raising your hand against

the Firmament itself. Are you trying to rebel against the heavens? You must be courting death!”

Hula!

With a flick of his wrist, the fatty took out a token and held it in his palm. Despite its small size, the token seemed to carry the weight of the heavens in it. Anyone who dared act out of line would suffer divine retribution for their insolence.

“This is... Sovereign Zhang Xuan’s aura?” Fairy Linglong was taken aback, already familiar with the aura in the jade token.

Could it be that the fatty who had moved her heart was related to Zhang Xuan?

Peng!

While Fairy Linglong was still frowning in bewilderment, the fatty, after taking out the token, swiftly claimed the advantage in the battle and defeated the leader. After that, he shook his head with a look of disappointment on his face as he remarked, “Yet another unworthy opponent...”

He put down his pig trotters and placed his hands behind his back before he walked away with such light footsteps that seemed almost as if nothing had happened earlier.

“Friend, please wait a moment!”

It was the first time that Fairy Linglong had met someone as carefree as this. Unable to hold herself back anymore, she quickly rose to her feet and called after him. “May I know your name?”

“I am...” The fatty tilted his chin upward, and his eyes glowed in confidence. “Sun Qiang!”

“Sun Qiang?” Fairy Linglong jotted down the name in her mind, and with a smile, she gestured to the table and asked, “Your pig trotters...”

Sun Qiang turned his head around coolly and said, “They’re your pig trotters now...”

Fairy Linglong’s face reddened a little.

...

A year later, Fairy Linglong and Sun Qiang had a grand wedding.

And from that day onward, Fairy Linglong never lost a wink of sleep at night again.